

# Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice towards Media Campaigns against Gender-Based Violence among Adults in Southwest Nigeria

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## Abstract

This study investigated the level of knowledge, attitudes and practice towards media campaigns against gender-based violence among adults in Southwest Nigeria. The researcher used a mixed methods approach comprising a survey and key informant interview. The researcher used a mixed methods approach consisting of a survey and key informant interviews to gain quantitative and qualitative insight into the study. The study findings showed that media campaigns have been effective in raising awareness about GBV, with a significant positive relationship between exposure to media campaigns and perceived awareness ( $r=0.741$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), knowledge ( $r=0.812$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), and attitudes ( $r=0.856$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) towards GBV. The findings from qualitative data confirmed quantitative data by highlighting the importance of opinion leaders and community-based initiatives in disseminating information and promoting attitude change. The study thus concluded that media campaigns effectively create awareness about GBV. Hence, the study recommended a multichannel approach to campaigns using traditional and digital media to reach a wider audience. Therefore, more opinion leaders should be engaged in interpreting and disseminating information on GBV to their social networks. There is also a need to increase support services such as counselling, legal aid and shelter for victims and complainants.

**Keywords:** Adults, Attitudes, Gender-Based Violence, Knowledge, Media Campaigns.

## Introduction

Gender-based Violence (GBV) is an ingrained violation of human rights that results from the unequal power dynamics between men and women, according to the UN. To prevent women's advancement and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) on gender equality is a means of discriminating against and controlling them (1). GBV remains a pervasive and multifaceted issue globally, affecting millions of individuals, particularly women and girls, across various societies and cultures. In Nigeria, like many other countries, GBV manifests in diverse forms, including physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence, often perpetrated against women due to entrenched societal norms and power imbalances. Many factors, including culture, religion, and the media, contribute to the

widespread abusive phenomenon of violence against women (2-4). Indeed, it stands in the way of achieving the fifth Sustainable Development Goal of the United Nations, which is to eliminate all obstacles to gender equality (5). Before the age of 15, gender-based violence affects one in three women (3). There is a noticeable rise in violence against women in developing nations, even though developed nations have social, legal, and operational mechanisms to combat gender-based violence (2, 6). Numerous studies demonstrate that in certain sub-Saharan African nations, some culture considers child marriage as a right, while rape goes unreported because men use the girl child as a sex object (4, 7). Violence against women is deeply ingrained in many cultural and traditional values, either hidden or implicitly

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(Received 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025; Accepted 24<sup>th</sup> July 2025; Published 31<sup>st</sup> July 2025)

accepted in a society where men exhibit their masculine dominance and superiority over women, particularly the rural women who experience various forms of violence in their daily lives in forms of beating and abuse (8-10). The most common violation of human rights is gender-based violence against women (11). The mistreatment of women stems from gender inequality and the position of women in society in comparison to men (9). Media campaigns have emerged as vital tools in combating GBV, aiming to raise awareness, challenge societal norms, and empower individuals to recognise and respond to violence effectively. These campaigns utilise various communication channels, such as radio, social media, television, and community outreach programmes, to disseminate information, advocate for policy change, and provide support services to survivors. Every year, just like the Global community, Osun State celebrates 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence with the theme "Invest to Prevent Violence against Women and Children" as part of its media campaigns. The International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, November 25, marks the start of the 16 Days Activism campaign against gender-based violence, which ends on December 10, Human Rights Day. Media outlets use the #HearMeToo campaign as a global advocacy tool to highlight the prevalence of domestic violence worldwide (6, 12). Research indicates, for example, that women in sub-Saharan Africa do not report domestic violence because they see it as unacceptable, and they also believe divorce is taboo (13-15). Therefore, it is necessary to supplement current research and concentrate on how women react to communication interventions about violence against women, concerning claims that women do not take sufficient action to prevent such violence (16). However, the effectiveness of these campaigns depends significantly on the knowledge and attitudes of their target audience, particularly women, who are disproportionately affected by GBV. This research seeks to explore the knowledge, attitudes and practices towards media campaigns against gender-based violence among adults in Southwest Nigeria in terms of their understanding of, attitudes to and the practices they are engaged in to combat GBV. It also looks at factors influencing GBV (e.g. cultural factors, media

exposure level, personal experiences, assessment and responses of adults) to these campaigns. It contributes to Nigeria's growing literature on gender-based violence prevention and intervention strategies. Gender-based violence is a pervasive issue in many parts of the world, including Nigeria, where it poses significant social, economic, and health challenges. In Southwest Nigeria, despite various media campaigns aimed at addressing and reducing gender-based violence, the prevalence remains alarmingly high. While media campaigns have been used as a strategy to overcome gender-based violence in the region, there remains a gap in understanding the effectiveness of these campaigns in raising awareness, changing attitudes, and ultimately reducing the prevalence of Gender-Based Violence (17). GBV affects the growth of the person mentally, psychologically, and physically and has a trickle-down effect on the effectiveness of the victim to take part in national economic development. There is no comprehensive study on the specific levels of knowledge of, attitudes to and the behavioural change of adults towards gender-based Violence in Southwest Nigeria regarding various forms of gender-based Violence (17). The media can set agendas as an institution. By the way, it presents its stories; it can portray issues as important, unimportant, or unworthy of attention. The media has long been recognised for its important role in educating the public and decision-makers in this regard. To put it simply, the way the media portrays gender-based violence can influence how much weight the public and decision-makers give the problem and how efforts are mobilised to find solutions. Campaigns to raise awareness of gender issues significantly impact gender knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours. The effectiveness of the numerous media campaigns launched to raise awareness of the risks and a consequence of gender-based violence is a matter of debate. It is, therefore, essential to confirm the effectiveness of these campaigns on adults' level of knowledge of gender-based violence and its effects on attitudes and changes in practices towards it. As a result of this gap, this study aims to ascertain the level of knowledge, attitudes and practices towards media campaigns against gender-based violence among adults in Southwest Nigeria. The research objectives for this study are to: identify the GBV Media Campaign strategies in Southwest

Nigeria, explore the level of awareness of GBV Media Campaigns among adults in Southwest Nigeria, assess the perceived knowledge of media campaigns on gender-based violence among adults in Southwest Nigeria, investigate the perceived attitude towards GBV media campaigns among adults in Southwest Nigeria and evaluate the perceived post-exposure practices to GBV media campaigns among adults in Southwest Nigeria. Based on the research objectives, the research questions are: what are the GBV media campaign strategies in Southwest Nigeria? What is the level of awareness of GBV media campaigns among adults in Southwest Nigeria? What is the perceived knowledge of media campaigns on gender-based violence among adults in Southwest Nigeria? What is the perceived attitude towards GBV media campaigns among adults in Southwest Nigeria? What are the perceived post-exposure practices to GBV media campaigns among adults in Southwest Nigeria?

The research hypotheses formulated for the study are:

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between higher levels of knowledge about gender-based violence and its association with more positive attitudes towards media campaigns against gender-based Violence in Southwest Nigeria.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between adults' positive attitudes towards media campaigns and their engagement in practices that support the reduction of gender-based Violence

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between the frequency of exposure to media campaigns and the level of knowledge of, attitudes to and practices regarding gender-based violence among adults in Southwest Nigeria.

While everyone's experience of violence is different, it is evident that violence is a severe and pervasive issue in Nigeria, where there is little public discourse on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex (LGBTI) rights and little space for LGBTI people. In Nigeria, the LGBTI community is stigmatised and criminalised, and if they are identified, they may be arrested or subject to violence (18). Sexual and gender-based violence against women, gay men, lesbians, transgender people, intersex people, girls, and boys occurs globally based on, for instance, their clothing. Although the violence and discrimination LGBTI people experience will not be discussed in this

dissertation, it is important to recognise their existence. Thus, the main goal of this dissertation is to investigate women's attitudes and knowledge regarding media campaigns of gender-based violence as it affects women and girls. The problem of violence against women cannot be fully solved or ended by responsible media coverage, but it can play a significant role in encouraging public action and increased participation in preventative initiatives. As a means of generating knowledge informed by professional, ethical values and the newsgathering process, journalism can raise awareness of issues like gender-based violence (19). GBV is a specialised topic requiring expertise from journalists to be covered effectively. The media are important social institutions necessary for daily life and culture. News stories are essential to human nature and a fundamental component of social identity (20). To express the everyday events of society, journalists weave stories with structure, order, perspective, and values. The goal of journalism is to deliver news and information to citizens. Using educational content and even other stories of human interest, Nigeria's mass media has played a crucial role in the fight against GBV, inspiring many people, particularly women, to adopt awareness-raising and prevention tactics. When it comes to opposing gender-based violence, the print media plays a crucial role in society is crucial. One of the responsibilities is raising awareness of issues, in this case, related to gender-based violence in society. Readers are also kept informed about current events by the media. Reflecting public opinion on general issues is another function of print media, primarily through letters to the editor. Readers can find out how they feel about GBV-related issues and how the government may address them. In addition to being a vital instrument for education, mobilisation and sensitisation, the media can help us view the world from a broader economic and mental perspective by disseminating information (21). The media's ability to set public agendas, assist neighbourhood projects, draw attention to problems, and spread clear information gives it power (22). The information that the media makes available to the public is advantageous. They gain knowledge of important information that impacts them, such as laws, policies, programs, innovations, and trends. Mass media campaigns, which have been used primarily to promote public

issues over the years, have greatly helped to expose a sizable portion of the public to messages through the use of social media and traditional media like radio, television, and newspapers (23). People's fundamental human rights are taught and informed by the media, which does this by highlighting how these rights are spelt out in different constitutions and laws to keep people safe and informed (24). Social media is a platform that breaks stories as they unfold while also being recognised by several researchers as an effective tool for research, a tool for social change and domestic violence interventions (25, 26). Social media platforms have become influential purveyors of human rights activism, encouraging people to fight against injustice and increasing freedom of speech and expression (27). Many activists use social media platforms to publicise human rights issues, monitor and document violations, draw attention to human rights laws, and communicate human rights messages to elicit public response and change (28). As campaign messages on gender-based human rights laws are on various social media platforms, people learn about their human rights and laws that protect them from abuse of such rights. This way, social media helps in defending and protecting human rights. Nigeria's mass media campaign on gender-based violence seeks to inform and inspire communities by delivering correct information, enabling people to recognise the root causes, and offering remedies for violations of human rights. Direct exposure to compelling campaign messaging by the audience is how an effective campaign shapes behaviour. Advocacy organisations should employ more realistic and helpful communication channels tailored to each rural area, such as using indigenous languages to create songs, plays, and proverbs that express the effects of domestic violence against women in their communities, according to a study on domestic violence against women in the Nigerian rural context (13). In a survey on a critical analysis of the mass media and gender-based violence in Imo State, Nigeria, it was found that 44% of the population was exposed to media reports and programs on gender-based violence. At a mean average of 3.5 (N=379), the analysis also revealed residents' knowledge of Gender-Based Violence (17). In the study, media reports and programmes successfully changed respondents' attitudes and

perceptions of gender-based violence to one of positivity, with an average mean score of 3.5 (N=379). This is because respondents see gender-based violence as a threat to families, society, and the country. The study found that sufficient awareness campaigns, educational programs, and media programs/reports were necessary to achieve perceptual and attitude change.

In another study on the perception of the influence of television broadcasts in the campaign against discrimination and violence among women, it was discovered that women's awareness of the campaign against violence and discrimination is low at 50% based on their exposure to television broadcasts, and 46.1% of them believe that the campaign's television broadcasts are inadequate. Essentially, the results showed that women's participation in the campaign against violence and discrimination is not significantly impacted by television broadcast exposure (29). Contrary to what the media had suggested, the problem of domestic violence against women in Ebonyi State did not receive the attention it merited in the centre spread. Additionally, there was little in-depth reporting, and most of the reports were simply news articles that did not provide the necessary interpretations (30). Through more fantastical depictions of the threat, the study suggests that gender issues and gender violence receive more media attention. In countering violence against women by encouraging disclosure, a significant increase in women's eagerness to disclose to authorities and a decrease in the percentage of women who experienced abuse has been the latest development (31).

The study relies on agenda-setting theories of mass communication, social learning theory, and two-step flow theory as drivers. The influence of media agenda on public agenda is known as the agenda-setting theory. In agenda-setting theory, the public agenda—the issues that are significant to the general public—is closely tied to the media agenda or the subjects that are significant to the media. The agenda-setting theory states that the media can persuade the public that the chosen contemporary issues are essential. The theory emphasises how social media and mass media significantly influence how people think and shape public opinion (32). Applying this theory to the current study, the way that domestic violence is portrayed in the media needs to guide public

opinion and action. Let us assume that the media presents an opposing view of the cultures in certain societies that encourage the perpetration of domestic violence against women. In that case, these analyses need to affect people and perhaps alter the pace at which domestic violence is prevalent in society. According to proponents of the social learning theory, social behaviour influences observational learning, modelling, and imitation (33). This theory is predicated on the notion that we pick up knowledge through social interactions. Separately, people adopt similar behaviours after witnessing those of others. When people see how others behave, they absorb and mimic that behaviour, especially if their observational experiences are positive or involve rewards associated with the behaviour they saw. According to Bandura, imitation is the actual replication of observed motor actions (34). Social learning theorists contend that since people can learn by observation alone, their knowledge may not always be demonstrated in their performance, in contrast to behaviourists who believe that lasting behaviour change must show learning (35). The two-step flow communication theory is about opinion leaders and their social impact. More than it forecasts the degree of influence; it explains how opinion leaders have a significant impact. The theory states that compared to non-leaders, opinion leaders are typically exposed to more news media content related to their leadership. They are more likely to use national news outlets. They are more socially connected (friends, organisations) and have a higher socioeconomic status (36). Since the influencers, such as religious leaders and community leaders, have greatly influenced men's and women's knowledge and attitudes regarding gender-based violence by supporting, changing, or contesting the messages conveyed in the campaigns, this theory is pertinent to the study. Also, by leveraging this theory, the media campaign designers will be able to engage opinion leaders to amplify the reach and impact of anti-GBV messages; this will enhance the overall effectiveness of campaigns because the messages are endorsed and spread by trusted figures.

## Methodology

The study used survey designs and in-depth interviews to adopt the concurrent mixed-methods design. The justification for adopting both

survey designs and in-depth interviews for this study is premised on having a comprehensive understanding as well as providing depth and context to understand the nuances and complexities of attitudes and practices to determine adults' knowledge of media campaigns, their attitude towards it and practices to employ in the fight against gender-based violence in the present Nigerian state. For this study, the methods used are a survey to gather quantitative data and an in-depth interview to collect qualitative data. Since the study adopts two methods, there are two categories of the population. The first population for this study focuses on the total number of adults in the south-western part of Nigeria. The researchers purposively selected six south-western states for investigation. These states include Osun, Oyo, and Lagos. The justification for choosing these states is premised on their socioeconomic profiles, cultural richness, political and religious status, research accessibility, data availability, and population contributions to Nigeria.

Since the study uses two methods, the population is obtained by adding the population of each of these states, which the National Population Census puts at 18,831,824. The population for the in-depth interview included five interviewees of diverse age groups, socioeconomic backgrounds, educational levels, and cultural identities to ensure representation across various demographic categories. For the survey, the sample size for this study is a total of 400 respondents who were selected from Osun, Oyo and Lagos States. This sample size calculation uses the Taro Yamane Formula:

Which is:  $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$

Where: n = Sample Size [400]

N= Population [18,831,824]

1= Constant [1]

e= Tolerable Error [ 0.005<sup>2</sup>]

For the In-depth Interview, a purposive sampling technique will be used to pick five respondents three GBV survivors, a Director from the Ministry of Justice and one Director from the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Affairs in the three states under review. This research employs the multistage sampling technique for the survey due to the nature of the population. Multistage sampling requires a combination of two or more sampling methods, a mixture of probability and



non-probability sampling techniques or the two used in selecting a representative sample. To this end, the non-probability sampling technique is used to choose the sample size from a total population of 18,831,824 Osun, Oyo, and Lagos State residents, while the researchers used an interview guide for the in-depth interview to gather narrative data and generate responses from stakeholders of the GBV movement for analysis. A pilot study was conducted on 50 respondents, over 10 % of the population. A construct is reliable if the

Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) value is more significant than .70. Reliability results show that construct reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. The results revealed that Cronbach's Alpha value for the 31 items was ( $\alpha=.852$ ) while Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardised Items showed ( $\alpha=.833$ ). This was found reliable because the construct was more significant than .70.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data, including frequency, percentages, mean, and standard deviation.

## Results

**Table 1:** Respondents' Exposure to the GBV Campaign

Exposed to the GBV campaign	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	394	100%
No	0	0
Total	394	100%

**Table 2:** Types of GBV Addressed In Media Campaign

Type of GBV addressed	Frequency	Percentage
domestic violence	140	35.5%
rape	81	20.5%
human trafficking	60	15.2%
FGM	30	7.6%
child marriage	44	11.2%
Total	394	100%

The Table 1 above reveals that all respondents have been exposed to GBV campaigns. This implies an increased awareness of GBV among respondents.

The Table 2 reveals that domestic violence 35.5% is the leading Type of GBV addressed in media

campaigns among respondents, rape 20.5%, human trafficking 15.2%, FGM 7.6% and child marriage 11.2%. This finding implies that domestic violence and rape are the most commonly addressed types of GBV in media campaigns.

**Table 3:** Perceived Knowledge of Media Campaigns on Gender-Based Violence

Statements	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
GBV includes physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse	394	1.00	5.00	4.71	0.62
Anyone can be a victim of GBV regardless of their gender, age, or socio-economic status	394	1.00	5.00	4.91	0.46
Domestic violence is a common form of GBV that occurs within the home	394	1.00	5.00	4.83	0.54
Sexual harassment and assault are forms of GBV which can happen in workplaces, schools, and public spaces	394	1.00	5.00	4.94	0.38
Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a harmful practice that constitutes GBV	394	1.00	5.00	4.85	0.50
Child marriage is considered a form of GBV because it often leads to	394	1.00	5.00	4.78	0.58

physical, sexual, and emotional harm to the child

Scorning, defaming, hurting, humiliating or intimidating variants of violence against women if committed by intimate partners	394	1.00	5.00	4.82	0.54
Being forced to have sexual intercourse by an intimate partner is a form of gender violence	394	1.00	5.00	4.95	0.36
Occasional shoving and slapping are forms of gender violence when committed against women by their intimate partners	394	1.00	5.00	4.87	0.48
I believe that men can be emotionally abused by their partners	394	1.00	5.00	4.74	0.63

The Table 3 above shows the perceived knowledge of media campaigns on gender-based violence on a five-point scale (5=strongly agree, 3= neither agree nor disagree, 1= strongly disagree). Statement one states that GBV includes physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse (M =4.71, S.D = 0.62). Statement two states that anyone can be a victim of GBV regardless of their gender, age, or socioeconomic status (M =4.91, S.D = 0.46). Statement three states that domestic violence is a common form of GBV that occurs within the home (M =4.83, S.D = 0.54).

Statements from the four states that sexual harassment and assault are forms of GBV which happen in workplaces, schools and public spaces (M =4.94, S.D = 0.38). Statement five states that

FGM is a harmful practice that constitutes GBV (M =4.85, S.D = 0.50). Statement from the shows six states that Child marriage is considered a form of GBV because it often leads to physical, sexual, and emotional harm to the child (M =4.78, S.D = 0.58). According to another statement, intimate partners may engage in forms of violence against women that include scorning, defamation, hurting, humiliation, or intimidation (M =4.82, S.D = 0.54). Gender violence includes coercion into having sex by an intimate partner (M = 4.95, S.D = 0.36). Intimate partner violence against women includes occasional shoving and slapping (M = 4.87, S.D = 0.48). According to the final statement, they think that men can experience emotional abuse at the hands of their partners (M = 4.74, S.D = 0.63).

**Table 4:** Perceived Attitude of GBV

Statements	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Some media GBV campaigns sometimes overstress the issue of GBV unnecessarily	394	1.00	5.00	3.41	1.11
Media campaigns on violence against women seem to me to be over-protecting women to the neglect of men	394	1.00	5.00	2.82	1.31
I will not report sexual abuse if it happened to me for fear of stigmatization	394	1.00	5.00	2.21	1.42
I am aware of human rights laws in Nigeria aimed at protecting individuals from GBV, they are ineffective	394	1.00	5.00	3.11	1.20
I believe perpetrators are more protected by the law than the victims	394	1.00	5.00	2.51	1.31

of GBV because of the corrupt system in Nigeria					
Victims of GBV are partly to blame for the abuse they suffer	394	1.00	5.00	1.80	1.14
There is nothing wrong when a partner occasionally slaps his partner who is rude	394	1.00	5.00	2.16	1.25
Even though there are local and international laws they are not effective	394	1.00	5.00	3.31	1.17
Media campaigns against GBV are important but not the way to eradicate GBV	394	1.00	5.00	4.51	0.81
Media campaigns do not portray GBV victims positively	394	1.00	5.00	3.81	1.01
Using celebrities who are victims of GBV in media campaigns can help victims take desired action	394			4.21	0.98
Spouse battery and slapping are forms of discipline, not GBV	394			2.41	1.31
Support services for GBV victims are inadequate in my community, so helping them is usually pointless as the perpetrators can target me	394			3.61	1.11

The above Table 4 shows the respondents' perceived attitude toward GBV. Some Media GBV campaigns sometimes overstress GBV (M =3.41, S.D = 1.11). Media campaigns on violence against women seem to be overprotecting women to the neglect of men (M =2.82, S.D = 1.31). The respondent claims not to report sexual abuse if it happens for fear of stigmatisation (M =2.21, S.D = 1.42). There is awareness of human rights laws in Nigeria that protect individuals from GBV. They are ineffective (M =3.11, S.D = 1.20). Respondents believe perpetrators are protected by law (M

=2.51, S.D = 1.31). Victims of GBV are to be blamed (M =1.80, S.D = 1.14). There is nothing wrong with slapping (M =2.16, S.D = 1.25). International and local laws are ineffective (M =3.31, S.D = 1.17). Media campaigns against GBV are important (M =4.51, S.D = 0.81). Media campaigns do not portray GBV positively (M =3.81, S.D = 1.01). Using celebrities who are victims of GBV (M =4.21, S.D = 0.98). Slapping is a form of discipline that does not involve GBV (M =2.41, S.D = 1.31). Support Services for GBV are inadequate (M =3.61, S.D = 1.11).

**Table 5:** Perceived Post-Exposure to GBV Media Campaigns Towards Gender-Based Violence

Statements	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I have slapped my wife before	394	1.00	5.00	1.92	1.09
I do not condone wife battery, domestic violence, or intimate partner violence in my marriage anymore	394	1.00	5.00	4.42	0.79
I canvassed against early marriage in my community after the media exposed me to the of	394	1.00	5.00	3.91	1.03
Media campaigns influenced me to act against GBV by reporting incidents of human rights violation	394	1.00	5.00	4.13	0.92



As a victim, I am now an advocate of anti-GBV crusade	394	1.00	5.00	3.73	1.11
As a victim, I have approached NGOs for emotional and psychological support and counselling for me and other victims that I know after I learnt of the complaint channels from the media campaigns	394	1.00	5.00	3.51	1.12
I discuss GBV issues with family and friends openly, and I encourage others to do the same	394	1.00	5.00	4.23	0.81
I have received training/education on how to respond to GBV incidents from the agencies and individuals mentioned in the campaign	394	1.00	5.00	3.81	1.03

The Table 5 above shows statements and corresponding data for respondents' perceived post-exposure to GBV media campaigns towards gender-based violence. "I have slapped my wife before (M =1.92, S.D = 1.09)". "I do not condone wife battery, domestic violence, or intimate partner violence in my marriage anymore (M =4.42, S.D = 0.79)". I canvassed against early marriage in my community after the media exposed me as a respondent to the consequences of GBV (M =3.91, S.D = 1.03)". Media campaigns have influenced me to act against GBV by reporting incidents of human rights violation (M =4.13, S.D =

0.92). As a victim, "I am now an advocate of anti GBV crusade (M =3.73, S.D = 1.11). As a victim, I have approached an NGO for emotional and psychological support and counselling for me and other victims that I know after I learnt of the complaint channels from the media campaigns (M =3.51, S.D = 1.12). The researcher discussed GBV issues with family and friends openly and encouraged others to do the same (M =4.23, S.D = 0.81). I have received training/education on responding to GBV incidents from the agencies and individuals mentioned in the campaign (M =3.81, S.D = 1.03).

**Table 6:** Relationship between Exposure to Media Campaigns on Gender-Based Violence and Perceived Awareness of GBV among Adults in Southwest Nigeria

Score	Pearson Correlation	1	0.741
Exposure to media campaigns	Sig. (2-tailed)		< .001
	N	394	394
Perceived awareness of GBV	Pearson Correlation	0.741	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	< .001	
	N	394	394

\*\* The correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2-tailed)

**Table 7:** Relationship between Exposure to Media Campaigns on Gender-Based Violence and Perceived Knowledge of GBV among Adults in Southwest Nigeria

Score	Pearson Correlation	1	0.812
Exposure to media campaigns	Sig. (2-tailed)		< .001
	N	394	394
Perceived awareness of GBV	Pearson Correlation	0.812	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	< .001	
	N	394	394

\*\* The correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2-tailed)

### Hypothesis Testing

Data from Table 6 showed a Pearson correlation between exposure to media campaigns on gender-based violence and perceived awareness of GBV

among adults in Southwest Nigeria. The data revealed that there was a coefficient (r) of 0.741, indicating a strong positive relationship at p-value

= [ $< 0.01$ ]. Thus, the correlation is statistically significant with a very high confidence level.

Data from Table 7 showed a Pearson correlation between exposure to media campaigns on gender-based violence and perceived awareness of GBV

among adults in Southwest Nigeria. The data revealed that there was a coefficient ( $r$ ) of 0.812, indicating a strong positive relationship at  $p$ -value = [ $< 0.01$ ]. Thus, the correlation is statistically significant with a very high confidence level.

**Table 8:** Relationship between Exposure to Media Campaigns on Gender-Based Violence and Perceived Attitude towards GBV among Adults in Southwest Nigeria

Score	Pearson Correlation	1	0.856
Exposure to media campaigns	Sig. (2-tailed)		$< .001$
	N	394	394
Perceived awareness of GBV	Pearson Correlation	0.856	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	$< .001$	
	N	394	394

\*\* The correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2-tailed)

Data from Table 8 showed a Pearson correlation between exposure to media campaigns on gender-based violence and perceived awareness of GBV among adults in Southwest Nigeria. The data revealed that there was a coefficient ( $r$ ) of 0.856, indicating a strong positive relationship at  $p$ -value = [ $< 0.01$ ]. Thus, the correlation is statistically significant with a very high confidence level.

From the qualitative data, five themes emerge from the interview data obtained from the study as follows.

#### **Theme 1: Public Knowledge and Awareness**

Data from the interview showed a need to improve public knowledge and awareness of GBV laws and policies in the state. The public needs more sensitisation and awareness to understand their rights and report GBV incidents. One interviewee noted that the public knowledge about GBV laws and policies in the State still needs to be improved. Similarly, a desk officer of GBV in the Ministry of Justice believes that people are now more conscious of the laws and policies on GBV in the state.

#### **Theme 2: Media Campaign Strategies**

Data from the interview revealed that the media campaign strategies are regular reportage, information dissemination and featuring GBV stories in the media. Partnerships between media and government, as well as NGOs, are encouraged. Excerpts from the interview with one of the interviewees showed that some of the campaign strategies on media are on information dissemination, and regular reportage in using different mediums like print, broadcast and social media. However, radio is the most used medium for campaigns against GBV. Another interviewee

noted that "Media partnerships between the media and the government in the state... campaigns through lots of programmes pushed into the media in the state..."

#### **Theme 3: Communication Strategies**

The communication strategies used by the Ministry of Women Affairs, the body that is by law saddled with prosecuting issues of GBV, are activism walks, conferences, seminars and community sensitisation. These efforts aim to create awareness, influence positive attitudes and change behaviour. From the interview data, an interviewee believes that the ministry in charge of GBV employs various communication strategies, including sensitisation campaigns, 16 days of activism, and community sensitisation. Consequently, the other interviewees noted that constant meetings with relevant stakeholders to brainstorm on how to end GBV in their various localities are some of the strategies.

#### **Theme 4: Collaboration with Local Communities**

Collaboration with local communities and stakeholders is vital. The ministry works with community leaders, traditional rulers and NGOs to ensure that media campaigns are culturally relevant and practical. Excerpts from the interviewees support this finding that the ministry in charge of GBV collaborates with local communities on media campaigns by meeting the community leaders at the grassroots, enlightening them and making them ambassadors of GBV. The interviewees attested that the Ministry collaborates with the local community and stakeholders through the gender-based violence

management committee established at each local government.

#### **Theme 5: Challenges and Additional Measures**

Data from the interview showed that the challenges faced include inadequate funding, lack of comprehensive contextualisation of issues, and unprofessional media reportage. Additional measures to strengthen the impact of media campaigns include empowering the media, providing adequate funding and ensuring that campaigns are sustained over time. These excerpts support the fact that one of the challenges is the lack of comprehensive contextualisation of issues in reportage and unprofessional media reportage. They suggest that additional measures should be deployed to ensure enough funds for the campaign against GBV in the state.

### **Discussion**

The first objective sought to identify the GBV media campaign strategies in southwest Nigeria. From a quantitative angle, the study found radio to be the leading medium that exposed respondents to GBV campaigns, followed by social media and community meetings. The qualitative data revealed that media campaign strategies included regular reportage and information dissemination. At the same time, the Ministry of Women's Affairs used regular conferences, seminars, and community sensitisation to create awareness. This approach is in tandem with social cognitive theory, which posits that learning and behaviour change occur through observation, imitation and reinforcement. Importantly, these findings imply that combining traditional and digital media with community-based initiatives is integral for effective GBV awareness creation. Also, the revelation from the qualitative data that the ministry uses ministry agents and other stakeholders to carry out their campaigns, which are supported by NGOs, raises the consistency of the two-step flow theory, which suggests that information flows from the media to opinion leaders who then interpret and disseminate the information to the broader public. In exploring the level of awareness of GBV Media Campaigns among adults in Southwest Nigeria. The study's Quantitative data showed that most respondents were exposed to campaigns such as the Stop Violence against Women in Politics mobile. Also, physical violence and rape were the most

commonly addressed types of GBV in media campaigns. This finding buttresses the fact that the media is setting the agenda for the public discourse on GBV around domestic violence and rape which is consistent with the tenets of Agenda setting theory.

The media focuses on these two types of GBV, which may influence the public's perception of the importance and prevalence of these issues. However, the qualitative study found a need to improve public knowledge and awareness of GBV laws and policies in the states of the Southwest. The findings emphasise the need to sensitise and create awareness of understanding rights and reporting GBV incidents. These findings suggest an awareness gap in the knowledge and understanding of GBV laws and policies, implying the need for sensitisation. The findings also buttress the need for opinion leaders to receive and pass media information on to the broader public. This assertion is consistent with the Two-step flow theory. Findings from the hypothesis tested using Pearson's correlation showed a strong positive relationship between exposure to media campaigns and perceived awareness of GBV. This supports agenda-setting theory, which states that the media influences the public agenda by selecting and emphasising defined issues. This is because, in this study, media campaigns are seen to have raised awareness about GBV among adults in southwest Nigeria. Another objective of the study sought to assess the perceived knowledge of media campaigns on gender-based violence among adults in Southwest Nigeria. Quantitative data showed that respondents were generally knowledgeable about GBV. Data from Table 3 showed that respondents generally agree that GBV includes physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse ( $M = 4.71$ ). They also agree that anyone can be a victim of GBV regardless of gender, age, or socioeconomic status ( $M = 4.91$ ). Findings suggest that media campaigns have successfully placed GBV on the public agenda, with respondents demonstrating a good understanding of what constitutes GBV.

This is consistent with the setting of the public agenda aspect of the agenda-setting theory.

Investigating the perceived attitude towards GBV media campaigns among adults in Southwest Nigeria. Respondents generally disagree with statements that blame victims of GBV or justify

violence against women. Data from Table 4 imply a positive shift in attitude in societal attitudes toward GBV. They agree that media campaigns against GBV are important ( $M = 4.51$ ) and that support services for GBV are inadequate ( $M = 3.61$ ). This finding implies the media's role in raising awareness and promoting attitude change while highlighting the need for increased investment in support services such as counselling, legal aid, and shelter for victims and complainants. Findings from the hypothesis tested using Pearson's correlation showed a strong positive relationship between exposure to media campaigns and perceived knowledge of GBV. This is consistent with social learning theory, which suggests that people study new behaviours and knowledge by observing and copying others. The media campaigns provide a place for adults in southwest Nigeria to learn about GBV and its various forms.

In evaluating the perceived post-exposure practices to GBV media campaigns among adults in Southwest Nigeria, data from Table 5 showed that respondents reported that media campaigns have influenced them to act against GBV by reporting incidents of human rights violations ( $M = 4.13$ ). They also report discussing GBV issues with family and friends openly and encouraging others to do the same ( $M = 4.23$ ). These findings suggest that social learning theory plays a significant role in shaping respondents' attitudes to GBV. Through observational learning, respondents have learned about GBV by observing others, such as opinion leaders, medical personalities, and other governmental agents. Also, social learning buttresses the fact that the respondents have been reinforced in their learning through positive feedback from others, leading to disagreement with statements that blame victims or justify violence. Findings from the hypothesis tested using Pearson's correlation showed a strong positive connection between exposure to media campaigns and the perceived attitude toward GBV. This is consistent with the two-step flow theory, which suggests that information flows from the mass media to opinion leaders, who interpret and disseminate information to the broader public. In this scenario, opinion leaders must have influenced media campaigns by interpreting and disseminating them to their social networks, contributing to the widespread awareness and

knowledge of GBV among southwest adults. Therefore, media should prioritise and promote campaigns against domestic violence, rape, human trafficking, FGB, child marriage, physical, sexual, emotional, psychological abuse, and female genital mutilation.

## Conclusion

This study set out to explore the level of knowledge, attitudes and practices towards media campaigns against gender-based violence among adults in Southwest Nigeria. Based on the findings, combining traditional and digital media with community-based initiatives is essential for creating awareness about GBV. The study also emphasised the importance of opinion leaders in disseminating information to the broader public while calling for more sensitisation on the laws and rights of victims and complainants for more understanding. Hence, the study recommended a multichannel approach to campaigns using traditional and digital media to reach a wider audience. It is also recommended that more opinion leaders be engaged in interpreting and disseminating information on GBV to their social networks. There is also a need to increase support services such as counselling, legal aid and shelter for victims and complainants.

## Abbreviations

FGB: Female Gender-based, FGM: Female genital mutilation, GBV: Gender-Based Violence, LGBTI: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex, M: Mean, NGOs: Non-Governmental Organisations, SD: Standard Deviation, SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals.

## Acknowledgement

All authors whose works were cited are duly listed in the references.

## Author Contributions

All the authors contributed to the study in terms of conception, writing, reviewing, methodology, data curation, analysis, editing, and funding.

## Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest among the authors.

## Ethics Approval

The study received ethical approval from the University Ethical Approval Committee. Reference number: RUN/REC/2024/184.



## Funding

The study is funded by the authors.

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