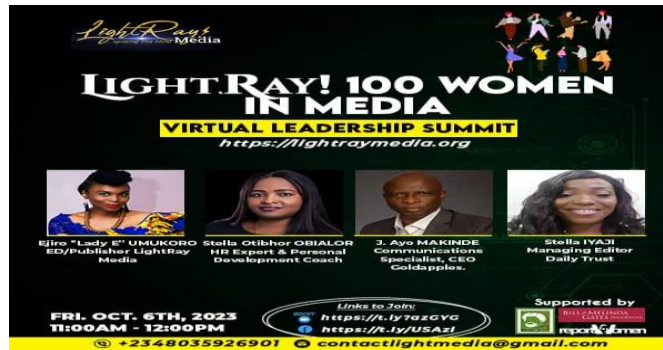


A POLICY DOCUMENTATION



RESEARCH

ON

100 WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP VIRTUAL SUMMIT

BY

LIGHTRAY! MEDIA



SUPPORTED BY:

Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Reporting
Report Women & Gates Foundation

Introduction

Overview of The Policy's Purpose and Importance.

In today's fast-paced and information-driven world, the media wields an unparalleled influence over public discourse and perceptions. Within this dynamic landscape, it is imperative to acknowledge and celebrate the pivotal role that women play in shaping the narratives, voices, and perspectives presented to society. LightRay! Media, a prominent and forward-thinking think-tank in the field of media, media development and communications, has taken a momentous step by not only recognizing, but fervently celebrating the invaluable contributions of women in Nigeria's media sector. The announcement of the **"100 Women in Leadership Virtual Summit #LightRay!100WiML"** stands as a groundbreaking initiative meticulously crafted to empower and strategically position women within the media industry. This visionary endeavor extends a transformative hand to aspiring professionals and seasoned entrepreneurs alike, nurturing their journey towards unparalleled success.

The **"100 Women in Leadership Virtual Summit"** is not just an event - it is a resounding response to the evolving dynamics occurring within the media landscape. It serves as a beacon of inclusivity, advancement, equity, and empowerment for women across various media-related career paths, from emerging talents eager to make their mark to seasoned professionals who have significantly influenced the nation's media sphere. This summit is a testament to the fundamental importance of women's roles within the Fourth Estate, as recognized by the Nigerian Constitution in sections 22 and 29.

However, the challenges faced by women in the media whether in Nigeria, Mali, Egypt, Kenya, Afghanistan, Tanzania, South Africa, Global North and South, the Americas or in Asia, which often go unnoticed or unaddressed, have necessitated a comprehensive and transformative initiative of this nature. It aims not only to empower women professionally but also to ensure they thrive in their careers and passions. The impact of this summit extends far beyond its scheduled date, offering a multifaceted platform for women to enhance their leadership skills, foster gender mainstreaming in media, advocate for better representation, and implement gender-sensitive policies within their organizations. This is a pivotal step towards reshaping the narrative and promoting a more inclusive and equitable media landscape in Nigeria.

Background and Importance

In a nation where the Nigerian Constitution, under sections 22 and 29, formally recognizes the Fourth Estate as a cornerstone of democracy, the role of women within this institution becomes all the more significant. However, despite this formal acknowledgment, the unique needs and challenges that women face in the media ecosystem often remain unaddressed, serving as insurmountable obstacles to their pursuit of equity, equality, inclusivity, and advancement. The **"100 Women in Leadership Virtual Summit"** stands as an unequivocal response to these multifaceted challenges and a clarion call for action.

The importance of this summit is profound. Firstly, it endeavors to equip female reporters across the spectrum of media platforms, beats, expertise and skillsets with the necessary leadership mindset, tools of success, personnel skills needed to navigate the workplace and media landscape including the insights required to assume strategic roles within their newsrooms. This empowerment is pivotal, as it not only

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enables women to occupy leadership positions but also arms them with the capacity to effect meaningful and progressive change within their organizations.

A recent report cited in the published *The Missing Perspectives of Women in News* suggested that globally 73 % of the top management jobs in newsrooms were occupied by men with only 27% by women. The summit underscores the critical aspect of gender mainstreaming within the media. It seeks to educate and enlighten attendees on enhancing their news coverage, ensuring that the narratives concerning women both young and old are more inclusive and well-informed. By doing so, it lays the foundation for a balanced representation of gender within the media landscape, a step toward a more equitable and reflective portrayal of society.

It advocates for the engagement of female experts as sources for news stories. Attendees were opportune to delve into proactive strategies that facilitate the incorporation of women with expertise in various fields. This not only enriches the quality of reporting but also ensures the amplification of diverse perspectives, fostering a more inclusive and comprehensive news reportage.

Fourthly, the summit was geared toward equipping participants with advocacy skills, enabling them to champion the cause of better representation of women in leadership roles within newsrooms and executive management. This endeavor transcends individual advancement, contributing to the creation of a media landscape that is inherently more inclusive and equitable.

Additionally, it places a strong emphasis on the development of gender policies within media organizations. By providing attendees with the necessary tools and knowledge to craft and implement gender policies, the summit ensures that gender equality is not just an aspiration but an operational reality within media institutions. This, in turn, promotes fairness, diversity, and equity in news reporting.

Lastly, the initiative extends beyond the confines of the summit itself. The creation of a "Members Only Women in Media Hangout" serves as a testament to **LightRay! Media's** commitment to nurturing a network of support and collaboration among women in media. This intimate gathering not only provides a platform for networking but also fosters the sharing of experiences and the development of solutions to common challenges. It is a tangible manifestation of solidarity and mutual empowerment. This policy documentation format serves as a testament to **LightRay! Media's** steadfast dedication to supporting women in their media careers. It extends beyond the national context and aspires to elevate women in media to international prominence and global collaborations. It is a rallying cry, an invitation to join hands in celebrating and empowering the extraordinary women who are the driving force behind the media industry's progress.

Statement of the Problem

The statement of the problem within the context of this research is a critical component that outlines the specific issues and challenges faced by women in the media industry in Nigeria. It serves as the foundation upon which the research objectives and solutions are built. The problem at hand revolves around the under reportage and amplification of women in media and their contributions, systemic misunderstanding, institutional barriers against the advancement of women in media, undervaluation, rejection, and the questioning of the contributions and rights of women in the media. It also identifies

socio-political drivers such as welfare, salaries, workplace support for pregnant and nursing mothers, While the Nigerian Constitution, particularly in sections 22 and 29, recognizes their vital roles within the Fourth Estate, the reality is that women often encounter disparities in terms of equity, equality, inclusivity, and advancement within the industry.

However, it's worth noting that the magnitude of the problem extends beyond initial expectations. Although the summit research initially targeted 100 women within Nigeria, the response exceeded expectations, with over 230 responses pouring in from across the nation from over 10 Federal and State-owned media organisations to more than 100 private radio and tv stations and over 10 new media across Nigeria. This overwhelming participation signifies the urgency of the issues at hand and the eagerness of women in the media to address them. Furthermore, the research also attracted responses from international participants, including those from Tanzania, Afghanistan, Kenya, Congo, Uganda, and other African countries. This broader participation serves as a telling indicator that similar challenges are prevalent not only in Nigeria but also across the African media landscape. Therefore, the statement of the problem goes beyond being a localized issue and highlights a broader, continent-wide concern that demands attention and solutions.

Objectives

- To evaluate women's impact in media leadership.
- To examine the obstacles and biases that hinder women's progress in media leadership.
- To examine the effectiveness of gender policies in promoting equality and inclusivity.
- To propose actionable strategies to support women in attaining leadership positions in media.
- To publish and give more voice and amplification on the roles, contributions and impact women across the media landscape and ecosystem plays.

Scope of the Study

This study focuses primarily on the media landscape in Nigeria, delving into the role and challenges faced by women in leadership positions within media organizations operating within the country. It encompasses a comprehensive examination of print, broadcast, online, and digital media platforms. By concentrating on Nigeria, the study aims to provide context-specific insights into the unique dynamics and issues relevant to the Nigerian media industry.

While the primary focus is on women's leadership within media, this study also extends its scope to investigate the impact of women's leadership on news reporting, editorial decisions, and media narratives. It aims to understand how the presence and influence of women in leadership roles affect the content,

tone, and inclusivity of media coverage. Additionally, the study evaluates the effectiveness of existing gender policies within media organizations and their contributions to gender equality and inclusivity. Although the study emphasizes challenges and opportunities for women in media leadership, it does not limit its examination solely to the barriers faced by women. It also explores potential strategies and recommendations to empower women and promote their advancement in media leadership roles. The study combines qualitative and quantitative research methods, including interviews, surveys, and content analysis, to provide a comprehensive and well-rounded understanding of the scope and dynamics of women's leadership in the Nigerian media industry.

Definitions of Operational Terms

Media Leadership: The term "media leadership" refers to the positions of authority and decision-making roles held by individuals, and in this context, particularly women, within media organizations. It encompasses roles that should be gender neutral such as editors-in-chief, news directors, managing editors, publisher, chairperson, and other high-ranking positions responsible for shaping media content and direction.

Impact Assessment: Impact assessment in this study involves the systematic evaluation of the influence and effect of women's leadership within media organizations on various aspects, including news reporting, editorial choices, and overall media narratives.

Challenges: In the context of this study, "challenges" encompass the obstacles, biases, and barriers that women encounter when aspiring to or holding leadership positions within the media industry. These challenges can be related to gender discrimination, workplace culture, and limited access to opportunities.

Gender Policies: "Gender policies" refer to the formalized rules, regulations, and initiatives implemented by media organizations to promote gender equality, inclusivity, and the advancement of women within the workplace. These policies may include diversity and inclusion initiatives, anti-discrimination measures, and gender-specific programs.

Empowerment Strategies: "Empowerment strategies" in this study encompass actionable approaches, initiatives, and recommendations aimed at supporting and empowering women to attain leadership positions within media organizations. These strategies may include mentorship programs, leadership training, and advocacy efforts.

Media Landscape: The "media landscape" encompasses the entirety of media outlets and platforms operating within a specific region or context. It includes print, broadcast, online, and digital media entities, as well as their respective audiences and stakeholders.

Context-Specific Insights: "Context-specific insights" refer to findings and conclusions generated through research that are relevant and applicable to the specific circumstances and dynamics of the Nigerian media industry. These insights take into account the unique cultural, social, and structural factors at play in Nigeria.

Inclusivity: "Inclusivity" within the scope of this study pertains to the degree to which women's perspectives, voices, and contributions are integrated and represented within media content. It examines

how inclusive media narratives are in portraying the experiences and concerns of women and the girl-child.

Ethical Guidelines

The research adheres steadfastly to a robust set of ethical principles and guidelines, meticulously crafted to uphold the highest standards of integrity, fairness, and respect throughout the research process. These ethical principles encompass the following:

Informed Consent: Prior to any data collection, comprehensive and transparent information about the research's purpose, methodologies, and potential implications is provided to all participants. Informed consent is not only obtained but regarded as a cornerstone of ethical research practice, ensuring that individuals engage in the study willingly and with full awareness.

Confidentiality and Privacy: The research places paramount importance on preserving the confidentiality and privacy of all participants. All information shared by participants is held in strict confidence and exclusively utilized for research purposes. To protect identities, personal identifiers are either eliminated or anonymized, safeguarding the anonymity of participants.

Data Security: Rigorous measures are instituted to safeguard the security of all research data, encompassing surveys, interviews, and collected information. These measures thwart unauthorized access and adhere meticulously to data protection regulations, preserving the sanctity of participant privacy.

Non-Discrimination: The research embodies a commitment to impartiality and fairness by treating every participant, irrespective of gender, race, religion, or any other defining characteristic, with utmost respect and without any form of discrimination. It actively cultivates an inclusive, non-discriminatory environment for all involved.

Transparency and Honesty: Transparency forms the bedrock of the research's ethical framework. Every aspect of the research, from methodologies to findings, is presented with unwavering honesty and objectivity. The research refrains from any misrepresentation or manipulation of data, ensuring that results are communicated faithfully and transparently.

Beneficence: The research actively seeks to benefit both participants and society at large. By furnishing valuable insights and practical recommendations, it strives to contribute positively to the advancement of women in media leadership and the promotion of gender equality within the media sector.

Conflict of Interest Management: In the spirit of transparency and fairness, the research diligently identifies and addresses potential conflicts of interest. It conducts its investigations impartially and without bias, safeguarding the credibility and impartiality of its findings.

Research Integrity: The research is conducted with uncompromising research integrity. This entails meticulous citation and referencing of sources, accurate and unvarnished presentation of findings, and strict adherence to academic and ethical research norms.

Feedback and Accountability: The research actively encourages and embraces feedback from participants and stakeholders. It remains steadfastly committed to accountability, promptly addressing any concerns or feedback pertaining to the research process or its outcomes in an open and transparent manner.

Regulatory Compliance: The research adheres scrupulously to all pertinent legal and ethical regulations governing research activities. This includes adherence to human research ethics and data protection regulations, ensuring full compliance with established norms and standards.

These ethical principles and guidelines underpin every facet of the research, serving as an unwavering foundation for conducting the study ethically and responsibly. The research is dedicated to preserving the rights and well-being of all individuals and organizations involved while maintaining the highest standards of research conduct and ethical rigor.

Research Approval Process

The research approval process for this study follows a structured and ethical framework to ensure the integrity and compliance of research activities. The first step involves the formulation of a detailed research proposal that outlines the research objectives, methodologies, ethical considerations, and expected outcomes. This proposal undergoes a thorough review by the research team and is refined to meet ethical and academic standards. In parallel, the research team identifies and contacts potential participants, providing them with clear and comprehensive information about the study's purpose, methods, and potential implications. Informed consent is obtained from all participants, signifying their voluntary participation.

One notable aspect of this study is the utilization of Google Forms as a data collection tool. The approval process for this research involved securing consent from the institutional or organizational bodies responsible for overseeing research projects. The criteria for approval included a rigorous assessment of the research proposal, ensuring that it adhered to ethical guidelines, data protection regulations, and relevant institutional policies. The research team sought approval for the use of Google Forms as a secure and efficient means of collecting participant responses. This involved demonstrating the security measures in place to protect participant data and ensuring that the informed consent process was appropriately integrated into the Google Form.

The research, which garnered 237 registered respondents for the training sessions, proceeded with data collection through Google Forms, where participants filled out the forms as part of the study. The data collection process was conducted in full compliance with the informed consent obtained earlier. Additionally, the study conducted interactive Zoom meetings, with a dedicated "Interactions" section that spanned nearly two hours during each session. These Zoom meetings provided participants with an opportunity to share their insights, suggestions, and opinions directly with the research team. This aspect of the research was also subject to approval, with the criteria for approval emphasizing the ethical conduct of these interactions and the respectful handling of participants' contributions.

Throughout the approval process, the research team maintained a commitment to transparency, accountability, and ethical research conduct. Any concerns or queries raised by the approving bodies were addressed promptly and comprehensively. The research team provided assurances regarding data security, privacy protection, and the responsible handling of participant contributions. This rigorous approval process not only ensures the ethical conduct of the study but also underscores the commitment to upholding the rights and well-being of all participants. It serves as a testament to the research team's

dedication to conducting research that adheres to the highest standards of ethical and academic integrity while actively engaging with participants to gather valuable insights.

Data Management

Data collection for this research involved a meticulous and systematic approach to ensure both the quality and ethical handling of participant information. The primary tool employed was Google Forms, a secure online survey platform. Participants were invited to fill out the forms, and this process was carried out in strict compliance with informed consent principles. The data collected through Google Forms included responses to survey questions, feedback, and opinions provided voluntarily by participants. Each form submission was time-stamped to track when the data was received. Additionally, the data collected during interactive Zoom meetings, where participants shared insights and suggestions, was recorded and transcribed for analysis.

The storage and protection of collected data were paramount considerations throughout the research. All data, whether collected via Google Forms or during Zoom interactions, was stored securely on password-protected servers accessible only to authorized research team members. Personal identifiers, such as names and contact information, were carefully removed or anonymized to protect the privacy of participants. Data files were encrypted to prevent unauthorized access. Regular backups were performed to safeguard against data loss. Access to the data was restricted to authorized personnel only, and strict confidentiality measures were observed.

Data protection and ethical handling were embedded in every aspect of the research process. Consent forms and information provided to participants explicitly detailed the purpose of data collection, how data would be used, and the security measures in place to protect their information. Participants were assured that their responses would be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes. Additionally, the research team adhered to relevant data protection regulations and institutional policies governing research ethics. The anonymized data was meticulously analyzed to derive meaningful insights while respecting the privacy and confidentiality of participants. The research stands as a testament to the commitment to responsible data management and ethical research conduct, ensuring the security and integrity of participant information throughout the study.

Intellectual Property

This research policy was put together by LightRay! Media (and Foundation) team lead by the Executive Director, Lady Ejiro Umukoro. The intellectual work as regarding this project, data gathering, content, and other information is the sole property of LightRay Media.

Ownership and protection of intellectual property arising from this research are governed by principles of fairness and adherence to ethical standards. The primary intellectual property concerns in this study pertain to the research findings, data, and any original content created as a result of the research process. As a fundamental principle, the research acknowledges that intellectual property rights are shared among

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the contributing team members and participating organizations upon approval from **LightRay! Media**. Ownership rights are typically distributed in accordance with the contribution and involvement of team members and aligned with the policies and agreements in place within the research institution as directed by **LightRay! Media**.

Protection of intellectual property is integral to maintaining the integrity and value of the research outcomes. The research team takes measures to safeguard the research findings and data through appropriate mechanisms such as data encryption, access controls, and secure storage practices. Furthermore, any original content created, including reports, publications, and materials, is subject to copyright protection, ensuring that the research team retains the rights to control and disseminate these works. Ethical considerations also extend to proper attribution and citation of external intellectual property, acknowledging the contributions of other researchers and sources that have informed the study.

The research operates within the framework of open and transparent sharing of knowledge, adhering to academic and ethical norms. While recognizing ownership and protection of intellectual property, the research team is committed to disseminating the research findings for the greater benefit of society. Therefore, research outcomes are typically shared through publications, reports, and presentations while upholding principles of proper attribution and acknowledgment. The research institution, sponsors, and collaborating organizations may also have specific policies and agreements in place governing intellectual property, which are respected and followed diligently, as stated herein. Overall, the research endeavors to strike a balance between protecting intellectual property rights and advancing the broader goals of knowledge sharing and societal benefit.

Funding

Research funding for this study is allocated and managed with utmost transparency and accountability. Funding sources, including institutional grants and contributions from participating organizations, are meticulously documented and tracked. A dedicated budget is established to ensure that research expenses, including data collection tools, participant engagement, and data analysis, are appropriately managed. Regular financial reports and updates are shared with funding organizations and stakeholders to maintain transparency and accountability in resource allocation. Additionally, the **"100 Women in Leadership Virtual Summit,"** a key component of this research, receives support from prominent organizations dedicated to gender equality and journalistic excellence, including Report Women, the Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. This support underscores the commitment to empowering women in media leadership and promoting gender equality within the industry, inviting all stakeholders to join this transformative movement and celebrate the remarkable women shaping the future of media in Nigeria.

Collaboration

LightRay! Media acknowledges to the contribution of the three speakers at the 100 Women in Media Virtual Summit: J. Ayo Makinde [CEO, Goldapples and TV Anchor with Channels TV], Stella Iyaji [Managing Editor, Daily Trust Newspapers] and Stella Obialor, HR Consultant and Coach.

Compliance and Regulatory Requirements

Compliance with legal and regulatory requirements is an integral aspect of conducting ethical and responsible research. In the context of this study, several legal and regulatory obligations come into play. Firstly, the research adheres to national and international data protection laws and regulations to ensure the privacy and security of participant information. This includes compliance with established data protection standards such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and relevant national data protection laws. Strict protocols are in place to safeguard participant data, including encryption, secure storage, and controlled access.

Secondly, the research is guided by ethical research principles outlined by institutional review boards (IRBs) and research ethics committees. These principles encompass informed consent, confidentiality, participant privacy, and the ethical treatment of participants. Compliance with these ethical standards is mandatory and is overseen by the research oversight committee to ensure the responsible conduct of research. Lastly, the research acknowledges and complies with copyright and intellectual property regulations when using external sources, references, or materials in the study. Proper attribution and citation of sources are essential to avoid plagiarism and respect the intellectual property rights of authors and content creators. In conclusion, this research places a strong emphasis on adherence to legal, regulatory, and ethical requirements to ensure the research is conducted with the utmost integrity, transparency, and respect for the rights and well-being of participants and stakeholders. Compliance with these obligations is central to maintaining the research's credibility, validity, and ethical standing.

Safety and Risk Management

Safety measures and risk management are paramount considerations in research projects to protect the well-being of participants, researchers, and the integrity of the research itself. Firstly, in the context of this study, safety measures begin with ethical considerations, including obtaining informed consent from participants to ensure their voluntary and informed participation. The research adheres to established ethical guidelines that prioritize participant safety, ensuring that their rights and privacy are safeguarded throughout the research process.

Secondly, risk management involves identifying potential risks associated with data collection, interactions with participants, and the handling of sensitive information. The research team conducts a comprehensive risk assessment to anticipate and mitigate these risks. For example, measures are in place to protect data security and privacy, including data encryption and secure storage. Additionally, during interactive Zoom meetings or other engagements, respectful and non-coercive communication is prioritized to minimize

any potential psychological or emotional risks to participants. Overall, safety and risk management are integral components of responsible research conduct. By adhering to ethical principles, seeking informed consent, and implementing robust risk mitigation strategies, the research project aims to ensure the safety and well-being of all involved while upholding the integrity and validity of the research outcomes.

Reporting and Monitoring

Reporting and monitoring mechanisms for research activities are systematically implemented throughout the research process to ensure transparency, accountability, and adherence to ethical and regulatory standards. A dedicated research oversight committee oversees and monitors the research activities, including data collection, participant interactions, and data analysis, to ensure that they align with the approved research protocols and ethical guidelines. Regular progress reports are generated and shared with stakeholders and funding organizations, providing insights into the research's status, milestones achieved, and any emerging issues. Additionally, the research team conducts ongoing self-assessments and internal audits to evaluate compliance with legal, ethical, and regulatory requirements. These mechanisms collectively uphold the integrity of the research and maintain the highest standards of research conduct.

Review and Revision

The policy governing this research will undergo regular and systematic reviews to ensure its continued relevance, effectiveness, and alignment with evolving ethical, legal, and regulatory standards. The review process will be initiated on a predetermined schedule, typically at regular intervals such as annually or biannually, as well as in response to significant changes in the research landscape or relevant regulations. The responsibility for overseeing the policy's review will be entrusted to the research oversight committee, which will comprise experts in research ethics, data protection, and relevant legal fields.

During the review process, the committee will assess the policy's efficacy in safeguarding the rights and well-being of participants, maintaining data security, and upholding ethical research conduct. Any emerging ethical or regulatory considerations will be thoroughly examined, and necessary updates or revisions will be proposed. Additionally, feedback from stakeholders, research team members, and participants will be solicited and incorporated into the policy review process. Once revisions are made, the updated policy will be disseminated to all relevant parties, ensuring that all individuals involved in the research are aware of and adhere to the latest ethical and regulatory standards. This iterative and responsive approach to policy review ensures that the research remains in full compliance with best practices and continually reflects the highest ethical and legal standards.

Training and Awareness

Training and awareness initiatives for researchers involved in this study are integral to fostering a culture of ethical research conduct and compliance with relevant regulations. Researchers will undergo comprehensive training programs prior to their involvement in the research project. These programs will cover a range of topics, including research ethics, data protection regulations, informed consent procedures, participant privacy, and intellectual property rights. Researchers will also receive specific

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training on the use of data collection tools and secure data management practices, such as encryption and access controls. Additionally, researchers will be educated on the research oversight committee's role in monitoring research activities and the reporting mechanisms for ethical concerns or potential conflicts of interest.

To maintain a high level of awareness and ethical conduct throughout the research project, ongoing awareness initiatives will be implemented. Regular seminars, workshops, and discussion forums will be organized to address emerging ethical and regulatory issues in research. These initiatives will provide researchers with opportunities to engage in ethical discussions, share best practices, and learn from experts in the field. Furthermore, the research team will maintain open channels of communication, facilitating continuous dialogue on ethical considerations and regulatory compliance. This multifaceted approach to training and awareness ensures that researchers are equipped with the knowledge and resources needed to uphold ethical standards and legal requirements throughout the research project.

Discussions Of Findings

Finding 1: Factors Influencing Lower Interest and Participation of Women in Media Career Paths

This study revealed that the factors contributing to the lower interest and participation of women in specific media-related career paths are multifaceted. Gender bias and discrimination within media organizations have been identified as significant deterrents. Women often face unequal treatment, limited access to leadership roles, and unequal pay, discouraging them from pursuing these careers. Additionally, the absence of mentorship and support systems plays a critical role. Many women in the media expressed the importance of mentorship and guidance from experienced colleagues in navigating their careers effectively. The scarcity of such mentorship opportunities can be a barrier, as women may perceive a lack of support for their advancement. Furthermore, limited access to skill development opportunities is a substantial factor. Women often encounter challenges accessing training programs and skill development initiatives. This limitation hinders their ability to acquire the necessary expertise to excel in roles requiring technical proficiency, further discouraging their participation.

Addressing these issues requires a multi-pronged approach. Firstly, media organizations must actively combat gender bias and promote equal opportunities within their ranks. Implementing policies and practices that eliminate discrimination and promote gender equality is essential. Secondly, establishing mentorship programs and peer support networks can provide the much-needed guidance and encouragement for women to pursue media career paths with confidence. Thirdly, offering equal access to training opportunities and tailored skill development programs is crucial to leveling the playing field. By proactively addressing these challenges, the media industry can create a more inclusive and supportive environment that encourages women to participate in all facets of media.

Finding 2: Societal Influences, Bias, and Barriers in Media Leadership

Societal influences can indeed discourage women from seeking leadership roles within media organizations. Cultural norms and stereotypes often perpetuate traditional gender roles, which may discourage women from aspiring to leadership positions in media. These influences can manifest as biases and barriers that hinder women's advancement in media leadership roles. Women may face resistance or skepticism when attempting to break into traditionally male-dominated areas of media, further deterring them from pursuing leadership positions. Overcoming these biases and barriers requires not only changes within media organizations but also broader societal shifts in attitudes toward gender and leadership.

Mentorship and networking are instrumental in encouraging women to take on leadership positions in the media industry. Women benefit greatly from mentorship programs that provide guidance, support, and opportunities to connect with established professionals. Networking offers access to valuable relationships and resources that can aid in career advancement. Media organizations should actively promote mentorship and networking opportunities for women to help them navigate their career paths effectively. This support can empower women to overcome biases and barriers while building the skills and resilience needed to succeed in leadership roles.

Finding 3: Strategies for Gender Equality in Media Leadership

To achieve gender equality in newsroom leadership, media organizations can adopt successful strategies employed by their peers. Implementing transparent promotion and hiring practices that prioritize merit over gender is essential. Equal pay for equal work policies should be established to bridge existing wage gaps. Moreover, mechanisms for reporting and addressing gender discrimination should be put in place to create a safe and inclusive work environment. Mentorship and leadership development programs specifically designed for women can help nurture leadership skills and build a pipeline of future female leaders in the media industry.

Women journalists navigate gender bias and discrimination in the newsroom by maintaining their professionalism and resilience. They employ strategies such as assertive communication, seeking support from allies, and documenting instances of bias. By confronting these challenges while upholding their commitment to ethical journalism, women journalists continue to excel in their roles. They ensure effective delivery of their stories to the audience by prioritizing accuracy, fairness, and balance. Despite potential obstacles, their dedication to reporting on critical issues, including those affecting women's rights, remains unwavering. Initiatives and training programs that equip women journalists with necessary skills and support are crucial. Providing training in digital media tools, leadership, and conflict resolution can enhance their capabilities and resilience in the field, enabling them to excel in their careers and overcome gender-related challenges in media.

Finding 4: Building Resilience and Reporting on Critical Issues

In the face of adversity, women journalists exhibit remarkable resilience to continue reporting on critical issues, including those affecting women's rights. They understand the importance of their role in bringing these issues to light and advocate for positive change. To build resilience, they often prioritize self-care, maintaining a strong support network, and seeking professional development opportunities. By maintaining their commitment to journalistic integrity and focusing on the broader societal impact of their work, women journalists navigate obstacles and persist in their pursuit of impactful reporting.

Finding 5: Initiatives and Training Programs for Women Journalists

Initiatives and training programs designed to empower women journalists can make a significant difference in their careers. Providing access to digital media tools and platforms equips women with the skills needed to excel in today's multimedia landscape. Leadership development programs offer the knowledge and confidence required to take on leadership roles within news organizations. Conflict resolution training enhances their ability to handle challenges effectively while maintaining professionalism. Furthermore, creating safe spaces for women journalists to share experiences, seek guidance, and build supportive networks is crucial. These initiatives not only equip women with the skills and support they need but also foster a sense of belonging and empowerment within the media industry.

Finding 6: Effective Story Delivery Despite Potential Obstacles

Women journalists employ several strategies to ensure the effective delivery of their stories despite potential obstacles. They prioritize the core principles of journalism, such as accuracy, fairness, and

balance, to maintain credibility and professionalism. Additionally, they seek support from colleagues and allies within the newsroom to navigate challenges and overcome obstacles. Some women journalists employ assertive communication techniques to address issues directly while upholding their commitment to ethical reporting. By leveraging digital media tools and platforms, they adapt to the changing media landscape and reach their audiences effectively. These strategies enable women journalists to overcome potential obstacles and continue delivering impactful stories to their audiences.

Finding 7: Key Support mechanisms, as identified by the respondents

In striving to create a more inclusive and empowering environment for women in the media, it's essential to consider the key support mechanisms, as identified by the respondents in the following statistics:

1. **Implementing Gender-Sensitive Policies and Workplace Initiatives**: The foremost mechanism identified, with a significant percentage of 36.5%, emphasizes the need for implementing gender-sensitive policies and initiatives within media organizations. Such policies aim to rectify gender imbalances and address gender-related challenges effectively. This includes ensuring fair representation and equitable treatment of women, persons living with disability (PLWDs), promoting diversity, and mitigating biases in decision-making processes.
2. **Providing Equal Opportunities for Leadership Roles and Decision-Making Positions**: A significant 30.8% of participants stressed the importance of offering equal opportunities for leadership roles and decision-making positions. Achieving gender parity in leadership roles within the media is essential for ensuring women have a strong voice and influence in shaping organizational strategies, policies, and content.
3. **Offering Flexible Work Arrangements and Support for Work-Life Balance**: A notable 18.6% of respondents highlighted the significance of providing flexible work arrangements and supporting work-life balance. The media industry is known for its demanding schedules and high-pressure environments. Offering flexibility in work arrangements and addressing the challenges associated with work-life balance can significantly enhance the well-being and professional growth of women in the field.
4. **Fostering a Culture of Mentorship and Peer Support Networks**: Approximately 14.1% recognized the role of mentorship and peer support networks in creating an empowering environment. Mentorship programs and networks connect women with experienced professionals who can provide guidance, support, and opportunities for skill development and career advancement.

These statistics reflect the diverse perspectives of respondents, underscoring the multifaceted nature of the support mechanisms required to empower women in the media. The collective efforts to implement gender-sensitive policies, offer equal leadership opportunities, support work-life balance, and foster mentorship and peer support networks are fundamental steps toward creating an inclusive and empowering environment that harnesses the full potential of women in the media industry.

Finding 8: Skills, knowledge, and expertise necessary to progress in their professions

Participants in the study emphasized a multifaceted approach to advancing in media-related career paths. When asked about the skills, knowledge, and expertise necessary to progress in their professions, respondents provided a range of insightful responses. The following was gathered;

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Strong Writing Skills: The ability to craft compelling and accurate content through strong writing skills was identified as fundamental for career advancement. Effective writing is a cornerstone of journalism and media-related roles. This skill ensures that news and stories are not only engaging but also reliable.

Media Literacy: Respondents recognized the importance of media literacy in the ever-evolving media landscape. Understanding the intricacies of the industry, including emerging platforms, technologies, and trends, is seen as vital. Media professionals must remain informed to stay competitive in the field.

Research and Communication Skills: Effective research and communication skills were noted as vital for comprehensive reporting. These skills enable professionals to gather information, conduct interviews, and present news stories accurately and engagingly.

Digital Proficiency: In today's digital age, proficiency in digital tools, software, and platforms is a prerequisite. Staying current with digital media tools is essential for remaining competitive in the media industry.

Journalistic Ethics: Commitment to journalistic ethics is crucial for maintaining integrity and credibility. Upholding ethical standards is a fundamental aspect of career advancement.

Continuous Learning: Respondents recognized the need for continuous learning and adaptability. They acknowledged the importance of staying informed about industry trends and embracing lifelong learning to remain relevant and effective.

Leadership and Managerial Skills: Leadership and managerial skills were deemed important as professionals progress into roles with more responsibility. These skills are necessary for effective team management and decision-making.

Mentorship and Training: The value of mentorship, training, and guidance from experienced professionals was stressed. Participants highlighted the support and insights these resources provide for career advancement.

Specialized Knowledge: Respondents identified the importance of acquiring specialized knowledge in areas such as Search Engine Optimization (SEO), data analysis, investigative reporting, development communication, and multimedia journalism.

Networking: Building a network and sharpening news judgment were seen as important aspects of career growth. Developing contacts and collaborating with peers can open doors to new opportunities and perspectives.

Content Creation and Public Relations: Creative content creation, public relations, and risk management were mentioned as skills and knowledge areas contributing to career advancement.

Teamwork and Communication Skills: Skills related to teamwork, communication, and public relations were identified as critical for working effectively within newsrooms and media organizations.

These responses highlight the diverse and multifaceted nature of skills, knowledge, and expertise required for career progression in the media industry. Professionals must master a range of fundamental journalism skills, remain digitally proficient, continuously update their knowledge, and develop specialized expertise

to navigate the ever-changing media landscape. Furthermore, mentorship, leadership, and networking play significant roles in empowering professionals to take on leadership positions and make valuable contributions to the industry. The dynamic skill set and knowledge base described by participants reflect the adaptability needed in a field as dynamic as media.

Finding 9: Participating in the survey expressed a diverse range of aspirations and career goals within the media industry.

The respondents participating in the survey expressed a diverse range of aspirations and career goals within the media industry. Their ambitions reflect the multifaceted nature of the field and highlight the wide array of positions and roles that professionals can aim to advance into. Here is a synthesis of their responses, showcasing their career aspirations:

Leadership Roles: Many respondents aim for leadership positions, indicating their desire to shape and direct the course of media organizations. This includes titles such as "Director," "CEO," and "Publisher." Their ambitions encompass leading media houses, driving editorial decisions, and guiding the strategic direction of their organizations. These roles often entail a significant degree of responsibility and influence.

Editorial Positions: The role of an editor holds appeal for several respondents who aspire to be "Editors," "Editor in Chief," or "Daily Editor." Editors play a critical role in content selection, quality control, and audience engagement. This position allows professionals to shape the narrative, style, and impact of media content.

Public Service: The call to public service is evident in responses such as "Permanent Secretary" and "Country Director in an NGO (Development sector)." These positions often involve communication roles in government and non-governmental organizations, where professionals contribute to national and international development through media and communication efforts.

Media Entrepreneurship: The entrepreneurial spirit shines through in ambitions like "Media House ownership" and "TV station owner." These respondents aim to establish and manage their media ventures, fostering innovation and independence within the industry.

Communication and Consultancy: Some professionals aspire to careers as communication experts and consultants, including titles such as "Communication specialist" and "Communication Consultant." These roles involve providing strategic advice and solutions to organizations seeking effective communication strategies.

Academia and Education: Respondents express a commitment to education and knowledge dissemination through goals like "PhD" and "Academics." Such roles often involve teaching and research in media-related fields, contributing to the development of future media professionals.

Specialized Positions: Several respondents are keen on specialized roles, such as "Senior Security Correspondent," "Investigative Broadcast Training and AI," or "Media/Communication Expert." These roles require specific expertise and skills tailored to unique aspects of media, such as security reporting, investigative journalism, and artificial intelligence in media.

General Management: Management positions, including "General Manager," "Managerial," and "Assistant General Manager," indicate respondents' ambitions to oversee the operations and functions of media organizations. They aim to combine leadership and organizational skills to ensure the success of these establishments.

Empowerment and Advocacy: Some respondents seek positions that allow them to make a difference and promote societal change, including "To mentor young female journalists" and "Empower women rights." These roles contribute to empowerment, advocacy, and gender equality within the media landscape.

These diverse career aspirations underscore the varied opportunities available within the media sector. Respondents aim for roles that span leadership, editorial, entrepreneurship, communication, education, and specialized expertise. Their ambitions reflect not only their personal career goals but also their contributions to the broader media landscape, including media ownership, public service, and social impact. These goals exemplify the dynamic and ever-evolving nature of the media industry, with professionals poised to make substantial contributions across a spectrum of positions.

In summation, the research findings provide a comprehensive picture of the intricate challenges and opportunities that women encounter in the media industry. The barriers they face, ranging from gender bias and discrimination to limited access to mentorship and training, underscore the urgent need for proactive measures within media organizations. These measures should aim to foster inclusivity, eliminate bias, and establish robust support systems to empower women across all dimensions of media. It is noteworthy that amidst these challenges, women journalists exhibit unwavering dedication and resilience to their profession. They steadfastly uphold the core tenets of journalism, ensuring the effective delivery of their stories while maintaining the highest standards of professionalism, even in the face of potential obstacles. The research highlights the pivotal role of initiatives and tailored training programs in empowering women journalists, equipping them with the skills, confidence, and networks necessary to thrive in a media landscape that demands excellence. It also serves as a clarion call for ongoing efforts to promote gender equality within media organizations. The ultimate goal is to create an environment where women can not only overcome obstacles but also excel in media-related career paths and leadership roles.

Findings 10: Question seeking to understand the types of support participants have found most valuable for their personal and professional growth within the newsroom or the broader media industry.

In the dynamic world of newsrooms and the broader media industry, certain supportive mechanisms have emerged as instrumental contributors to personal and professional growth. The responses from participants underscore the significance of these forms of support, shedding light on the preferences and priorities of individuals within the field. These mechanisms, tailored to address the unique challenges and needs of those working in the media, have been recognized as pivotal:

Mentorship and Guidance: Mentorship and guidance from experienced colleagues have been heralded by approximately 33.2% of participants as highly valuable. This support system facilitates the transfer of

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wisdom and expertise from industry veterans to aspiring professionals and those seeking career advancement. It is a platform for learning, personalized advice, and the sharing of insights that can be profoundly impactful in nurturing professional growth.

Access to Training and Skill Development Programs: The importance of access to training and skill development programs has been resoundingly affirmed, with a significant 40.2% of respondents acknowledging its pivotal role. This finding underscores the indispensable nature of continuous learning and skill enhancement within the media industry. These programs act as conduits for individuals to stay abreast of industry trends, acquire new competencies, and remain adaptable in an environment characterized by constant evolution.

Networking: Networking has emerged as a valuable support mechanism, drawing the attention of 22% of participants. Building professional connections and networks within the media industry serves as a gateway to a world of opportunities, collaborations, and invaluable insights. Networking provides a platform for sharing experiences, gaining diverse perspectives, and broadening one's career horizons.

Emotional Support and Work-Life Balance Initiatives: A subset of participants recognized the importance of emotional support and initiatives that promote work-life balance. In a high-pressure field like the media, addressing emotional needs and maintaining a healthy work-life equilibrium is crucial for long-term career success and personal well-being.

Initiatives and Training Programs Tailored for Women Journalists: The responses reveal that initiatives and training programs designed specifically to address the unique challenges faced by women journalists play a pivotal role in their empowerment. This includes equipping them with essential digital media skills, which are paramount in today's multimedia-driven industry. Furthermore, leadership development programs empower women journalists with the knowledge and confidence to assume leadership roles, thereby promoting gender equality in newsroom leadership.

Conflict Resolution Training: Conflict resolution training emerged as a valuable skill set, providing women journalists with the capabilities to address workplace challenges professionally and to foster a respectful work environment. It equips them with essential skills for effectively navigating professional conflicts.

Creating Safe Spaces for Connection and Support: Initiatives that create safe spaces for women journalists to connect, share experiences, and seek guidance were highlighted as fostering a sense of community and empowerment. Pregnant and nursing mothers in particular, need adaptive policies designed in the workplace to enable them balance life and work in a society that demands economic contributions from both men and women, husbands and wives. These support mechanisms not only enhance their skills and capabilities but also contribute to a more supportive and inclusive media industry, where individuals can thrive and reach their full potential.

Collectively, these findings underscore the multifaceted nature of support mechanisms that contribute to the personal and professional growth of individuals in the media industry. They emphasize the significance of adopting a holistic approach to support, which encompasses mentorship, training, networking, emotional well-being, and tailored programs for women journalists. Such comprehensive support is pivotal in nurturing a skilled, empowered, and resilient workforce in the dynamic and ever-evolving media field.

Findings 11: Policy that supports women in the Media

1. **Equal Opportunity:** The implementation of policies ensuring equal opportunities for women in all aspects of the media industry receives overwhelming support, with participants advocating for its immediate adoption.
2. **Gender Equality Policy:** A comprehensive gender equality policy, which addresses gender bias and discrimination, garners immense support, with participants strongly endorsing its implementation.
3. **Participation in Decision-Making and Empowerment:** A resounding number of participants emphasize the necessity of involving women in decision-making processes and empowering them through well-structured workplace initiatives, making it a top priority.
4. **Balanced Platform for All:** Many recommend organizations to provide a balanced platform where every individual, regardless of gender, has equal opportunities for career growth and advancement, emphasizing its utmost importance.
5. **Equal Representation:** An inclusive workplace that promotes equal representation of women receives substantial backing, with participants advocating for its immediate implementation to empower women and enrich content diversity.
6. **Equal Pay Measures:** There's a unanimous call for organizations to implement equal pay measures, with participants strongly advocating for this policy to ensure fair and equal compensation for women's work.
7. **Gender Equality Training:** Gender equality training programs are highly endorsed, with participants strongly recommending their implementation. These programs will equip employees with the knowledge and awareness needed to promote gender equity within the workplace.
8. **Flexible Work Arrangements:** A flexible work arrangement policy, catering to the diverse needs of women professionals, is resoundingly recommended, highlighting its significance in empowering women and supporting work-life balance.
9. **Mentorship and Sponsorship Programs:** Mentorship and sponsorship programs are emphatically supported as key mechanisms for women's career growth and advancement. Participants endorse their immediate adoption to provide guidance and advocacy.
10. **Diverse Hiring Practices:** To ensure equitable employment opportunities, many recommend adopting diverse hiring practices. This policy will foster a workplace that values inclusivity and empowers women.
11. **Transparent Promotion Criteria:** Transparent promotion criteria are widely advocated, with participants strongly emphasizing their implementation. This policy ensures that individuals have equal opportunities for career advancement and mitigates biases in the promotion process.
12. **Generous Parental Leave Policies:** Providing generous parental leave policies is considered vital to support women in managing their professional and personal lives, contributing to their overall empowerment.

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13. **Safe Reporting Mechanisms:** Ensuring the availability of safe reporting mechanisms is viewed as an essential policy to address issues of harassment and discrimination. Participants unanimously advocate for its immediate implementation to safeguard women's well-being.
14. **Professional Development Opportunities:** The strong consensus is in favor of encouraging professional development opportunities. Participants endorse their adoption to empower women to enhance their skills and capabilities, promoting their career growth.
15. **Workplace Support Groups:** A significant number recommend the establishment of workplace support groups. These groups provide spaces where women can share experiences, seek guidance, and build a sense of community and empowerment, a policy that cannot be ignored.
16. **Inclusive Content Guidelines:** The adoption of inclusive content guidelines is endorsed. It ensures that media content represents diverse perspectives, particularly those of women, empowering women through increased representation.
17. **Work-Life Balance Prioritization:** Prioritizing work-life balance through policies and practices is overwhelmingly supported. Acknowledging the diverse roles women play, both professionally and personally, contributes to their long-term career success.
18. **Mental Health Support:** The provision of mental health support in the workplace is widely considered as crucial. Focusing on mental well-being is crucial for job satisfaction and overall empowerment.
19. **Diversity Audits:** The majority recommends conducting diversity audits within media organizations to promote transparency in this regard, ensuring inclusivity.
20. **Sharing Gender Diversity Statistics:** It's recommended to share gender diversity statistics to promote transparency and accountability, fostering a culture of equality and empowerment.
21. **Networking Opportunities:** Creating networking opportunities for women in the media industry is seen as a crucial step toward fostering an inclusive and supportive professional environment. These connections open doors to career growth and collaboration, a policy that resonates with many.

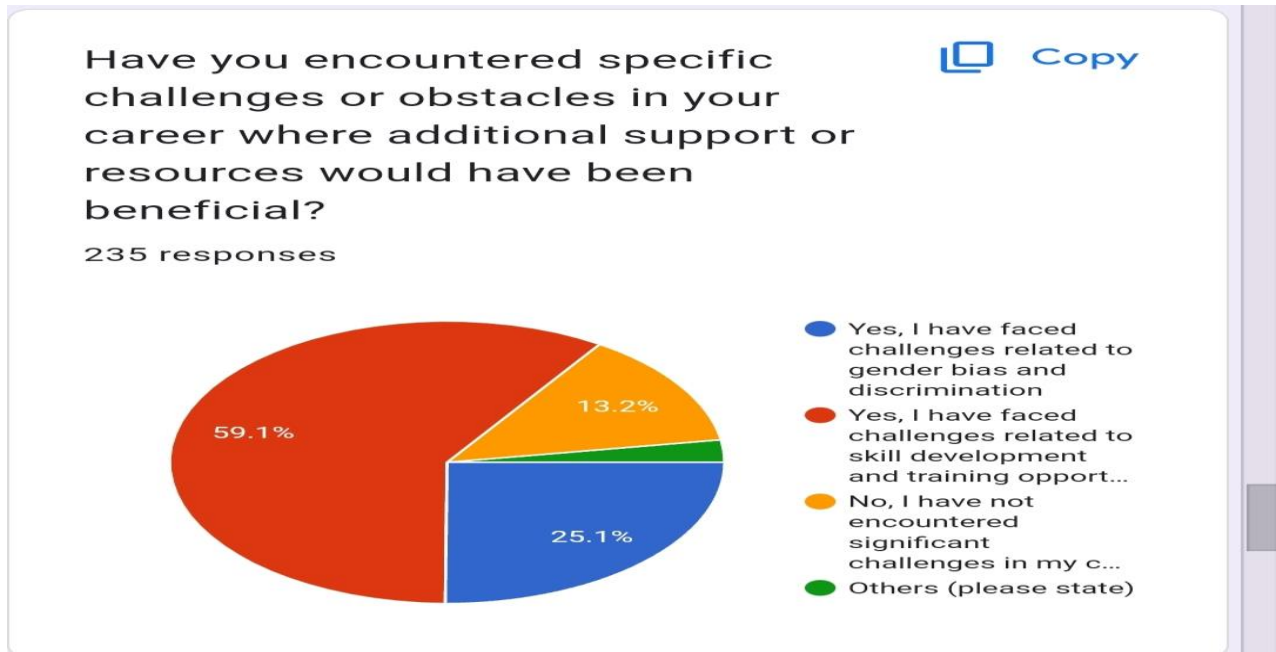
Conclusion

The findings of this research underscore the critical necessity for adopting the policies and initiatives proposed by the **LightRay! 100 Women in Leadership Virtual Summit**. The remarkable women in Nigeria's media industry, as highlighted in the study, face multifaceted challenges, including gender bias and discrimination, unequal opportunities, and limited decision-making powers/privileges, limited access to mentorship and skill development. These challenges have not only hindered their career advancement but have also affected the quality and depth of gender-streaming narratives and perspectives presented in the media space. The policy proposals and recommendations stemming from the summit provide a concrete roadmap for addressing these challenges and reshaping the media landscape. By adopting gender-sensitive policies, media organizations can promote equal opportunities, transparency in hiring and promotions, and mechanisms to report and address gender discrimination. Furthermore, the establishment of mentorship and leadership development programs can pave the way for women to access the guidance and support needed to thrive in their media careers.

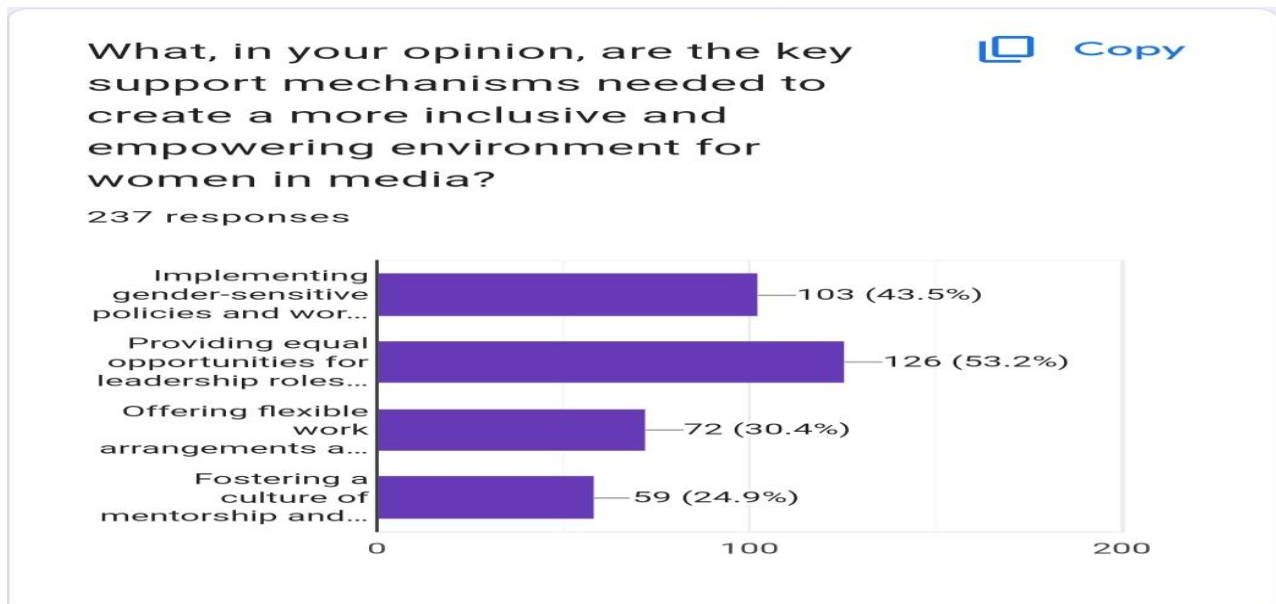
The document is recommended to be adopted by media organizations, media managers, media owners, women association groups, guilds, bodies, and individuals within the media landscape and ecosystem. Following the adoption of this policy, media organisations and heads can invite **LightRay! Media Team** to help in the setup, process, trainings and execution that will enable each media to implement effectively within their sector and ecosystem.

The need for these policies is not merely a matter of addressing gender disparities; it is a call to action to change the narrative within the media space. The media is a powerful influence in shaping public opinion and societal norms. Therefore, a diverse and inclusive media landscape is crucial for fostering a more equitable and informed society. By adopting these policies, media owners and industry leaders can actively demonstrate their commitment to a more inclusive and supportive environment, enriching the diversity and narratives presented in Nigeria's media sector. This is not just a matter of equality; it is a step towards a more balanced and comprehensive portrayal of the world through the lens of the media, where the voices and perspectives of women are equally valued and represented.

Appendices



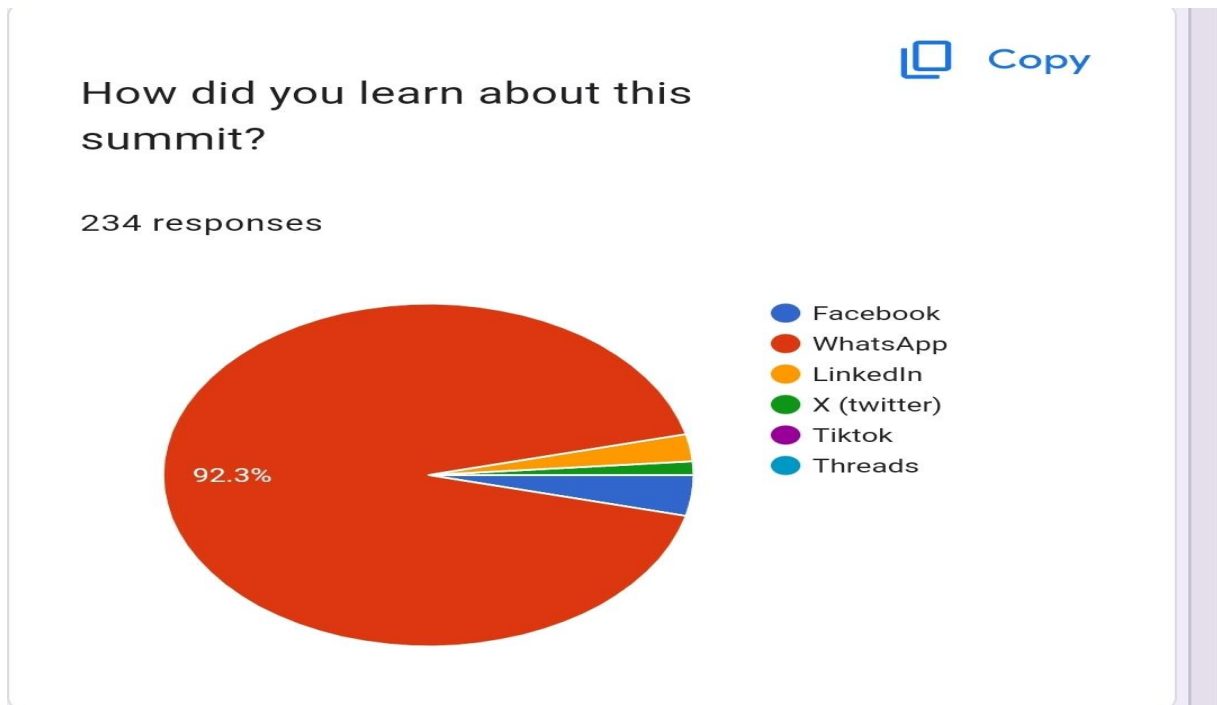
Pic 1: Chart indicating barriers and challenges faced by respondents



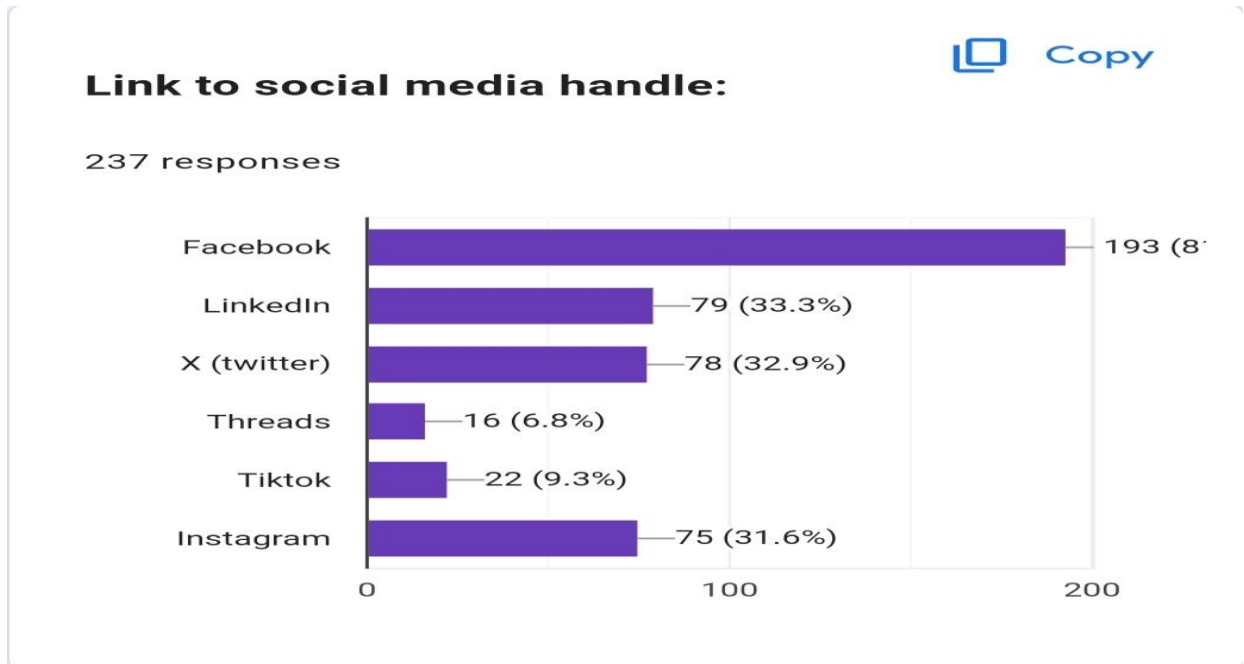
Pic 2: Chart indicating needs assessment areas identified by respondents



Pic3: Chart indicating some of the skills development areas identified by respondents



Pic 4: Chart indicating where the respondents heard about the summit.



Pic 5: Chart indicating respondents' social media presence.

Links to Publications

<https://www.thebrief.com.ng/lightray-media-will-hold-a-groundbreaking-100-women-in-leadership-virtual-summit-empowering-women-in-media-on-6-october-2023/>

<https://africangazette.net/female-journalists-urged-to-aspire-for-leadership-positions-group/>

<https://lightraymedia.org/2023/10/05/lightray-100-women-in-leadership-a-media-agenda-and-quest-for-women-of-excellence>

<https://mediacareer.ng/2023/10/05/lightray-media-holds-100-women-in-media-leadership-summit/>



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