

Innovations

Attitude and Behavior Towards Safety Guidelines for Professional Journalists Among Female Journalists Covering Insecurity in South-East Nigeria.

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Abstracts

This study examines attitude and extent of practice of the safety guidelines among female professional journalists working in South-East Nigeria. With the aid of the questionnaire, a survey was conducted among the 440 female journalists in the zone, and the results show that, 66% have positive attitude towards the safety guidelines and endeavour to apply them. However, 9% do not find the safety guidelines helpful while covering the Sit-At-Home. With a mean value of 4.77, the study showed that gathering necessary facts about the location of a high risk event before taking off, is the first precautionary step a female journalist must take. With a mean value of 3.35, the respondents least recommend 'carrying tear gas repellent or a ball of onion' as precautionary measure. The researchers recommend guided or strict adherence to the safety guidelines when covering high risk locations or sensitive events.

Key Words: 1.Female, 2.Safety, 3.Insecurity, 4.South-East Nigeria, 5.Attitude,6. Behaviour.

Introduction

Due to heightened insecurity in South-East Nigeria propelled by the separatist agitation and the resultant *Sit-At-Home order*, by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), a pro-Biafra group, journalists working in the zone have become targets of unknown gunmen, security forces and IPOB members. For safety, positive attitude towards adoption of the professional safety guidelines for journalists must be upheld, especially by female journalists.

Attacks on journalists is a worrisome phenomenon that is not restricted by gender. Both male and female journalists are equally targeted for their activities. However, in deference to gender, International Media Support (IMS) (2019: 7) reports that “women are subject to the same types of attacks as their male counterparts – killings, imprisonment, physical and psychological attacks, acts of intimidation, harassment, threats, surveillance, etc. – but violence against them is very often manifested in the form of sexual attacks”. IMS (2019) further states that female professional journalists are vulnerable to attacks not only from those trying to silence their coverage, but also, from sources and colleagues. According to Stahel (2019: 4), some journalists:

regularly receive large amounts of vulgar, pathologizing, inappropriately generalizing, disparaging, offensive, and threatening feedback against either them or their work. They are attacked through letters, face-to-face, and these days overwhelmingly online, such as on social networking sites, in emails, and in comment sections.

In consonance with Stahel (2019), Isola and Popoola (2015:3) note that, “there is an increasing record of killings, kidnappings and maltreatment of journalists, most especially in conflict zones”. Apart from the trouble they face in the hands of criminals. The scholars state that journalists “also suffer in the hands of hostile and overzealous security personnel and state military forces who perceive them more as an obstacle than partners during operations in tackling terrorism and other violent events” (Isola & Popoola, 2015:3).

A journalist’s role of searching and presenting information to the audience is supported by Article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR), which supports the right of every human being to hold opinion and to freedom of expression. The UNDHR Charter cited in *The Global Expression Report* (2021:16) explains the rights to include “freedom to hold opinion without any interference and to seek to receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”. In Nigeria, for instance, the 1999 Constitution in Section 39 places the responsibility of upholding “the accountability and responsibility of the government to the people”. Despite these legal frameworks, Isola and Popoola (2015: 19) citing Abati (1998) asserts that:

Nigerian Press has faced several challenges since 1960, but no challenges has been more of a problem than the menace of military rule and threats to the freedom of the press and the capacity of the press to fulfil its mission as the voice of the voiceless and defender of the oppressed...So serious is press censorship in Nigeria that between 1903 and 1998, there have been 29 anti-press legislations in the book. No other industry has been confronted with such a degree of official antagonism.

The Global Impunity Against Journalists’ Index, shows that Nigeria ranked 13th globally and 3rd in Africa after Somalia and South Sudan on impunity against the media (Committee to Protect Journalists, 2015). Also, Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index (2017) revealed that 368 journalists have been killed since 2012 while pursuing stories (Ibrahim & Spikin, 2021). According to Ibrahim and Spikin (2021: 3), the attack “on journalists deprive them their fundamental right to seek, receive and impart information without fear, favour and fear of consequences. It also denies them the right to freedom of expression as enshrined in various international and regional instruments”. Every society prescribes a measure of freedom for the press as an antidote for all forms of abuse, silencing and violence against journalists (Cram, 2007). Notwithstanding, the challenges facing the press cannot be altered if the standards of international human rights are not translated into effective public policies by governments.

In North-West, Nigeria under the threat of Boko Haram terrorism and religious restrictions for women, Hadiza and Binta (2021) observed that among female journalists in Kano State, greater part of the members had encountered dangers, assaults, disturbances, minimization, and segregation. Also, Asogwa (2018) conducted a study that aimed to describe the challenges confronting female journalists in Enugu State, South-East, Nigeria and concluded that women-journalists are confronted with safety and career related challenges, not because of their performance on the job, but because they are women.

A summary of attacks on journalists and media houses in 2020 reveals forty-eight (48) cases of attacks on journalists and eight (8) attacks on media outlets. Out of this number, 8 were in the South-East, 11 were in the South-West, 23 were in the South-South, 1 was in the North-West, 2 were in the North-Central, and 3 were in the

North-East. The nature of the attacks includes physical assault, abduction, battery, gunshot, harassment, threat to life, murder, suspension, robbery, and unlawful arrest/detention, etc., while injuries suffered include loss of valuables; psychological trauma; body injuries; damaged camera; gunshot injuries; loss of life; loss of official documents and phone destroyed; loss of job (IPC, 2021).

Preliminary investigations indicate that the kinds of hostilities and security risks some female journalists face in the South-East geopolitical zone include physical assault, seizure of equipment, arrest, sexual harassment, and intimidation, from criminal elements, members of the ESN enforcing *Sit-At-Home* in protest of the prosecution of the leader of the IPOB and over-zealous security personnel who believe that reports by journalists expose them to danger. However, these risks are not exclusive to women, as both male and female journalists in the South-East are confronted with the security challenges. Notwithstanding, this study focuses on women, because, scholars like Koirala (2020), Ogundoyin (2020), and Demos and Segal (2014) indicates that women as minority are most affected by threats and attacks. Women are considered as at-risk persons in environments under the threat of insecurity. It's a bigger challenge if the nature of work such women engage in, predispose them to danger or attack.

Professional safety practices as provided for in the *Journalist's Security Guide* are precautionary measures. Most of these frameworks and provisions for safety are universal declarations, therefore, their effectiveness in preventing crimes against journalists in Nigeria can only be guaranteed if professional journalists adhere to or exhibit positive attitude towards them. In view of the need for protection for female journalists working in a region like South-East Nigeria, currently under the threat of insecurity, this study examines the attitude and behaviour to the professional safety measures among female journalists covering this zone.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study is to examine attitude and behavior of female journalists in South East, Nigeria towards the professional safety measures for journalists. Specifically, the researchers examine the following:

1. To determine the opinion of female journalists in South-East Nigeria regarding UNECSO's safety guidelines.
2. To determine the safety behaviors journalists in South-East adopt when covering protests, especially, the *Sit-at-Home* order by IPOB.

Research Questions

1. What is the opinion of female journalists in South East Nigeria regarding UNECSO's safety guidelines?
2. What are the safety behaviors female journalists in South-East adopt when covering protests, especially, the *Sit-at-Home* order by the IPOB?

Research hypotheses

- H₀: The attitude of female journalists in South East Nigeria do not significantly influence their safety.
H_A: The attitude of female journalists in South East Nigeria significantly influences their safety.

Safety Challenges against Female Journalists

Safety, for female journalists, is the ability of journalists and media professionals to gather, produce and disseminate information without facing physical or moral threats. Around the globe, female journalists and media workers face offline and online attacks putting their safety at risk – these attacks can range from violence, stigmatization, sexism, hate speech, trolling, physical assault, rape to even murder. They are vulnerable to attacks not only from those attempting to silence their coverage, but also from sources, colleagues and others.

Regarding the attacks, some female journalists tend to leave the job in order to focus on the job of 'being a mother or wife'. In 1932, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) introduced an official marriage bar which impeded women's progress as they were obliged to resign from the corporation after marriage (Murphy, 2011 cited in Ogundoyin, 2020) whereas men still retained their jobs and positions. According to Franks' (2013) estimate, census figures in 1901 of the number of women journalists was 1, 249 which was around 9% of the total and by

1931, it rose to 3, 213, about 17%. In 1961, the proportion of female journalists was hardly 20% to their male counterparts. In other organizations, the fear that women journalists would leave work after their marriage made them not to employ women journalists in great numbers regardless of the fact that they do not have a formal marriage bar put in place in these organizations (Ogundoyin, 2020).

A 2014 global survey of nearly a thousand journalists, initiated by the International News Safety Institute (INSI) in partnership with the International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF) and with the support of UNESCO, found that nearly two-thirds of women who took part in the survey had experienced intimidation, threats or abuse in the workplace (Women in Journalism, n.d.). Chocarro (2019) explains that a study, entitled "Attacks and harassment – The impact on women journalists and their reporting," reveals that close to 70% of respondents indicated that being a woman was a contributing factor in the attacks.

In the period from 2012 through 2016, UNESCO's Director-General denounced the killing of 38 women journalists, representing 7 percent of all journalists killed ("Women in Journalism," n.d.). There are few journalists in the media industry, but, they still get killed in the line of duty. Perhaps, this is a case for the under-representation of women covering important beats like politics, conflict and crime. A report from The Coalition for Women in Journalism highlighted that during the first six months of 2019, women journalists were attacked every other day of the year. The report recorded 85 cases, where three women journalists were also killed (Women in Journalism, n.d.). It noted that 35 women journalists were in prisons around the world during the first six months of the year. Around 20% of all the cases that were documented had to do with online harassment (Women in Journalism, n.d.).

An analysis of more than two million tweets performed by the think tank, Demos found that women journalists experienced approximately three times as many abusive comments as their male counterparts on *Twitter* (Women in Journalism, n.d.). *The Guardian* analysed the 70 million comments recorded on its website between 1999 and 2016. Of these comments, approximately 1.4 million (approximately two per cent) were blocked for abusive or disruptive behaviour. Of the 10 staff journalists who received the highest levels of abuse and 'dismissive trolling', eight were women (Women in Journalism, n.d.). UN Women (2020), reported in a report published in 2018 by *Trollbusters* and the International Women's Media Foundation, that a survey conducted among 597 women journalists and media workers revealed that nearly two out of three respondents stated that they had been threatened or harassed online at least once. Among them, around 40 percent said they avoided reporting certain stories because of online harassment. Fifty-eight percent of the women journalists surveyed stated that they had already been threatened or harassed in person, while 26% indicated that they had been physically attacked.

The implication of attacks on journalists – male or female, is reduction in the number of journalists, inability to cover certain beats and the possibility of allowing evil to thrive unchallenged. Stahel and Schön (2020) observes that some female journalists regularly receive large amounts of vulgar, pathologizing, inappropriately generalizing, disparaging, offensive, and threatening feedback against either them or their work (called attacks in the following). They are attacked through letters, face-to-face, and these days overwhelmingly online, such as on social networking sites, in emails, and in comment sections. They further noticed that it is predominantly female journalists who report avoiding attacks by closing their social media accounts or stopping writing for the public, and, thus, self-selecting out of the public sphere.

Women's Action for the Safety of Female Journalists

When individuals are confronted with attacks and hate speech, whether offline or online, they cope with it by adapting their attitudes and behaviours (Leets, 2002 cited in Stahel & Schön, 2020). For sociologists, any differences reflect the positions that men and women occupy in broader social hierarchies. Social role theory, as explained by Eagly and Wood (2011) in Stahel and Schön (2020), states that differences in behaviour between women and men reflect gender role beliefs.

(i) The #MeToo Movement

In 2017, with the #MeToo Movement, a number of notable female journalists came forward to report sexual harassment in their workplaces. Harvey Weinstein, an American former film producer, was convicted of rape in 2017 (Corbett, 2020). While allegations against Weinstein had set off a global reckoning about workplace sexual

harassment and abuses in 2017, the legal case against him was a narrow one- centred on two women. In October 2017, *The New York Times* and *The New Yorker* reported that dozens of women had accused Harvey Weinstein of rape, sexual assault and sexual abuse over a period of at least thirty years. Over eighty women in the film industry eventually accused Weinstein of such acts. Weinstein denied getting involved in "any non-consensual sex" (Corbett, 2020). Shortly after, he was dismissed from The Weinstein Company (TWC), expelled from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and other professional associations, and retired from public view.

The trial inevitably took on a larger meaning and criminal investigations into complaints from at least six women took place in Los Angeles, New York City, and London. After the verdict was delivered, many of Weinstein's accusers reacted with relief and tears. Lawyers called it a risky, boundary-pushing prosecution that showed that the criminal justice system, which had often failed victims of sex crimes, could actually work (Corbett, 2020). In March 2020, he was sentenced to 23 years of imprisonment (Harvey Weinstein sexual abuse cases, n.d.). Women around the world declared it a victory for the #MeToo Movement, and for the power of speaking out.

Women of different nationalities, backgrounds, and race shared their stories of abuse and survival using the #MeToo hashtag and its variants. In 2018, women within the news media industry in India joined the movement and called out prominent editors, film makers, and artists on social media for perpetrating and abetting acts of sexual harassment and abuse against them. As an immediate result, several accused persons were made to resign from their organizations and dropped from prestigious public posts. However, a backlash to the movement followed soon after, most evidently in the form of victim-shaming and defamation lawsuits against women.

(ii) **The Coalition for Women in Journalism**

In 2018, a global support organization called The Coalition for Women in Journalism was formed to address the challenges women journalists face across different countries in the world. According to its founder, a Pakistani journalist, Kiran Nazish, "traditionally, women journalists have been doing it alone and they do need an infrastructure that helps guide them through their careers." She said in an interview, "the reason why women are not on the top is not because there aren't enough women or that they're not talented enough, it's purely that they need to help each other. That's why we were formed and that's why we would like to get as much support from everyone in the industry" (Women in Journalism, n.d.). According to Lauren Wolfe, an investigative journalist and the director of the Women's Media Centre's *Women Under Siege* programme, female journalists face particular risks over their male colleagues, and are more likely to experience online harassment or sexual assault on the job. According to a report released on 20 December 2017 by the Committee to Protect Journalists, in 2017, 42 journalists were killed because of their work worldwide, with 81 percent of those journalists, male. This was slightly lower than the historical average of 93 percent of men journalists killed annually for their work, with *The Intercept* hypothesizing that the drop was perhaps due to women being assigned more frequently to dangerous locales (Women in Journalism, n.d.).

A number of recent UN resolutions and reports show that there is growing recognition by the international community of the need to take into account the specific risks women journalists face both offline and online. UNESCO Director-General in her annual request to Member States regarding judicial follow-up of killings of journalists also inquires on specific actions taken by member States to address safety of women journalists. A summary of the reported measures can be found in the Director-General's Report on Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity.

UNESCO takes effective measures to tackle the issue of the safety of women journalists on three main levels:

- i. Practices in tackling online violence of women journalists;
- ii. Capacity building on safety of women journalists;
- iii. Awareness-raising on safety of women journalists.

Theoretical Framework: Attitude-Change Theory

This theory was developed from propaganda theories in the 1930s during World War II (Baran & Davis, 2012). The attitude- change theory explains that there are pre-existing attitudes, that are either biological or

psychological which have to be changed if selected messages or innovation must have any effect on the target. Again, it explains that these pre-existing attitudes are core and therefore stand as barriers to effective penetration of messages for desired change. Change in evaluations and perceptions of an individual's predispositions will take place if the required modification favours his expectations, if it is tied to someone he admires, or if it is bound to be beneficial to him (Wood, 2000; Author, 2019).

The theory explains three bases for attitude change, which include compliance, identification, and internalization. These three processes demonstrate the different levels of attitude change (Wood, 2000, cited in Author, 2019). Compliance refers to a change in behaviour based on consequences, such as an individual's hopes to gain rewards or avoid punishment from another group or person. The individual does not necessarily experience changes in beliefs or evaluation towards an object, but, he resorts to a change in behaviour due to the results he intends to get out of his adoption of a new cognition. There is also awareness that he or she is being urged to respond in a certain way perceived as positive (Wood, 2000, cited in Author, 2019).

Identification suggests that people change their opinions and actions in order to be similar to the one held by people s/he admires. In this case, the individual changes not because of what he intends to get from the attitude, but, because it is associated with an admired one. This seems like reinforcement theory where significant others have an influence in people's behavior (Author, 2019).

Internalization refers to adoption of an attitude due to the content of the perceived attitude. At this level of attitude change, the individual's evaluation towards a perceived attitude changes when he finds the content of the attitude to be intrinsically rewarding. The new attitude or behaviour is consistent with the individual's value system, and tends to be merged with the individual's existing values and beliefs. Therefore, behaviour towards some object is a function of an individual's intent, which is a function of one's overall attitude towards the action. The Expectancy-value theory is based on internalization of attitude change (Wood, 2000). The theory also identifies that existing attitudes or mental predispositions need to be changed or channelled to a particular cause through an intellectually and emotionally binding strategy (Baran & Davis, 2012; Author, 2019).

As regards the adoption of the safety guidelines for professional media workers among female media workers/ journalists, possible barriers to knowledge acquisition, positive attitude and practice of the safety measures may include psychological, emotional and physical factors. It is psychological when a female media worker/journalist finds it difficult to open up when threatened, sexually or physically attacked, due to shyness, stigmatization, cultural beliefs, intimidation etc. But, it is physical, when these persons do not have access to facilities for redress, or they neither have access to the safety guidelines nor sufficient knowledge of its provisions. Emotional factors arise, when the fear of the unknown prevents a female journalist from practicing the contents of the safety guideline. A typical example is the female journalists that resort to avoidance strategy in dealing with online threats (Stahel & Schön, 2020) rather than applying more professional measures in dealing with threats, attacks or sexual violence.

Methodology

The study adopted survey research method and questionnaire as research instrument. The reason is that the study involved a quantitative examination of the perception and practice of the target population. Given that this study centres on attitudes of professional safety measures by female journalists in South-East, Nigeria, survey research method was considered most appropriate. Female journalists in media organizations located in the five states that made up the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria constitutes the study population. The five states are Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States. Based on data from the National Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ), the population of the study is 440.

Table 1: Population of female journalists in South-East, Nigeria

S/N	States	Population
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1	Abia	50
2	Anambra	80
3	Ebonyi	88
4	Enugu	105
5	Imo	117
	Total	440

Source: NAWOJ Database (2021)

The entire population of women journalists is not too large nor unmanageable, hence, the researchers, involved all the 440 registered female journalists in the study area.

Through the aid of three research assistants, the research instrument was distributed in all the State. The questionnaire contained rating scales, that was used to weigh responses on questions that addressed each research question. The data was presented and analysed with tables, simple percentages and ANOVA.

Results

Response/Statistics		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Can't say	68	16.1	16.1	16.1
	Neutral	39	9.2	9.2	25.4
	Negative	38	9.0	9.0	34.4
	Positive	277	65.6	65.6	100.0
	Total	422	100.0	100.0	
Statistics:	Mean: 3.24				
	Std. Deviation: 1.157				

Source: *Researcher's computations from SPSS using the survey data (2022)*

According to the researcher's ratings, 68 of the 422 respondents (16.1%) had no opinion whatsoever regarding their attitude towards professional safety guidelines for journalists. 39 (9.2%) are neutral, 38 (9%) have negative attitude because they revealed through their responses that they do not consider the safety measures helpful even when aware of them, and 277 (66%) have positive attitude because the researcher could infer from their responses that they knew what constitutes safety measures and endeavour to apply them. The data in *Table 2* suggests that a combined 34% of the respondents do not have a positive attitude towards professional safety guidelines for female journalists in South-East, Nigeria. The researchers feel that, this is unacceptable because such female journalists might just be throwing caution to the wind. This negative trend must be reversed in order to safeguard female journalists in their professional assignment.

Professional safety measures when preparing to cover an event

In Item 24 of the Questionnaire, the respondents were supplied with seven points that describe general precautionary safety measures a female journalist could take when preparing to cover an event. They were to choose one answer from five options: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

Table 3: Precautionary safety measures a female journalist could take when preparing to cover an event

S/N	Precautionary safety measures a female journalist could take when preparing to cover an event	SA	A	U	D	SD	N	Mean	Rank	SD	Decision
I	Gather necessary facts about the	344	69	0	9	0	422	4.77	1 st	0.552	Accepted

	location before taking off.											
Ii	Do a risk assessment to determine the extent of risk involved.	80	286	56	0	0	422	4.06	5 th	0.566	Accepted	
Iii	In case of unknown or remote areas, I look for a trustworthy local guide or contact.	232	166	24	0	0	422	4.49	2 nd	0.604	Accepted	
Iv	To find out the kind of measures, I will have to observe at the location.	86	280	46	10	0	422	4.05	6 th	0.637	Accepted	
V	Ask myself if I'm physically and mentally ready for the assignment.	205	175	42	0	0	422	4.39	3 rd	0.661	Accepted	
Vi	Prepare a first-aid kit.	38	153	169	33	29	422	3.33	7 th	0.986	Accepted	
Vii	Check whether the information needed is worth taking the risks involved.	226	116	59	21	0	422	4.30	4 th	0.888	Accepted	
	Grand mean (29.39 ÷ 7)							4.20				

Source: Researcher's computations from SPSS using the survey data (2022)

As shown in *Table 3*, all the points listed each have a weighted mean value greater than the theoretical mean of 3.0. As a result, all are admitted as precautionary safety measures a female journalist could take when preparing to cover an event. However, the items have varied degrees of importance according to the data analysed. A new column was therefore provided for the ranking based on the mean values. Item (i) ranks first with the highest mean value (4.77). This means that the respondents mostly recommend that the first thing to do is to gather necessary facts about the location before taking off. This makes a whole lot of sense. Item (iii) ranks second with mean value of 4.49, Item (v) ranks third with mean value of 4.39, Item (vii) ranks fourth with mean value of 4.3, Item (ii) ranks fifth with mean value of 4.06, Item (iv) ranks sixth with a mean value of 4.05, and Item (vi) ranks seventh with the least mean value (3.33). This means that the respondents least recommends bringing a first-aid kit along while preparing to cover an event. Of course, the nature of the event would naturally come to bear. No journalist going to cover a war would want to leave a first aid kit behind.

Steps journalists would take when covering high risk events

In Item 25 of the Questionnaire, the respondents were supplied with eight points that outline specific steps/precautions a journalist would want to take when covering high risk events such as war, ethno-religious crisis, or communal clash. They were to choose one answer from five options: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The analysis is presented below.

Table 4: Steps/precautions a journalist would want to take when covering high risk events

S/N	Steps/precautions a journalist would want to take when covering high risk events	SA	A	U	D	SD	N	Mean	Rank	SD	Decision
I	Delete/avoid pictures, messages, videos, or contents that can implicate me.	247	115	41	19	0	422	4.40	3 rd	0.840	Accepted
Ii	Install digital safety tools and learn how to use them.	188	171	54	9	0	422	4.27	6 th	0.765	Accepted
Iii	Get a letter of assignment from the editor.	224	165	10	23	0	422	4.40	3 rd	0.785	Accepted
Iv	Avoid anything in camouflage print and knives to prevent	194	166	48	14	0	422	4.28	5 th	0.793	Accepted

	mistake identity.											
V	Study road maps and landmarks.	150	187	69	16	0	422	4.12	7 th	0.812	Accepted	
Vi	Carry extra cash in case of emergency.	234	156	18	5	9	422	4.42	2 nd	0.811	Accepted	
Vii	Memorise phone number of a partner or colleague.	247	148	27	0	0	422	4.52	1 st	0.615	Accepted	
Viii	I carry tear gas repellent or a ball of onion.	78	143	72	106	23	422	3.35	8 th	1.196	Accepted	
Grand mean (33.76 ÷ 8)								4.22				

Source: Researcher's computations from SPSS using the survey data (2022)

As shown in *Table 4*, all the points listed each have a weighted mean value greater than the theoretical mean of 3.0. On this account, all are admitted as steps/precautions a journalist would want to take when covering high risk events such as war, ethno-religious crisis, communal clash, etc. The relative importance of each point is reflected in the rank column. We can see that Item (vii) ranks first with the highest mean value of 4.52. This means that the respondents highly recommended the precaution in that point: Memorise phone number of a partner or colleague. This is very important indeed. Sometimes the journalist's phone may go off or other situations may warrant reaching out to someone through another person's phone or using a public phone booth altogether. Item (vi) ranks second with mean value of 4.42. Items (i) and (iii) jointly rank third with mean values of 4.40, we therefore skipped fourth position. Item (iv) ranks fifth with a mean value of 4.28. Item (ii) ranks sixth with a mean value of 4.27. Item (v) ranks seventh with a mean value of 4.12, and Item (viii) ranks eight with the least mean value (3.35). The last ranking means that the respondents least recommends carrying tear gas repellent or a ball of onion as a precautionary measure.

Safety behaviour when covering a demonstration/protest

In Item 26 of the Questionnaire, the respondents were presented with four points that represent aspects of expected safety behaviour a journalist should observe when covering protests like the *Sit-At-Home* order by the IPOB. They were to choose one answer from five options: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The analysis is presented below.

Table 5: Safety behaviour a journalist should observe when covering protests, like the Sit –at- Home by IPOB and others

S/N	Safety behaviour a journalist should observe when covering protests like the Sit-at-Home by IPOB and others	SA	A	U	D	SD	N	Mean	Rank	SD	Decision
I	I identify myself to the police before the protest starts.	245	119	21	37	0	422	4.36	2 nd	0.926	Accepted
Ii	I identify with other journalists on ground and work in a group, so that we can look out for each other when things escalate.	267	144	0	0	11	422	4.55	1 st	0.749	Accepted
Iii	While the atmosphere is still calm, I introduce myself to the protest leaders and ask them about their demands.	167	191	44	14	6	422	4.18	4 th	0.854	Accepted
Iv	Try to anticipate the movement of the crowd by watching the eyes and gestures of the demonstrators	160	196	60	0	6	422	4.19	3 rd	0.783	Accepted

Grand mean (17.28 ÷ 4)

4.32

Source: Researcher's computations from SPSS using the survey data (2022)

As shown in *Table 5*, all the points listed each have a weighted mean value greater than the reference mean of 3.0. For this reason, all are admitted as safety behaviour a journalist should observe when covering a demonstration/protest. The points have been ranked to show their relative importance with respect to their mean values. Item (ii) ranks first with the highest mean value of 4.55. This means that the respondents are highly of the opinion that a journalist who intends to cover a demonstration/protest should endeavour to identify with other journalist on ground and work in group so that members can look out for each other should things escalate. Item (i) ranks second with mean value of 4.36. This point says that it is important that the journalist identifies themselves with the police on ground at the scene, and this should be done *before* the protest starts. Item (iv) ranks third with mean value of 4.19. This item suggests that the journalist should try to anticipate the movement of the crowd by reading the body language of the demonstrator. Lastly, Item (iii) ranks fourth with mean value of 4.18. Here, it was suggested that while the atmosphere is still calm, the journalist should introduce himself to the protest leaders and ascertain what their demands were.

Safety behaviour when covering a dangerous event

The respondents were supplied with nine points that represent aspects of expected safety behaviour a journalist should observe when covering a dangerous event. They were to choose one answer from five options: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The analysis is presented below.

Table 6: Safety behaviour a journalist should observe when covering a dangerous event

S/N	Safety behaviour a journalist should observe when covering a dangerous event	SA	A	U	D	SD	N	Mean	Rank	SD	Decision
I	I appear humble and respectful.	298	113	0	0	11	422	4.63	2 nd	0.740	Accepted
Ii	I mind my language.	300	110	3	0	9	422	4.64	1 st	0.708	Accepted
Iii	I anticipate danger in order not to be caught unprepared.	163	220	31	0	8	422	4.26	5 th	0.752	Accepted
Iv	I dress according to local custom in order not to appear like a stranger.	186	178	46	3	9	422	4.25	7 th	0.841	Accepted
V	I don't follow a routine as regards time, places, and routes.	108	119	78	102	15	422	3.48	9 th	1.209	Accepted
Vi	I agree on a secret signal with the driver.	130	179	76	37	0	422	3.95	8 th	0.916	Accepted
Vii	I don't move around at night	163	216	32	11	0	422	4.26	5 th	0.708	Accepted
Viii	I try to look as if I know the environment very well.	155	236	25	6	0	422	4.28	4 th	0.637	Accepted
Ix	Constantly brief my colleagues or the editor about the situation on ground.	253	129	29	11	0	422	4.48	3 rd	0.738	Accepted
Grand mean (38.23 ÷ 9)								4.25			

Source: Researcher's computations from SPSS using the survey data (2022)

As shown in *Table 6*, all the points listed each have a weighted mean value greater than the reference mean of 3.0. For this reason, all are admitted as safety behaviour a journalist should observe when covering a dangerous event. The points have been ranked to show their relative importance judging from their mean values. Item (ii) ranks

first with the highest mean value of 4.64. This means that the respondents highly recommended the precaution that a journalist should mind his language when covering a dangerous event. This means they should be selective in their choice of words in their reportage so as not to appear to be taking sides. This is considered top on the list by the respondents. Item (i) ranks second with mean value of 4.63. This point says that it is important that the journalist appears humble and respectful, they should be professional. Item (ix) ranks third with mean value of 4.48, and says the journalist should constantly brief colleagues or the editor about the situation on ground. Item (viii) ranks fourth with mean value of 4.28; Items (iii) and (vii) jointly rank fifth with mean values of 4.26, we therefore skipped sixth position. Item (iv) ranks seventh with a mean value of 4.25. Item (vi) ranks eighth with a mean value of 3.95. Item (v) ranks ninth with a mean value of 3.48. This means that the respondents felt that not following a routine with regard to time, places, and routes is important, but not as core as the other eight points in the table under consideration.

❖ **Result of Hypothesis**

Questionnaire Items 15 and 23 in Section B specifically address the research hypothesis. Item 15 bothers on safety at work and Item 23 is the rating of the respondent’s attitude towards the professional safety guidelines. The mean responses of these couple of items were combined together in a one-way ANOVA framework to determine the F-statistics for testing the significance of the Item. The computations were done using SPSS 20 and the result is presented below.

Table 7: ANOVA for Research Hypothesis

Respondents' attitude towards the professional safety guidelines					
Source of variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	42.069	2	21.035	16.907	.000
Within Groups	521.277	419	1.244		
Total	563.346	421			

Source: Researcher's computations from SPSS 20 based on the survey data (2022)

The result in Table 7 shows that the F-statistic obtained from the analysis is significant at the 5% level because its p-value is less than 0.05. Following the stated decision rule, we therefore reject the null hypothesis under review and conclude that the attitude of female journalists in South East Nigeria significantly influences their safety. This means that a positive attitude would enhance safety whereas a negative attitude would inhibit safety.

Discussion of Results

The study finds that the attitude of female journalists in South East Nigeria significantly influences their safety. Regarding the attitude of female journalists in South East towards their safety on-the-job, the study finds that about 66% of the surveyed group had a positive attitude whereas 34% had unwelcome attitude towards safety with 9% having a negative attitude outright.

The study had examined the attitude of female journalists in the study area to safety in three core areas: to avoid sexual harassment, when facing violence or attempted rape, and when facing kidnap/captivity. In the first point, the study finds that the respondents recognize the need for steps to avoid sexual harassment altogether. For example, the attitude that ranks first among the six discussed under Item 23 of the questionnaire was wearing of comfortable shoes that would enable them to run away from the scene if possible. The second most recommended attitude was that the female journalist should not get into a vehicle with a stranger. But the least recommended was carrying whistle or deodorant to be sprayed into the eyes of the attacker. Indeed, this last point is very uncommon in the area of the study. In the second point, the study finds that the most recommended cover for a female journalist facing sexual attack or attempted rape was for the female journalist who is the victim to tell the attacker that she has kids/could be his mother/sister to which about 80% of the respondents agreed at least. Next to this, was that the potential victim should tell the attacker that she had HIV/AIDS to which 65% at least agree. The third coy was to

tell the attacker that she was menstruating to which 56% agreed at least; but the least recommended behaviour was the potential victim appealing to the attacker to use protection because she had sexually transmitted disease/infection, to which about 55% agreed.

In the third point – when facing kidnap/captivity – the respondents recommended that the best attitude would be to avoid provoking the abductors/captors deliberately to which more than 92% agreed at least. Secondly, the victim was to make calculated attempts to escape and only attempt it when the circumstances are right, to which 84% agreed at least. Third it was recommended that the female journalist who is the victim should appear calm to which 79% agreed; similarly, 76% agreed that the victim should retain her instincts as a journalist since she may need to tell the story later. The least two recommended attitude were to negotiate with the abductors/captors (68% agreed to this) and not to try to escape at all (62% agreed to this). Of course, circumstances vary so the victim's peculiarities would to a great extent influence their specific actions. However, maintain a positive attitude overall is important for the safety of the female journalist.

Conclusion

Based on the results, the researchers conclude that female journalists in the study area have high knowledge of safety and precautionary measures for covering risky situations and environments. Majority of them, also exhibit positive attitude towards adherence to the safety measures. The researchers, based on the hypothesis also conclude that the attitude of female journalists in South East Nigeria significantly influences their safety. In other words, the extent of adherence to the safety protocols, is significantly proportional to the extent safety is guaranteed. This means that a positive attitude would enhance safety whereas a negative attitude would inhibit safety. Hence, to prevent harassment, assault, rape, abduction and killing of female journalists, the contents of the safety guidelines should be strictly followed, except where situation warrants otherwise.

Recommendations

Female journalists in South-East need to imbibe more positive attitude towards the professional safety guidelines by strongly resorting to them to prevent/avert sexually related attacks or physical attacks such as kidnap or actual captivity. It is strongly recommended that they retain their strong instincts as journalists under such conditions in order to brave the situation as they may need to encourage others with their experience later on.

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