



## ***Daily Sun* and the ‘Sun Girl’ Practice: Challenging the Stereotypical Portrayal of Female Gender in the Media**

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### **Abstract**

*Daily Sun's* Sun Girl practice has continued over the years in Nigeria without any identified form of pressure from the academia or gender activists. This study, thus, interrogates the damage the practice portends for the image of the female gender. Volumes of related literature have been reviewed to situate the study within the existing body of knowledge. Hinged on the framing theory, the study contends that within the feminist struggle, the Sun Girl practice frames the female gender in a manner that makes women look materialistic, hedonistic and defocused. The practice also objectifies women, thereby increasing their ‘invisibility’ in the society. The study recommends progressive portrayal of women in the media in a manner that will increase their ‘visibility’ in the society. Spaces in the media devoted to women should be used to discuss serious issues that will help to advance the course of women and make them more visible in the society. Since the study is conceptual in nature, it is hereby recommended that more empirical studies be conducted on the Sun Girl practice to ascertain the extent of damage it is capable of causing to the female gender.

**Key words:** *Daily Sun*, Sun Girl, stereotype, female, media.

## Introduction

The issue of female representation not only in the media, but in the society generally has gained the attention of feminist scholars over the years. As a result, gender as it relates to female portrayal and representation as well as perception in the society is widely researched in the academia. At the center of this ever growing research interest is the need to investigate how women are represented in politics (both in elective positions and in terms of appointments), how women are represented in the civil society, the number of women occupying managerial positions in organizations and how societal and cultural factors influence this representation (Asogwa, 2013, Nwabueze, 2013, Makokha, 2014, Azeez, 2010 and Nwosu, 2012, Ibrahim, 2017). In media and communications research specifically, feminist researches focus on how women are portrayed in the media (advertisements, movies, portraits and roles), the ratio of male to female journalist both in reportorial and managerial positions, the appearance of women in the news as news subjects; consumption of the media by women and the nature of programs targeted at women among other issues (see Ross and Carter, 2011 and Okunna, 1992). In all of these, research evidence has proven that the media as an industry has not helped matters in ensuring a society that is fair to the female gender.

While this trend of underrepresentation and or misrepresentation has continued to thrive over the years as documented in available literature, this study concentrates on a phenomenon that is similar to this, though unique in its own style, namely: the *Daily Sun's* page three 'Sun Girl' portrait. Over the years, the paper has consistently published the picture of ladies on this page. While this practice has continued, it has generated little or no research attention, surprisingly, even among the feminist scholars! Few questions however, are worthy to interrogate with regard to this practice such as: why does the paper initiate the practice? Is it an attempt to satisfy the commercial drive of the paper and boost sales? To what extent does the practice toyed with the sensitivity of the female gender? Are women in the country interested in the practice? Do they see it as a welcomed development? What is the overall perception of women in the country to this practice? These are the issues that are worthy of investigation with regards to this practice.

Publishing female pictures in this fashion, however, is not peculiar to the *Daily Sun* Nigeria newspaper. Other newspapers globally have also at one time or the other, consistently published female pictures in this fashion. Good examples in this regard are the *Daily Mirror* and the *Sun* newspapers in London ([en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/page\\_3](http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/page_3)). The *Sun* newspaper in London for instance, had consistently published the portrait of topless female models from 1970 to 2015 (about forty-five years). This development was indeed, novel. Publishing nude pictures of female models in a serious newspaper of that standing was what other newspaper publishers could not imagine. Critics attacked the paper at several forums but, surprisingly, the act boosted the sales of the newspaper with about 2.5 million copies (Roy, 2015).

As the practice continued, critics also continued to attack it as well. Several reasons which were chiefly feminist were advanced to curtail the practice, however, the publisher of the paper refused to bow to the pressure. In 1986, Clare Short, a member of the British Parliament proposed a bill that would ban newspapers in the U.K. from

publishing pornographic images (Deakin, 2014). The bill was slow to gain support and eventually died on the floor of the parliament. This did not, however, stop anti Sun Girl campaigns. Roy (2015) wrote that at a conference of Liberal Democrats in Birmingham in 2012, many participants voiced their desires to ban the practice. In furtherance of this struggle, an activist named Lucy-Anne Holmes launched the “No More Page 3” campaign in 2012, an aggressive campaign that drafted and sent letters to British officials, asking them to ban the practice. A twitter campaign was also organized by the “No More Page 3” group in furtherance of this course. The pressure continued until 2013, when the Irish version of the paper stopped publishing the topless page 3 Sun Girl, and by 2015, the paper eventually, stopped the practice completely (Roy, 2015, Deakin, 2014 and Early, 2015).

That was the case with the *Sun* (London) practice of the Sun Girl or “Page 3” as it was fondly called. In Nigeria, however, the practice has continued over the years without any identified form of pressure from gender activists, neither has it generated research attention in the academia. It is against this backdrop that this study sets to interrogate what the Sun Girl practice portends for the female gender in Nigeria. It is hoped that the study will provide the basis for more empirical researches on this practice, and indeed, other related acts which are stereotypical to the female gender in the media.

### **Statement of the problem**

The Nigerian woman has been an object in the hands of media producers to help them achieve the goal of getting the audience’s attention. The use of women as television news casters is connected to this factor (Nwabueze, 2013), while film producers and advertisers have also realized and implemented this long ago. Marbel (2009:8) notes that:

The use of women’s bodies in advertising is essentially a cheap trick that marketers use instead of making more thoughtful arguments on behalf of their products. The mechanism used in advertising is quite simple; attractive women are employed to grab attention and stimulate desire, which advertisers hope will then be transferred to the products.

The Sun Girl practice in the *Daily Sun* newspaper is not divorced of this stereotype. One wonders why a beautifully adorned, and sometimes, semi-nude portrait of a lady has to be placed on the page of a newspaper consistently. For whatever motive- aesthetic, financial, promotional or otherwise, the practice has the potential of demeaning the image of the female gender. This essay interrogates the effects of the practice on the female gender with the intention to stimulate more empirical researches on the issue. The major source of concern is that continuous portrayal of women in the media in this fashion has the ability of making them ‘invisible’ in the society. Invisible in the sense that it makes them look unserious, defocused, materialistic and hedonistic. While arguments of women invisibility dominate feminist discourse in the academia, this study interrogates some of the ways media portrayal of women deepens the invisibility, as exemplified by the Sun Girl practice.

### **Conceptual explication**

This section highlights the two basic concepts that constitute the bulk of the study.

These concepts are: gender and the media.

## **Gender**

Gender is a socially constructed reality that has come to characterize the definition of roles between the male and female sex. According to WHO (2017:1), “gender refers to the socially constructed characteristics of women and men—such as norms, roles and relationships of and between groups of women and men; it varies from society to society and can be changed”. This is to say that the society and by extension, social interaction defines the gender roles between male and female, as well as the nature of relationship that should exist among people belonging to different sexes. To Brodolini, Giomi, Sansonetti and Tota, (2013:13):

In the definition of gender, what defines a woman or a man is much more related to culture and society rather than to their sex, sexuality and personal appearance. In other words, gender is not only naturally given, but also socially constructed. Gender is built on social interactions through the interiorisation of norms and the expectations on individuals’ behaviour according to two differentiated patterns for women and men. The social processes of everyday life are ordered according to these two patterns sociologically defined as ‘gender roles’. Gender roles include those behaviours, attitudes, poses that men and women are expected to assume according to the historical period and geographic context they live in. Unlike the essentialist perspective – according to which ‘nature’ (that is, biological factors such as chromosomal and hormonal differences) is the main cause of differences between male and female behaviour, anti-essentialist positions argue that gender roles are learned during development and reinforced throughout everyday life. Cultural influences and socialization processes, in this view, are the main determinants of an individual’s gender identity and roles.

This definition provides an overview to the concept of gender and what informs the perceptions of male and female gender as such. An often time, perception of gender roles between male and females involves a high level of stereotyping, where the male gender is placed above the female gender. Consequently, the female gender is perceived to be inferior, subordinate and weaker than the male gender, a perception that goes a long way to influence the ascription of gender roles. Here, Brodolini, Giomi, Sansonetti and Tota, (2013:13) notes that instruments of socialization such as the family, religious institutions, the educational system and the mass media among others are at the forefront of perpetuating this order in society. They help to establish a society that is masculine in orientation, asserting the dominance of the male gender at every level of the society, from traditional institutions to all the formal that one could think of.

## **The media**

The mention of the media gives the impression of the means through which one party links with the other, to borrow the words of Sanda (2017:105), the media are: “the whole gamut of information dissemination institutions and agencies in a political system”. In the field of communications, media refer to the various means through which messages are communicated to the audience. Narrowing this down to mass communication, we can point at television, radio, newspapers/magazines and to

some extent, books and the internet as the media. Typical to all of these is the fact that they contain messages aimed at public consumption (refer to Bitner, 1989, Baran, 2004, Dominick, 2002, Daramola, 2002, Sambe, 2008, Nwabueze, 2014 and Asemah, 2010).

The media are into production of content of all kinds for audiences' consumption. In other words, just the way customers troop into the supermarket to buy products of various kinds, the media also present to the audiences a potpourri of content choices, ranging from music, drama, documentaries, news and current affairs, editorials, advertisements, commentaries, games and puzzles etcetera. This production oriented nature of the media has added to it the adjective-industry. Thus, it is common to hear people talk of the media industry, referring to the means through which we acquire information in the society.

Discussion of the media in this study is based principally on two specific functions which they perform in the society, namely: the status conferral and agenda setting functions. These functions are related in many ways, but each is performed uniquely by the media. Status conferral refers to the popularity an individual gains by frequently featuring in the media. In the words of Sambe, (2008:60): "those whose deeds are reported by the mass media are instantly elevated to prominence more than they previously enjoyed. Not only do the media grant recognition to individuals, they also legitimize the status of organizations and movements." This function of the media derives from the thinking that, the more an individual is featured in the media, the more his/her status is raised to public prominence. Going by this thinking, it is axiomatic that the male gender dominates media coverage, which is only natural that the male gender's status is better enhanced in the media against the seldom covered female gender.

In the agenda setting function, the media play the role of social constructivist tools: they construct meanings and offer them to the audience members, who negotiate and incorporate them within their personal meaning structures. Meanings, therefore, are constructed by the audience members themselves through a mediation process that is largely influenced by the receivers' social context. Media focus on people, events and issues in the society largely motivate the audience to think about them. Thus by projecting a group of people in the society continuously through the various media channels, the masses are directed to think more about them. In the words of Asemah, (2011:39), agenda setting connotes the ability of the media to "mentally order the world for us". It is born out of the contention that the mass media determine what the masses discuss and think about (Littlejohn and Foss, 2009, Nwabueze, 2014).

Thus, the media, by focusing more on men in their content, invariably direct our thoughts towards the male gender more than their female counterparts. Sadly, in the very few instances as indicated by the literatures, where women make it into the media, negative and stereotypical 'frames' are associated with their portrayal. Such frames (as typified by the Sun Girl practice) make them appear unserious, defocused and sometimes materialistic (as seen in adverts). We argue that such frames or patterns of portrayal have the power of increasing the invisibility of women in the society. In the final analysis, we are inexorably forced to submit that certain forms of me-

dia portrayal- such as the Sun Girl practice are worse than not at all, as they do not augur well with the image and reputation of the female gender in the society.

### **Media portrayal and the image of women: insights from the literature**

The image of women as portrayed by the media has generated the attention of communication scholars over the years. As a result, it has become one of the most researched issues in the study of media and society. Trailing this ever growing research attention are volumes of literatures on the portrayal of women in the media. This section reviews some of the studies conducted in the area with the intention of situating the current study within the existing body of knowledge.

Okunna, (1996) in a study: “portrayal of women in Nigerian home video films: empowerment or subjugation” examined how women are portrayed in selected Igbo language films. The study which she premised on the assumption that “poverty, illiteracy, religion, cultural prejudices and male chauvinistic tendencies manifest in diverse patrilineal practices against women are some of the formidable forces that relegate women to the background (p.1)” employed focus group discussion to investigate the portrayal of women in Nigerian home videos. The population of the study is not defined, as she crafted the study from what was intended to be a casual discussion, in her words, “the conversation with my daughters was expanded to include six of their friends, culminating in a focus group discussion with these eight young women (p.28)”. The study was later expanded to include 26 female students of the institution, selected through convenience sampling.

Notwithstanding this great methodological shortcoming, lofty findings were arrived at. In her words: “the results of this study are unequivocal about the negativism in the image of women in Igbo language video films. All the 40 respondents said that the image of women and the roles they play are predominantly negative (p.31).” The study also discovered that the negative portrayal is not in tandem with reality: “all eight members of the focus group felt that the negative portrayal of women is unrealistic.” The study concluded that the image of women as portrayed in the films is negative and capable of negatively influencing the perception of women among the large audience of video films in the country. Thus the paper by way of recommendation “exhorts Nigerian video film makers to be mindful of the dangers inherent in their use of potentially powerful channel of development communication (p.34)”.the paper also urged Nigerian actresses to reject parts or roles which debase and dehumanize women in video films.

In a related endeavor, Azeez (2010) studied audience perception of portrayals of women in Nigerian home video films. The aim of the study was to investigate how Nigerian audience, particularly women interpret the meanings of the representations of women in Nigerian films. Just like Okunna (1966) as discussed above, the study adopted focus group discussion, where three sessions of focus group discussion “involving a representative sample of viewers of Nigerian video films, from different socio-economic groups were undertaken (p.201).” Participants in the first session fell between 26-36 years and were postgraduate students, “studying at master’s level” on a part time basis at the University of Lagos. The second group comprised of 18-25 years old people, and was drawn from students within the third and fourth years of study at undergraduate level from the same institution, while the last session com-

prised predominantly less educated market women, artisans, shop owners and lower-level civil servants within the age bracket of 35-45 years. This method was suitable for the study. Findings revealed that:

Nigerian audience, particularly female viewers perceive, receive and interpret the images of representations of women in Nigerian home video films differently. While men and less educated women interpret the representations in conformist manner, having the preferred meanings of the ideological meanings embedded in the representation, educated women interpret the representation 'oppositionally' and 'agitatively' (p.206).

The research thus concluded that Nigerian media films, as a form of the culture industry are devoted to controlling and dominating women and they do this in such a way as to make the control and domination seem natural and given, but with the power to propel women to internalize their objectives. So, they serve men and serve the purpose of sustaining the cultures and discourses that provide women negative subject positions.

Makokha (2014) took a similar step in this direction in her study, where she examined the "portrayal of the African woman in *Half of a Yellow Sun*", a novel written by the popular feminist novelist, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. The study which adopted hermeneutic approach espoused the various themes of the novel and discussed them intensively, vis-à-vis the realities of the African women and came to the conclusion that 'the Nigerian woman in this postcolonial patriarchal political setting experienced double colonization, the first time by the British colonialists, and the second time by the Nigerian man in postcolonial Nigeria.' through these various levels of "colonialism", the study notes that 'the African woman has been presented as having being colonized in the mind, and therefore, having embraced patriarchy, hence, having placed the African man in a higher pedestal, a position socially higher than hers (p. 119).'

Ugwulor (2009) also conducted a research in this direction. The work titled: "feminism in the mass media: redressing the imbalance and redefining the image of women" sought to find out whether women are aware of their marginalization in the media, the extent to which the mass media portray women negatively, which media misrepresent women the most, the efforts made to minimize the discrimination on the image of women and other effective measures the media can employ to find out the image and status of women. Survey design was employed to execute the study, with male and female adults in Enugu state (with a bias to media workers) as the population. Findings revealed that majority of the Nigerian women are aware women are being marginalized in the media. Television was ranked highest as the medium that portray women negatively, followed by newspapers. With these, the research concluded that Nigerian women are misrepresented and marginalized by the media through what the media present to the public on women, and hence, recommended that the media should set the right agenda by making sure that they carry out balanced coverage of male and female activities, thereby helping to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. This study contributes immensely to our understanding of how Nigerian women perceive the way the media portray them.

Nwabueze (2013) took a different dimension from the studies reviewed above, as

he interrogated the question of female marginalization in the Nigerian media industry, not in terms of portrayal, but in terms of male dominance in managerial and reportorial positions. The study which was purely conceptual decried the masculine nature of news rooms, citing several studies and reports that provide astonishing evidence of female marginalization in the newsroom despite high enrolment figures of female students in mass communication and journalism related courses in the tertiary institutions across the country. Culture was spotted as the major obstacle to female representation in the media within the Nigerian social context. He recommended that cultural practices, perceptions and stereotypes which discourage women from taking up journalism as a profession should be done away with to open up the space for more women in Nigeria willing to pursue a career in journalism.

Advertising has not helped matters in portraying the female gender. Documented research evidence proves that it does more harm than good in projecting the female gender. Asogwa (2013) investigated this phenomenon. The study had three main objectives: to discover how women are portrayed on Nigerian television adverts, to investigate the kind of roles assigned to women in TV adverts comparing them with that of their male counterparts; and how the portrayal of women affects the Nigerian culture. Focus group interview was used as the instrument with 400 level students of Kogi State University Anyigba as the population, as well as a content analysis of adverts and commercials on NTA and Sliverbird Television.

The study discovered that the roles dominantly assigned to women in Nigerian TV adverts are domestic work and roles more inferior to those of their male counterparts. More so, the study discovered that women are depicted sex objects, objects for consumption and as sexually available, this portrayal the study discovered, affects adversely, the Nigerian culture in terms of how women are treated in our society because advertising functions as a medium of socio-cultural communication. The study recommended that Nigerian feminists should fight for the advancement of women in all spheres of life by working towards curbing the way women are portrayed in TV adverts. It also recommended that media institutions should desist from over projecting advertisements that will demean the female gender and deepen the already existing inequality. Another recommendation was for the media to “strictly abide by the code of ethics governing the practice of advertising and create public awareness of the advertising code of ethics among their workers (p.277).”

Mabel (2009) also tore this part when she surveyed the public perceptions of the use and portrayal of females in Nigeria’s advertising scene. The study which had it as objectives to ascertain: the public perception of female gender in advertising, the various stereotypical portrayals of female gender by these adverts and the messages they communicate to media consumers employed survey design to investigate the phenomenon, with questionnaire as the research instrument. The study discovered that the respondents believe females are used in advertising because of their physical appearance, i.e. natural beauty, which made it possible for them to attract attention of consumers to products and services. Also, the study revealed that the audiences perceive the use of females in advertising as mere models and as an abuse of female gender. It was also revealed that projection of half-nude women in advertising is perceived to be “crazy, seductive and disgusting (p.118)” among other lofty revelations. The study as a result concluded that though advertising enhance sales of products



and services, advertising does not contribute to the much-needed empowerment of Nigerian women, and such can lead to subjugation of women because it can increase men's disdain for women, undermine women's confidence in themselves and strengthen the forces which push women to the background in this patriarchal society. Thus, "in this era of concern for women's empowerment, advertising is counter-productive and damaging to the course of women (p.120)."

Most of the studies on the portrayal of female gender in the media however, are focused on the broadcast media, basically television and the movies. This is one of the motivations for the present study, i.e. to balance to ratio between studies on broadcast and print media in this respect. Few studies notwithstanding exist on the print media and female gender. One of such studies is a research conducted by Nwaolikpe (2014) who examined the "representation of women's image in Nigerian newspapers." The major objectives of the study were: to discover how often Nigerian print media cover female images, if there is an imbalance between the coverage of men and female images, the issues of their coverage and also to know if these images undermine the status of women in Africa today. Content analysis was utilized as the design approach, where *The Guardian* and *The Punch* newspapers were studied for a period of four months (August to December, 2012). The study discovered that:

There is an imbalance representation of women's picture in the newspapers analyzed especially in the area of economy, education and politics...more of the women's pictures appeared in entertainment and fashion (lifestyle), advertisement and others, confining women to areas that are traditionally meant for them (p.46).

The study concluded that images of women portrayed in the print media are negative and undermines the African woman today (p.46), a finding that necessitated the recommendation that the media as an agent of change should provide the society with alternative representations of women, new gender ideas and identities, values and ways of living that will address the accepted norms and beliefs among other relevant recommendations.

It is noteworthy that in spite of the proliferation of studies on the image of women in the media, no study has been identified (at least by the researchers) on the Sun Girl practice which has continued for years now. Perhaps, there is need to focus on this issue specifically.

### **Theoretical framework**

Although this study is situated within the framework of feminist theory, framing theory is employed to buttress how the Sun Girl portrait is likely to portray the female gender before the eyes of the general public. Propounded by Goffman (1974), framing theory is an extension of the agenda setting theory. It is the assumption that how an event is characterized in the media can have influence over how it is comprehended by audiences. The theory posits that media transfer the salience of specific attributes to issues or events (Dimitrova, Kaid, Williams, and Trammel 2005). In media parlance, framing of stories entails giving specific interpretations using words in news representations such that audience do not just read about an issue but view it from a particular perspective (McQuail 200, Jibril, 2017).

According to Nwabueze and Edogo (2010), framing deals with the angle from which a media house reports an event. The belief is that such an angle invariably influences the audience to reason from the standpoint of such a media house. This theory explains the argument in the study. Looking at the nature of pictures typical of the Sun Girl(s), one derives the impression that the female gender is unserious and fashion minded. Thus from the frame analysis of Goffman (1974), the study argues that the frame which *Daily Sun* newspaper employs to portray women in this fashion does not augur well with their image in the society. Looking critically at the nature of *Daily Sun's* Sun Girl portraits, one discovers that there is more to it than just the intended aesthetic purpose. This is where framing theory provides a good anchor for the study.

### **Sun Girl practice and the female gender in Nigeria: beyond aesthetic and commercial value**

Literature on the portrayal of women in the media reveal that often times they are being used for commercial purpose. The argument here is that the use of women in the media attracts audience members to such media. Studies have attempted to link the uses of women as news casters and program presenter on television and radio to this factor. Similarly, the use of women in adverts, commercials and promos/campaigns is linked to this factor as Mabel (2009) has argued. Thus, the female gender features in the media in the fashions above due to their aesthetic value. This in the feminist parlance is referred to as objectification of the female gender, justified by the fact that most of the times; women are portrayed as sex objects in adverts and commercials. Another dimension to this is that the portrayal has the capacity of making the female gender appear unserious and defocused, materialistic and hedonistic in nature. What is more worrisome is the fact that those responsible for this negative portrayal have scant regard for the danger which this portrayal has on the image of women in the society Ugwulor (2009) and Asogwa (2013) have earlier established this position.

Sun Girl practice is not free of these evils. The major contention of this essay is that deep behind the face value, there is a hidden meaning to the portrayal of women in this fashion. Although the practice appears to portray women in the newspaper consistently, a critical look at the portrayal from the lenses of the feminist theory indicates the irony in the portrayal, namely: that the portrayal has the ability of increasing the invisibility of women in the society. What this suggests is that the portrayal is not of progressive taste, but has the potential of demeaning the female gender in the eyes of the general public. Radical feminists have been pursuing this course over the years. The number of billboards on our streets with images of women advertising products of all kinds, same with TV commercials and newspaper adverts depict this reality. All these in the long run contribute to engraving in the psyche of individuals in the society, the 'inferiority' of the female gender, a position earlier held by Okunna (1996).

One could see the cruelty in the Sun Girl practice manifesting in the simple fact, that while the newspaper could not devote quality space discussing women issues in a progressive fashion, a whole page, as strategic as page 3 is devoted for the continuous objectification of women. We argue that beyond aesthetic and commercial val-

ues, the Sun Girl practice has a damaging effect on the image of women based on the frame used to present them. The time is ripe for media producers to wake up to their responsibility of ensuring that the society accords the desired regard to women. This can be achieved through devoting attention to serious issues affecting the female gender. Issues such as the opportunities ICTs have opened up for the 21<sup>st</sup> century women, entrepreneurship, maternal health etc. can be addressed in the media in a way that will benefit the female gender tremendously. Okunna (1996) and Azeez (2010) also advocate for this, thus, we argue that in this 21<sup>st</sup> century where women aspire for greater feats in the society, the Sun Girl practice is not only old fashioned, but also stereotypical and counter progressive to the course of women in the society. As major stakeholders in the public sphere, the media must strive at all times to ensure that the image of women is not only secured, but also protected. This can only be achieved through favorable projection of the female gender in a way that reveals their competences and capabilities. Such a portrayal can go a long way to shape the perception of the masses about the female gender, and correct the stereotype which they are often associated with.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

Media portrayal of women remains a controversial issue in academic discourse. While there appears to be a underrepresentation of the female gender on serious issues such as politics, the economy, developmental and a host of other issues, the unfortunate trend of misrepresentation is also manifest, whereby, the few women who make it into the media are used to achieve the selfish aim of the publisher. Objectification of women in adverts and the Sun Girl practice as discussed in the study, which have commercial and aesthetic undertones are considered as calculated attempts to make the female gender invisible through the continued stereotypical portrayal. This way, the study concludes that media portrayal of women for these selfish gains is disastrous and damaging to the image of women in the society. This conclusion is against the background that, much as there is need to feature women in the media to make them visible in the society as the agenda setting theory would argue, the frames with which they are portrayed have a lot to do with the visibility. Negative portrayal or framing the female gender in the media will no doubt deepen their invisibility in the society.

It is therefore worthy to recommend that media practitioners should strive at all times to protect the image of women in the society. Portrayal of women should be the kind that will help to project the integrity and dignity of women. Needless to stress here that the media must be alert to the sensitivities of the female gender, owing to the fact that stereotypical portrayal has the ability of deepening their invisibility in the society. The paper therefore recommends that instead of continuing with the Sun Girl practice, the *Daily Sun* newspaper should use the page to discuss serious issues having to do with the female gender that will empower women positively to brace up, utilize their potentials to the fullest and live up to their expectation in the society. It is also pertinent to recommend that other media houses must also devote quality time and space to discuss women issues in a progressive fashion. For the society to adequately appreciate the competence of the female gender, the media must spearhead the course by setting such an agenda, and framing women in a way that makes them appear serious.

Lastly, owing to the conceptual nature of this paper, it is hereby recom-

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mended that more empirical studies be conducted on the Sun Girl practice to discover how the female gender, and indeed, the entire society perceive it, as well as the extent to which it affects the perception of the female gender in the society. Such researches should focus on finding out why women feature on the page, the satisfaction they derive from featuring on the page and lastly, the motive behind the page from the standpoint of the publishers. These will help to reveal a holistic picture of the Sun Girl practice, vis-à-vis the feminist question in the society.

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