



ASSESSMENT OF MEDIA CAMPAIGNS ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
IN GWAGWALADA AREA COUNCIL ABUJA

By

Member Solace Gbakighir, ANIPR, Ph.D

Department of Mass Communication

Veritas University, Abuja

gmember@yahoo.com

08034356502

Dibor Chinonye Christine

Veritas University, Abuja

08164069004

dibornonye@gmail.com

&

Shekinnah Pius Emenogu

Department of Mass Communication

Veritas University, Abuja

Shekinahpius123@gmail.com

08039475239



DOI : <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18181014>

ABSTRACT

This study “Assessment of Media Campaigns on Domestic Violence against Women in Gwagwalada Area Council Abuja” examined the impact of media campaigns and domestic violence against women in the area. Incidence of domestic violence persist despite the various media campaigns and initiatives by the community, government, local and international organisations to promote justice, and protect women’s rights. To carry out the research, the social learning theory was used to anchor the work. The study adopted the quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. Using the Cochran formula, the sample size was determined as 403 with the target population consisting of women residing in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja. Data was presented using frequency tables. Findings revealed that sensitization programs on social media (22.1%), newspaper coverage (19.8%), TV (18.8%), and radio discussion programs (such as Otutu Oma and Ojumo re (41.4%), as well as initiatives like the Sexual Offences Awareness and Response (SOAR), the Kutunku community By-law, the provision of free legal services to women by FIDA, paralegal workshops, and sensitization programs used in creating awareness and sensitizing women have only made minimal impact. The study highlights that while mass media campaigns serve as a formidable instrument against domestic violence, the desired impact is not achieved. Findings revealed challenges affecting media campaigns as the limited access to media channels in the communities (7.4%), insufficient funding for media campaigns (10.6%), cultural and social norms that perpetuate domestic violence - patriarchal system (17.4%), lack of engagement from local community leaders and influencers (14.8%). It was also revealed that majority of campaign messages lacked a tailored approach, failing to take into account the cultural context of the communities (49.6%). Customizing media campaigns with culturally relevant frames, with emotionally engaging formats like storytelling, narratives, dramatizations, through easily accessible medium like radio was highly suggested. The study therefore recommended that use of radio for campaigns in rural areas should be prioritized. Merging radio with visual formats, such as short video clips on social media, can help ensure broader outreach across diverse demographic groups; contextualizing media campaigns and approaches that align with local languages, customs, and values of the communities will help educate women and the people more effectively.

Keywords: *Domestic violence, Nigerian Women, Media campaign, Gwagwalada*



Introduction

Domestic violence (DV) is prevalent in Nigeria despite the numerous sensitization efforts by government and Non-Governmental Organisations like the Center for Sexual and Domestic Violence Prevention (CSDVP), Government agencies and International Organisations like the UN, and WHO and the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA). Recent data has revealed the rising cases of DV against women specifically in Gwagwalada Area Council that has necessitated examination of the impact of mass media campaigns in curbing the threat and identifying strategies that will enhance the effectiveness of media campaigns against the practice. Gwagwalada is a cosmopolitan city and a significant area of study for DV due to its unique demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. The town is densely populated with rising cases of domestic violence.

The increasing cases of gender based violence in the new Kutunku community in Gwagwalada for instance has called for more attention in the area. Gwagwalada area council in recent times has been noted as a stronghold of gender based violence with practices such as teen marriages, genital mutilation, rape, breast ironing and other domestic violence (Independent Newspaper 2025). As revealed by the Association of wives of traditional rulers and the Broad Sustainable Women Economic Empowerment and Peace Initiatives, Gwagwalada now has the highest number of (900) SGBV (Punch November 2022; Abuja Digest 2023). The efforts of youths to sensitize the community through rallies, drama, dialogue and other initiative to create awareness, mobilize community, and educate residents on SGBV have continued to be underreported and unreported (Legit, 2021). According to the Gender-based Violence Data Situation Room, between 2020 and 2023, 27,698 cases of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) were recorded in Nigeria as confirmed by the Minister of Women Affairs Uju Kennedy Ohanenye (Prime Progress 2024). This amount paints a grim picture of the several efforts by the mass media in curtailing the trend in Nigeria. DV is described as an aggressive behavior with the intent to cause injury or death. Women in most cases are the worse affected though disproportionately, they suffer physical injuries, emotional and psychological consequences, limit their economic opportunities, they face social isolation etc.

Domestic violence in Nigeria takes the form of physical, emotional, sexual, and psychological abuse perpetrated mostly by partners, family, or others within the home. In culturally prone societies like Nigeria, social norms, culture and religion condone men's use of violence as a form of discipline and this reinforces different acts of domestic violence against women (Yusuf, Jude, & Gusau, 2022:193). According to Sambe (2015), the mistreatment of women stems from the belief that they are the weaker gender... regrettably, domestic violence extend beyond physical harm, impacting on women's mental health and overall well-being thus, the physical and psychological toll of domestic violence on women is intense.

The United Nations Population Fund describe the act as a life-threatening and an act of human rights violation (United Nations Population Fund, 2021) which could lead to permanent disabilities, some women have lost their lives to issues of domestic violence examples include the popular gospel artist Osinachi Nwachukwu who died on April 8 2022 in Gwagwalada Abuja, Asake Ojo a pregnant woman who was beaten to death by her husband in January 2024 in Lagos



State. In 2022 alone 401 women were reported dead due to sexual and gender-based violence (Leadership Newspaper 2025). Radio Nigeria reported that approximately 955 cases of gender based violence have ended in the victim's death (Prime Progress 2024). The establishment of the Nigerian Governors Wives Against Gender-Based Violence (NGWA_GBV) and the creation of Gender-Based Violence Management Committees chaired by the wives of the Governors across the states of the federation were effort to curtail the rising menace.

In light of the growing incidence of domestic violence, mass media campaigns have been used as tools for sensitization, advocacy, education, and fostering social change. Various media platforms, including television, radio, print, and online channels, serve vital function in influencing public perceptions and mobilizing community action against domestic violence (Dauda, 2015). Initiatives such as the “Stand to End Rape Initiative” and the #NoToDomesticViolence campaign have gained momentum in Nigeria, utilizing both mass media and social media platforms to inform the public about domestic violence and the support systems available (Nkwam-Uwaoma *et al.*, 2020). While efforts have focused more on creating awareness on DV, preventive strategies are required to mitigate this threat. With public campaigns widespread, it prompts questions regarding the impact of media interventions in altering societal attitudes and behaviours towards DV. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of mass media campaigns in mitigating domestic violence against women in Gwagwalada Area Council Abuja.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Gwagwalada a densely populated area have been on news in recent times for the wrong reasons. Aside cases of substance abuse and insecurity, cases of domestic violence against women are becoming rampant in the area. Abuja is the capital city of Nigeria, a hub for national and international organisations, such as the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) whose aim include that of promoting justice, protecting women's rights, and providing legal education through public campaigns and several other initiatives. With regards to the numerous efforts against domestic violence going on in Abuja, such as the FIDA Abuja branch which have been carrying out advocacy visits, sensitization campaigns on women and children's rights, a by-law was established in partnership with SOAR, an NGO to combat frequent cases of women abuse in Kutunku and surrounding areas, however, the impact of media campaigns in reducing domestic abuse against women in Gwagwalada remains uncertain. With the dearth of empirical studies on the effectiveness of media campaigns in addressing this issue in Gwagwalada area council is the motivation for this study.



Research Questions

1. What is the nature of domestic violence against women in Gwagwalada Area Council Abuja?
2. What are the most effective media channels for raising awareness about domestic violence in the area?
3. What are the challenges in using media campaigns to prevent domestic violence against women in Gwagwalada Area Council Abuja?

Review of Literature

Domestic Violence against Women

Violence against women has been defined as any act of gender based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty whether occurring in public or in private life (WHO, 1996). Domestic violence refers to the pattern of abusive behaviour mostly in a marriage by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner. In a broader sense, abuse including nonphysical abuse in such settings is still called domestic abuse and this includes behaviors that frighten, intimidate, terrorize, manipulate, hurt, humiliate, blame, injure or wound someone (United Nations).

Domestic violence against women encompasses various types of abuses, including physical, emotional, sexual, psychological, or economic harm inflicted by a partner, family member, or household member (WHO, 2021). In Nigeria, one major challenge of this issue is ascertaining the magnitude of the problem as it is believed to be underestimated because studies are not available that determine prevalence of domestic violence across various ethnic groups and socio-economic strata in the country. Studies however, have projected the picture of the problem across various socio-economic levels that exist in different cultural settings.

DV continues to be a significant issue of both public health and human rights. DV against women is seen as a form of social injustice against women (United Nation, UN, 1993). All humans both male and female have a role to play in the economic and political development of the country hence the need to actively involve the women to contribute their quota. If women are to also contribute their quota to development, they must be liberated from the various social injustices such as domestic violence perpetrated against them which not only put them in subordinate position but prevent them from exploring their potential to the development of Nigeria. Hamid (2020) noted that as damaging as domestic violence is, the act is underreported because of the societal stigma, cultural practices, and insufficient law enforcement.

The Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS, 2018: 467) reports that 30% of Nigerian women aged 15–49 have endured physical violence, while 10% have experienced sexual violence.



Despite the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act 2015 being a robust legal framework on paper, the deeply rooted issues hinder its practical application. The Nigerian laws are inadequate and discriminatory with stringent standards of proof in protecting persons, especially women and girls from violence...some provisions of the existing laws somehow encourage gender base violence, which is tolerated by the society because of our culture and power bridge between male and female (Igwe, 2022: 115).

Sambo, Jibril, & Sulaiman, (2023) outline the different forms of DV to include:

- i. Physical abuse: This refers to an intentional use of force against another person resulting in injury or harm. This is a highly common form of abuse, It encompasses actions such as beating, kicking, hitting, choking, and confinement.
- ii. Economic abuse: It refers to a form of DV where one partner exerts control over the other through financial means. This can include restricting access to money, preventing the victim from working, or misusing shared resources to create dependence and limit autonomy, manipulating or exploiting a family member for monetary benefit, restricting one partner from their job choices, as well as manipulating one partner sexual or other gains.
- iii. Emotional abuse: is a type of psychological maltreatment that undermines a victim's self-worth through manipulative and controlling behaviors. It includes insults, criticism, social exclusion, intimidation or exploitation for control, frequently imposing unreasonable expectations, and jeopardizing a person's self-esteem in a way that increases the risk of significant behavioural, cognitive, emotional, or mental health issues. While the physical abuse may be easier to quantify and defined across cultures, it might be difficult to define and quantify emotional and verbal abuse of which women may find more devastating than the physical abuse.
- iv. Verbal abuse: This is another variation of psychological abuse. It is the use of language to demean or control another, leading to emotional distress and a toxic environment.
- v. Sexual abuse: this is an unwanted sexual activity or behavior that occurs without consent. This can include a range of actions, such as sexual assault, exploitation, or coercion. The key element in sexual abuse is the absence of consent, making it a violation of personal autonomy and rights.
- vi. Neglect: This involves withholding food, clothing, shelter, medical attention, protection from danger, or a sense of love and worth from a partner.

It is widely acknowledged that these abuses inflict significant harm on women's well-being and relationships (Visage, 2021), that could lead to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), a mental health condition that is triggered by traumatic events that are characterized by nightmares, flashbacks, severe anxiety, and persistent thoughts about the distressing occurrences. Depression,



feeling of disconnection often accompanied by psychological impact of domestic violence. Depression it is believe intensify feeling of sadness, hopelessness, changes in appetite, and a loss of interest in activities that were previously enjoyable for the victim. It often result to homelessness, as most women may be forced to leave their homes to escape physical harm, the threat of death, and the disruption of their social support systems. Additionally, domestic violence can lead to other serious physical injuries (Duru, Aguocho, Iwu, Oluoha, Diwe, Okedo-Alex, & Nwaigbo, 2018). In Gwagwalada, not even the introduction of the Kutunku bylaw in partnership with a non-governmental organisation, the Sexual Offences Awareness and Response (SOAR) initiative to checkmate prevalence of domestic violence has effectively curtailed this problem.

Mass Media Campaigns and Domestic Violence

Mass media campaigns involve organized communication efforts that use television, radio, newspapers, and digital platforms to educate the public and influence behaviour (Nkwam-Uwaoma *et al.*, 2020). In combating domestic violence, media campaigns aim to:

- Raise awareness about the prevalence and consequences of domestic violence.
- Change societal attitudes by challenging cultural norms that tolerate abuse.
- Encourage victims to seek help by promoting support services and legal interventions.

Chukwuka, Aniugbo, Chime & Njeze (2023: 74) asserts that the Media can play a useful role in the sensitization of the people on the issue of domestic violence. The media can create awareness, convey education and act as deterrence to various abuses. The media as a citadel of information can build self-confidence on women and as well discourage men from gender based violence through portrayals of media messages and programmes that will grab attention and possibly sustain the interest of the society to speak out than shy away. Mass media campaigns are strategic communication efforts that use platforms such as television, radio, newspapers, and digital media to influence public attitudes and behaviours. They play a critical role in raising awareness among the public regarding the prevalence, causes, and impacts of domestic violence. One of the key roles of mass media is to inform society. For instance initiatives like the United Nations' "Orange to the world" campaigns utilize media channels to raise awareness about gender-based violence. In Nigeria, organizations such as the Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA) and the Mirabel Centre have employed radio and television programs to shed light on domestic abuse incidents and motivate victims to seek assistance. Abigail, & Igyuve (2023) assert that once the media expose the unhealthy behaviours of people, they may with time, learn to take the right attitudinal changes to suit the required behaviour expected of them.



Theoretical Framework

The Social Learning Theory

The study is anchored on the Social Learning Theory developed by Albert Bandura. The theory suggests that individuals acquire behaviours through observation, imitation, and modelling. According to this theory, people learn by observing others either directly or via media. In relation to domestic violence, media campaigns that highlight alternative non-violent responses to conflict or display the repercussions of abusive behaviour can contribute to changing societal norms. When individuals observe positive role models advocating for respect, gender equality, and conflict resolution either through interviews, discussions, movies, drama, or documentaries, they are more inclined to emulate those behaviours. Conversely too, when methods of domestic violence are frequently shown in media, it may become normalized and the methods copied, unless intentionally countered with educational material. Thus, Social Learning Theory reinforces the idea of leveraging mass media as a means to influence behaviour by showcasing socially responsible actions, which is vital in a setting where many still perceive domestic violence as a private issue or culturally appropriate.

Theory plays a significant role in this project by illustrating how individuals can adopt updated perspectives and behaviours simply by observing others, particularly through media. Regarding domestic violence, when mass media campaigns present true stories, foster respectful relationships, and highlight the serious consequences of abuse, they provide viewers with material to contemplate and learn from. These narratives can challenge damaging norms and present healthier, more constructive alternatives. For numerous Nigerian women and communities, witnessing such examples on television, radio, or social media can subtly initiate mind-set changes and promote transformation, since individuals often replicate what they observe, especially when it resonates as genuine and relatable.

Method of Data Collection

This study adopted a quantitative research method. The study covered Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT with a population estimated at 157,770 in 2006 (as widely cited by multiple academic and official sources attributing to National Population Census of Nigeria 2006: Irechukwu, & Chima, 2012; Okafor, & Ikeokwu 2024; Ologbonori, Magaji, Musa, 2025; Wikipedia). However, the population may no longer be valid according to Sennuga, Salaudeen, Bamidele, Alabua, Lagunju, (2023:), Gwagwalada now has a population of over 1 million people because of the massive influx of people into the area council therefore, using the estimated fraction of the attribute present in the population, the desired precision and confidence levels, the Cochran formula was used to determine the optimal sample size. The Cochran's formula is given below:

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 p (1-p)}{(e)^2}$$

Where,



e = desired level of precision

p = the fraction of the population in percentage

z = gotten from a z-table

Given the absence of exact information on the population of women in Gwagwalada, 50% of women was evaluated, which gives the largest variability. A precision of $\pm 5\%$ and a 95% confidence level (resulting in a $\alpha=0.05$) were taken into account. Based on the z-tables, 1.96 is the value for z. Thus, the following would be the theoretical sample:

$$n_0 = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.5 (1-0.5)}{(0.05)^2} = \frac{0.9604}{0.0025} \approx 384$$

To account for potential attrition in the study, an additional 5% of the sample size was included

$$n = 384 + 19.2$$

$$n = 403.2$$

Thus, the sample size for the study is approximately 403 respondents.

The Gwagwalada Area Council is divided into ten wards namely: Zuba, Ibwa, Kutunku, Tungan-Maje, Gwako, Ikwa, Paikon, Koro, Quarters, and Gwagwalada central (Alli, 2015). The purposive sampling technique was used to select the respondents in the study Area. Forty (40) respondents each were purposively selected from each of the ten wards. Thus, a total of four hundred (400) respondents were selected for the study. The respondents comprised girls and women between the ages of 15 to 50 years. Questionnaire was administered face to face to gather data from each of the ward.



Data Presentation and Discussion

Table 1: The forms of domestic violence witnessed or experienced in Gwagwalada?

Item	Frequency	Percentage
a. Physical	220	54.6
b. Emotional abuse	45	11.2
c. Economic abuse	120	29.7
d. Sexual violence	18	4.5
e. Others.....(Please specify)	0	0
Total	403	100

Source: Field Work 2025

Data as shown in Table 1 shows 220 respondents representing (54.6%) indicate physical violence as the most common form of domestic violence witnessed or experienced in Gwagwalada Area Council. Economic abuse came second most prevalent with 120(29.7%) responses. Emotional abuse got 45(11.2%) while sexual violence got 18(4.5%) responses. This implies that domestic violence is a significant issue in Gwagwalada with physical abuse being the most prominent form. The prevalence of economic abuse suggests that financial control and exploitation are also common aspects of domestic violence in this area.

Table 2: The frequency of domestic violence witnessed or experienced in Gwagwalada

Item	Frequency	Percentage
a. Daily	60	14.8
b. Every other day	200	49.6
c. Weekly	130	32,3
d. Monthly	13	3.2



e. Rarely	0	0
Total	403	100

Source: Field Work 2025

Data in table 2 shows a significant proportion of respondents 260 respondents witness or experience domestic violence frequently on daily basis or every other day. 130(32.3%) indicated that they witness on weekly basis while 13(3.2%) indicated they witness it on monthly basis. This implies that domestic violence is regular occurrence in Gwagwalada. This findings suggest that there is high level of tolerance and normalization of domestic violence in the communities, meaning there is possibly inadequate support systems or resources for victims. This calls for the need for community based initiatives to promote healthy relationships and challenge societal norms that perpetuate domestic violence as well as more educative campaigns and awareness.

Table 3: The Domestic Violence/Abuses witnessed more often

Item	Frequency	Percentage
a. Physical	120	29.7
b. Emotional abuse	88	21.8
c. Economic abuse	175	43.4
d. Sexual violence	20	4.9
e. Others....	0	0
Total	403	100

Source: Field Work 2025

Data in the table shows that economic abuse is the most commonly witnessed form of abuse, accounting for 175(43.4%). Physical abuse comes as the second most common domestic violence with 120(29.7%), emotional abuse comes next with 88(21.8%) while sexual abuse 20(4.9%) is indicated as the least abuse. This implies that economic abuse is pervasive and the most explored form for domestic violence.



Table 4: The media channels most effective in raising awareness about domestic violence

Item	Frequency	Percentage
a. Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)	89	22.1
b. Television	76	18.8
c. Radio	167	41.4
d. Newspaper	80	19.8
e. Online blogs/websites	87	21.6
Total	403	100

Source: Field Work 2025

The table indicate that radio as the most effective media channel in raising awareness about domestic violence with 167(41.4%). Respondents indicate that social media is effective with 87(22.1%) responses, online blogs/websites was also indicated as an effective channel with 87(21.6%), while newspaper got 80(19.8%). The data implies that radio is a powerful tool for raising awareness about domestic violence likely due to its widespread reach and accessibility. This suggest that radio campaigns and programs should be prioritized in efforts to raise awareness about domestic violence.

Table 5: The types of messages that are most effective in raising awareness about domestic violence

Item	Frequency	Percentage
a. Messages emphasizing the physical and emotional harm caused by domestic violence	80	19.8
b. Messages highlighting the importance of seeking help and support	83	20.6



c. Messages promoting healthy relationships and conflict resolution skills	170	42.2
d. Messages addressing the social and cultural norms that perpetuate domestic violence	40	9.9
e. Messages featuring personal stories or testimonials from survivors of domestic violence	30	7.4
Total	403	100

Source: Field Work 2025

Table shows messages promoting healthy relationships and conflict resolution skills received 170(42.2%), messages highlighting the importance of seeking help and support 83(20.6%), messages emphasizing the physical and emotional harm caused by domestic violence 80(19.8%), messages addressing the social and cultural norms hat perpetuate domestic violence 40(9.9%) while messages featuring personal stories or testimonials from survivors of domestic violence showed 30(7.4%). The data implies that messages focusing on prevention and empowerment are more effective than those emphasizing harm or featuring personal stories. This suggest that campaign programs should prioritize messages promoting healthy relationships, and conflict resolution.

Table 6: The Importance of involving local influencers, community leaders and survivors in raising awareness

Item	Frequency	Percentage
a. Very important	270	66.9
b. Somewhat important	70	17.4
c. Not very important	33	8.2
d. Not at all important	30	7.4
Total	403	100



Source: Field Work 2025

The data in the table shows an overwhelming majority 270(66.9%) of respondents believe it is very important to involve local influencers, community leaders, or domestic violence survivors in media campaigns, 70(17.4%) believe that it is somewhat important to involve local influencers, community leaders and domestic violence survivors in raising awareness about domestic violence, 33(8.2%) feel it is not very important, while 30(7.4%) believe it is not important at all. This implies that involving stakeholders like local influencers and community leaders is crucial for effective awareness about domestic violence. This suggest that local voices have a big and critical role to play in ensuring effective campaign against domestic violence. Thus partnership with these category of people is very necessary.

Table 7: Challenges in using media campaigns to prevent domestic violence against women

Item	Frequency	Percentage
a. Limited access to media channels in the communities	30	7.4
b. Insufficient funding for media campaigns	43	10.6
c. Cultural and social norms that perpetuate domestic violence (patriarchal system)	70	17.4
d. Lack of engagement from local community leaders and influencers	60	14.8
e. Inadequate messaging and content that resonates with the target audience	200	49.6
Total	403	100

Source: Field Work 2025

Data in the table shows inadequate messaging and content resonates with the target audience with 200(49.6%) respondents indicating so. Responses 70(17.4%) indicate cultural and social norms as main challenges, 60(14.8%) respondents indicated that lack of engagement from local community leaders and influencers constitute the main challenge, 43(%) indicated insufficient funding for media campaigns, while 30(%) indicated limited access to media channels in the area. This implies that the effectiveness of media campaigns in preventing domestic violence against women is



hindered by inadequate messaging and content. This suggest that media campaigns should prioritize developing messaging and content that resonates with the target audience taking into account their specific needs, concerns and cultural context. Formative research should be conducted to better understand the target audience and inform the development of effective messaging and content. Partnership with local community leaders can help ensure that messaging and content are culturally relevant and effective.

Table 8: How resonate are messaging and content with the target audience?

Item	Frequency	Percentage
a. Messaging and contents evoke emotions and inspires action	23	5.7
b. Messaging and content lack clarity and emotional connection with the audience	200	49.6
c. Messaging and content are perceived to be irrelevant and ineffective		
d. Messaging and content is totally unclear	60	14.8
	120	29.7
Total	403	100

Source: Field Work 2025

Data shows the majority of respondents 200(49.6%) feel that the messaging and content lack clarity and emotional connection with the audience, a significant number of respondents 60(14.8%) perceive the messaging and content as irrelevant and ineffective, a substantial number of respondents 120(29.7%) find the messaging and content to be totally unclear, while only a small proportion of respondents 23(5.7%) report that the messaging and content evoke emotions and inspire action, this findings imply that the campaign messaging and content on domestic violence are not effectively resonating with the target audience.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

The current study was undertaken to investigate domestic violence against women and the efficiency of media campaigns in reducing violence against women in Gwagwalada Area Council Abuja. Findings from similar related studies show that DV against women is prevalent in Nigeria generally and this has been linked basically to the patriarchal nature that gives leading roles to males while putting women in a subordinate position. As Bakare, Asuquo & Agomoh (2010:6)



rightly noted, the Nigerian traditional cultural practices embrace the belief in the inherent superiority of males over females.

Nature of Domestic Violence

In relation to the prevalence and nature of domestic violence against women in Gwagwalada Area council findings revealed that domestic violence is common occurrence against women and the impact is deep and varies. Findings revealed that women who are economically dependent are worse hit. Domestic violence instil both physical and psychological damages on the women. From the findings, physical abuse appears to be the most frequent type of abuse as respondents indicate that they witness such violence almost every other day and sometimes weekly. Other types of abuses that are common include economic and physical abuse. Economic abuse is believed to be common also because it is connected to poor or low socio economic status of many women especially those depending on their husbands for the provision all needs. Gillum (2019) corroborates on this, when he stated that the high level of poverty and socio-economic challenges in Nigeria today have contributed largely to the prevalence of domestic violence. Although indications shows that other factors such as traditional beliefs also contribute to the persistence of some forms of domestic violence. This could be so because most African traditional societies preach total submission of wives to their husband. Studies by Okenwa-Emegwa *et al.* (2016:2), noted the societal acceptance of spousal control and physical punishment as proper corrective measures. Notably too emotional and sexual abuse occur occasionally. These abuses are most often discreet owing to the fact that they are private except for women with confidence to open up and discuss about it. This may be so because traditionally, sexual activities between couple is believed to be a marriage rite in the African setting and so woman are often rebuked when they complain about sexual harassment or abuse from their spouse and often feel ashamed to discuss it. Existing studies have indicated that the magnitude of some form of domestic abuses are underestimated because of lack of available data record to determine their prevalence across various ethnic groups in Nigeria.

Media channels and messaging strategies

Findings revealed different media channels such as radio, social media (like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), online blogs/websites, newspaper and television as some of the effective media channels for raising awareness about domestic violence. Radio however was indicated as the most effective media channel because of its advantage in penetrating rural settings. Ayobolu, (2024) acknowledge the flexibility of radio which places an advantage over all other media of communication like television and newspaper, “radio is faster and very effective in reaching the nooks and cranny of rural dwellers”. Radio has proven to be an effective tool in communicating with rural dwellers because of its ability to localize media content to the literacy level of its audience (Adedotun, & Akindutire, 2024). The medium provides special quality in disseminating information in local languages it reaches the farthest areas with programs that rural, literate, and non-literate audiences can relate to. The medium’s suitability for development communication stems from its relative simplicity, cheapness, and ubiquity without necessarily depending on electricity this makes it a supper choice. Ayobolu, (2024) affirms that radio is not only a powerful tool for raising awareness but also promoting behavior change, it remains the fastest medium that



can tailor messages to specific audiences serving their needs and interests, and enable them become active participants in programs or campaigns that concern their well-being. The role of radio as a medium for dissemination of information and behavioural change is significant in this context, because Gwagwalada is populated with rural settings and radio appears to be the easiest most accessible forms of media. As Dauda (2015) asserts, radio programs, particularly those aired in local dialects, are very effective at reaching diverse audiences across both urban and rural regions... Since radio does not depend on literacy or electricity (for battery-operated sets), messages gets to the most isolated or marginalized communities. Findings also emphasized the importance of strategic message creation with the most highly rated strategies as emotional storytelling and short video dramatizations, highlighting the significance of emotional involvement. These outcomes align with Hiester (2021), who argues that narratives and dramatizations capture viewers' emotions and personal experiences, rendering the issue of domestic violence more relatable and difficult to ignore. Birchall (2018) equally note that dramatizations result in higher retention and recall rates, especially among audiences with lower literacy levels, making them particularly effective in rural or underserved areas.

The major challenge among other challenges include inappropriate messaging and content that does not resonates with the target audience. Findings revealed that lack of understanding of the nature of the audience' social and cultural perspective, and ideologies has affected the interventions to prevent domestic violence in the area. Campaign messages often lack clarity and emotional connection with the audience and thus are very often perceived untrustworthy. This has resulted to the lack of support and community engagement. The observation that campaigns mirroring local languages and customs tend to be more successful is strongly backed by Njamba (2015), who emphasizes the importance of cultural resonance, asserting that messages crafted in local dialects and enriched with familiar cultural symbols resonate better with and persuade the intended audiences. In dealing with community members especially when it bothers on change, understanding the cultural and social norms of the local context is very important. Findings revealed that community members must be involved. Lack of engagement with key stakeholders such as community leaders, local influencers to share their experience constitutes a major hindrance to effective messaging. Testimonies from survivors are other influential means. Berns (2017), noted that real-life narratives from survivors can aid in de-stigmatizing discussions about domestic violence, empower other victims to seek help, and make an otherwise abstract issue more tangible. Not overlooking the substantial power that traditional and religious leaders possess in shaping public perception findings revealed that local leaders must be fully involved. This position is validated by Adelokun (2021), who found that campaigns that included endorsements or participation from local leaders had significantly greater impact than those relying solely on mass media. Other factors identified as constituting challenge include: insufficient funding of media campaigns, limited access to media channels etc. Considering the importance of media campaigns in addressing these challenges, it was revealed that media campaigns are very important in addressing the root causes of domestic violence such as poverty and inequality.



Conclusion

The study concluded that domestic violence is prevalent and with devastating consequences particularly on the women gender. Mass media campaigns make significant impact towards domestic violence against women in Nigeria. Nevertheless, the targeting of campaign messages is often inappropriate as such message initiatives ought to be designed according to the context of cultural beliefs, and local customs. Customizing media campaigns with culturally relevant frames, emotionally engaging formats like storytelling, narratives, dramatizations, through an easily accessible medium like radio is highly recommended. The research underscores the perspective that while mass media campaigns serve as a formidable instrument against domestic violence, the desired level of impact is not achieved as most media campaigns do not take into cognisance the specific needs of targeted audience as such messages do not resonate with the intended.

Recommendations

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

- i. Given that domestic violence against women is common in Gwagwalada Area Council, media campaigns messages should be customized to align with local languages, customs, and societal values. By incorporating cultural and religious viewpoints that denounce domestic violence, the public's acceptance and resonance of the message will be strengthened across various communities.
- ii. Owing to its reputation as a widely trusted and accessible medium in Nigeria, radio should be prioritized, particularly in rural regions. Merging radio with visual formats, such as short video clips on social media, can help ensure broader outreach across diverse demographic groups.
- iii. The community should collaborate with agencies and the government to provide necessary assistance during policy formulation and implementation so as to have a deeper understanding of the challenges that may hinder prevention of domestic violence in the area

References

- Abigail, A.B. and Igyuve, A.I. (2023). Exploring Perspectives of Abuja Residents on Facebook Reports of Domestic Violence against Women in Nigeria (2022-2023). *International Journal of sub-Saharan African Research (IJSSAR)* 1(1): 1-9.
- Abuja Digest Newspaper (October 2nd 2023). Group laments high rate of violence against women. Retrieved: October 2nd 2023, From: <https://abujadigest.info/stories/news/group-laments-high-rate-of-violence-against-women>



- Adebusuyi, O. Adedotun, A. O. and Akindutire, A. S. (2024). Public relations and its application to rural development. : <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/378307017>
- Adelakun, O. S. (2021). The Influence of Community Leaders on the Criminal Justice System of Gender-based Violence in West Africa. *The Comparative and International Law Journal of Southern Africa*, 54(1), 1-30.
- Alli, L. A. (2015). Blood level of cadmium and lead in occupationally exposed persons in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria. *Interdisciplinary toxicology*, 8(3), 146-150.
- Ayobolu, Y. O. (2024). Effectiveness of Radio Health Advocacy Program in Rural Communities: A Case of Agidigbo FM's "Ilera Wa" in Onidundu Area, Akinyele, Oyo State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Development*. DOI:10.24940/ijird/2024/v13/i5/MAY24052
- Bakare, M.O., Asuquo, M.D. and Agomoh, A. O. (2010). Domestic Violence and Nigeria Women: A Review of the Present State. *Nigerian Journal of Psychiatry*. (8)2. <https://mail.bibliomed.org/?mno=199005>.
- Berns, N. S. (2017). *Framing the victim: Domestic violence, media, and social problems*. Routledge. DOI: <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9780203791578>
- Birchall, J. (2018). Gender sensitive strategic communications interventions. K4D Helpdesk report. Brighton, UK Institute of Development Studies. <https://gender.cgiar.org/publications/gender-sensitive-strategic-communications-interventions>
- Chukwuka, M.O., Aniugbo, C.C., Chime, A.C. and Njeze, I.V. (2023). The Influence of Media Campaign in Curbing Domestic Violence Against Married Women in South East, Nigeria. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Management Research* 9(9). DOI: 10.56201/ijssmr.v9.no9.2023.pg73.91
- Dauda, B. (2015). Mass media messages and domestic violence in Nigeria. *African Journal for the Psychological Studies of Social Issues*, 18(1), 122-141.
- Duru, C. B., Aguocha, C. M., Iwu, A. C., Oluoha, U. R., Diwe, K. C., Okedo-Alex, I. N., and Nwaigbo, E. (2018). Domestic violence among women in households in IMO state, Nigeria: Prevalence, pattern, and determinants. *Asian Journal of Social Science Studies*, 3(1), 15-31.
- Gillum L. T. (2019). The intersection of intimate partner violence and poverty in black Communities. *Aggression and violent Behaviour*. (46): 37 - 44. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2019.01.008>.



- Hamid, A. M., Tamam, E., and bin Osman, M. N. (2020). Relationships between media exposure and knowledge, attitude, and practice on HIV/AIDS: A cross sectional survey of adolescent Islamiyya girls in Nigeria. *Health Communication*. <https://schola.google.com>
- Hiester, S. (2021). Non-profit Narratives: How Two Organizations Use social media and Rhetorical Appeals to Address Issues of Sexual and Domestic Violence. East Tennessee State University. <https://dc.etsu.edu/etd/4000/>
- Igwe, O. (2022). Critique of the violence against persons (Prohibition) Act 2015. *African Journal of Law and Human Rights (AJLHR)* 6(2). <https://journals.ezenwaohaetorc.org>
- Independent Newspaper (August 31 2025). DNF bombs Gwagwalada strongholds with messages against rape, teen marriages and violence against women. <https://independent.ng/dnf-bombs-gwagwalada-strongholds-with-messages-against-rape-teen-marriages-violence-against-women/>
- Irechukwu, E. N. and Chima P. (2012). Social Services Administration in Gwagwalada Area Council: Militating Factors. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance*. 2(3): 159. DOI:10.5296/jpag.v2i3.2499
- Leadership Newspaper (June, 2025). Gender-based violence in the heart of the Nigerian family. Retrieved From: <https://leadership.ng/gender-based-violence-in-the-heart-of-the-nigerian-family>
- Legit.ng, (23 December 2021). Abuja Community releases 17 actions to take against anyone who abuses a child. <https://www.legit.ng/nigeria/1448790-abuja-community-releases-17-actions-to-take-against-anyone-who-abuses-a-child/>
- Njamba, P. (2015). An evaluation of the communication strategies used in anti-gender-based violence campaigns: A case of the young Women's Christian Association in Linda Township of Lusaka (Doctoral dissertation).
- Okafor, O.C. and Ikeokwu, U.I. (2024). Influence of Socio-Economic Factors on Contraceptive Use among Rural Women in Gwagwalada Area Council FCT, Abuja, Nigeria. *Asian Science Bulletin*. 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.3923/asb.2024.01.09>
- Okenwa-Emegwa, L., Lawoko, S., and Jansson, B. (2016). Attitudes toward physical intimate partner violence against women in Nigeria. *Sage Open*, 6(4), <https://ideas.repec.org/a/sae/sagope/v6y2016i4p2158244016667993.html>
- Ologbonori, S. T., Magaji, S., Musa, I., (2025). Assessing the Critical needs driving rural development in Nigeria: Implications for sustainable national development. *MRS Journal*



of Accounting and Business Management. 2(7). 1-10.
<https://mrspublisher.com/assets/articles/1751426205.pdf>

- Punch Newspaper (25 November 2022). Gender violence: Women groups record 1000 FCT cases. Retrieved 25 November, From: <https://punchng.com/gender-violence-women-groups-record-1000-fct-cases/>
- Prime Progress (2024). The Silent epidemic of domestic violence in Nigeria. 26 August 2024. <https://primeprogress.com.perspective/the-silent-epidemic-of-domestic-violence-in-nigeria/>
- Sambe, J. A. (2015). Emerging development in political communication in Nigeria: Emerging trends in gender Health & political communication in Africa. Enugu, RhyceKerex.
- Sambo, M. N., Jibril, M. B., and Sulaiman, H. (2023). Perception, and experience of domestic violence among women in a rural community in Kaduna State, Nigeria. *Nigerian Medical Journal*, 64(3), 314-326.
- Sennuga, S.O., Salaudeen, M.A., Bamidele, J. Alabua, F.O., Lagunju, B. O. (2023). Assessment of factors militating against youth participation in Fadama Ng-cares in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja, Nigeria, Pollution and Community Health effects, BRS Publishers. 1(1); DOI:10.59657/pche.brs.23.003. <https://bioresscientia.com/article/assesseement-of-factors-militating-against-youth-participation-in-fadama-ng-cares>
- The Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS, 2018). National Population Commission Abuja, Nigeria. The DHS program ICF Rockville, Maryland, USA. <https://dhsprogram.com>
- United Nations (2024). What is Domestic Abuse? <https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/what-is-domestic-abuse>
- Visage, A. N. (2021). Sites of power: Documentary ethics and representation of child abuse (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Waikato).
- Yusuf, A. M., Jude, I. O. and Gusau, H. H. (2022). Gender Based Violence against Women during COVID – 19 Pandemic: A Case Study of Gwagwalada, Abuja – Nigeria. *International Journal of Economics and Development*. 5(1).