

## **A Systematic Review of Gender Mainstreaming and Representation in the African Media Landscape**

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### **Abstract**

The strategy of gender mainstreaming is upheld to challenge androcentric policy norms and tackle gender inequality in society through the modification of inequitable gender roles and behaviours. Likewise, disparaging studies of media representations of women have been conducted. Even while there has been considerable research interest in these topics, studies that thoroughly assess gender mainstreaming and representation in the media, especially in the African context appear to be few. This research aims to close that gap. After a thorough literature search, 11 scholarly papers, mostly journal articles were found. Through content analysis, these publications were thoroughly analysed to determine research gaps and areas of interest. While research on gender mainstreaming and representation in African media is still in its infancy, the review reveals that there has been slow but steady progress in the last six years. The findings also suggest that this trajectory will likely grow even more in the next five years, partly because more of these kinds of articles are needed if gender issues are to be effectively addressed in the media. The results also showed that because things have been unjust for a very long period, most research has concentrated on establishing equal opportunities and representation for all genders.

**Keywords:** Africa, Gender mainstreaming, Gender inequality, Media, Representation.

### **Introduction**

Notwithstanding the significant success of women's participation in policymaking in Africa, this is still far from the fifty per cent gender equality target set by the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Morsy, 2019). The Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) Section "J" on women and the media, called attention to the centrality of media and ICTs for gender equality. Resounding the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), the 47th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2003 noted the responsibility of these industries to end discrimination against women. Most recently, Sustainable Development Goal 5 also referred to the role of media and ICTs in women's empowerment (World Association for Christian Communication, 2018). Girls can face

inequalities from the time of their birth and throughout their entire lives. Girls often lack access to healthcare, wholesome food, and possibilities for schooling in poor nations. Lack of access to skills and constrained employment chances are the results of educational disadvantages (Appiah-Adjei & Jamil, 2021).

Gender is a rational way to raise the consciousness of injustices distorted by institutional systems in various societies worldwide. It emphasizes both the roles and demands of men and women, rather than just on women as a distinct and homogeneous group (Pant, 2021); including concerns regarding access to and control over resources, division of labour, interests, needs, etcetera (Chukwu-Okoronkwo & Nwankwo, 2012). Scarlotta and Rockmore (2020) added that women were predominantly depicted in domestic roles during the 1950s and 1960s, while men were seen pursuing occupations outside the home (Scarlotta & Rockmore, 2020). Though their home life continues to take precedence, women now can assume more sophisticated, progressive leading positions. Notwithstanding these issues of gender, the role of women in every aspect of social life cannot be taken for granted and Morsey (2019) added that by influencing policymaking in their countries, women can help lift barriers to their participation in labour markets which at 61% remains lower than men at 67%. Gender mainstreaming is therefore vital in achieving this parity. Verloo (2005) noted that a significant number of people concur that the main goal of gender mainstreaming is to develop initiatives and policies that are gender equal. Further, gender mainstreaming is supported as a strategy to challenge androcentric policy norms and address gender inequality in society by altering unequal gender roles and practices. The issue of gender disparities can be seen in almost every aspect of our lives including workplaces. Women often do not attain top management positions hence unable to contribute much to decision making. For instance, 30% of the women sampled in a study by Yeboah-Banin, Fofie and Gadzekpo (2020) are in management roles; the majority of these are in middle management (20%) as opposed to senior management (5%) or hold executive head positions (1%). Given the proportion of women in these roles, it would seem that their contributions to the media organisations where they work would be minimal.

Media research critically examines how women are portrayed in the media because of the media's ability to influence public opinion through its methods of portrayal (Aladi & Okoro, 2021). A study by Piano et al. (2014) focused on gender stereotypes by highlighting their pervasiveness in various areas, from work to education, from books to media. Another study done by Johannessen (2006) focuses on women's representation in the media. The study examined the construction of gender in Tanzanian local television dramas and newspapers. Also, Kumari and Joshi (2015) in their study confirm that the content of media reflects the pattern of value in any society. A study (Global Media Monitoring Project) spanning twenty years in one hundred and fourteen countries found that women comprise only 24% of the people we read about, see or hear from on the television, radio and in the newspapers (Alaoui, 2021). Studies of gender in media have pointed to glaring gaps, including low numbers of female protagonists in popular films and an underrepresentation of women in award shows (Alaoui, 2021). This, Kriout (2021) believes contributes to the shaping of harmful attitudes

of disrespect and violence towards women. In addressing these issues, Rodriguez (2021) suggested that creating news by, for, and about women is an essential step in the direction of advancing gender equality and safeguarding that women and girls can have equal prospects for education, employment, and well-being.

In a study by Asante and Kamkam-Boadu (2022) that surveyed six broadcasts in Ghana, it was discovered that politicians, lawyers, doctors, university teachers and other men referred to as experts and analysts dominated the programmes and out of 1,476 experts studied, only 128 were females. According to Rattan et al., (2019), women made up a mere 19% of experts featured in news stories and 37% of reporters telling stories globally. The insignificant role of women in decision-making was made clear in the findings of a report by Yeboah-Banin, Fofie and Gadzekpo (2020) that shows that out of 318 respondents, 74% are generally found at the lower levels of the organisational hierarchy, occupying staff positions such as senior and junior reporters. Works done in Africa like Lyut (2011) on how gender is represented in South African (SA) television advertising through content analysis. Lindner (2004) looks at how women have been portrayed in the previous 50 years in ads for general interest publications and women's fashion magazines. Ulusal's (2020) study was on the presentation of female characters in cinema in Iran.

Although these issues have sparked some level of study interest as demonstrated in the articles reviewed thus far, a cursory review of the literature reveals a lack of research that systematically evaluates gender mainstreaming and representation in the media, particularly in the African context. Therefore, to help future academics concentrate their efforts where they are most needed, the current study aims to identify the various research gaps that are present in the body of literature already written about gender representation and media within the African setting with attention on media ownership, information production, and decision-making positions. To summarise the corpus of prior research on the subject, this study conducted a systematic review. This systematic review is important to other researchers in the field because it can provide a thorough assessment of the current state of the subject, current trends, and prospective solutions. Furthermore, the study assists in identifying scholars who carried out relevant research during the period of gender mainstreaming and representation in African media, along with the favoured methodologies employed in those investigations.

### **Gender and Gender Mainstreaming**

Understanding what gender means is necessary to fully comprehend the goals of gender mainstreaming. According to Hankivsky (2013), there are often misconceptions as to what the concept of gender means and how it differs from "sex". To him "Gender refers to the array of socially constructed roles and relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours, values, relative power, and influence that society ascribes to both men and women. Gender roles and characteristics do not exist in isolation, but are defined in relation to one another" (638). Gender is perhaps the basic category we use for sorting human beings, and it is a key issue when discussing representation. The concepts of

gender (what does it mean to be a boy or a girl?) are composed of elements of our own identity and the identities we assume other people to have (Popaa & Gavriliu, 2015). To Ulusal (2020), the concept of gender consists of social and cultural norms that are determined and imposed by society in relation to masculinity and femininity. The reflection of this concept in society constitutes the roles assigned to men and women in that society (Yilmaz, 2007)

Understood as an approach to encourage gender equality, gender mainstreaming has received substantial attention worldwide (Caglar, 2013). Gender equality units have been established, new policy tools have been introduced, and new procedures have been created. Even though countries across the globe have understood the need for gender equality, Bustreo et al. (2022) maintain that no nation is likely to achieve gender equality by 2030, notwithstanding extensive advocacy for gender mainstreaming as a means of realising gender equality goals. Gender mainstreaming is an approach to policy-making that takes into account both women's and men's interests and concerns (Council of Europe, 2024). It is widely acknowledged that the objective of mainstreaming is to change the status quo and promote gender equality for both men and women in all policies and initiatives (Hankivsky, 2013). Also, Walby (2011) makes a strong case for gender mainstreaming as one of the most successful tools of the last generation for ensuring that gender perspectives and the goal of gender equality are central to all activities within government and organisations.

### **Gender Representation in the Media**

Policy declarations and guidelines integrating a gender perspective in humanitarian response have been released for decades (Gupta et al., 2023). Gender mainstreaming has been the prevalent strategy along this progression. To implement gender mainstreaming, all planned actions, including laws, policies, and programs, must be evaluated and their effects on men and women must be differentiated at all levels and in all domains (ECOSOC, 1997; IASC, 2020). A hub-and-spoke organizational structure is typically used for mainstreaming, with a central gender unit in charge of creating the organization's gender policy and gender focal points positioned throughout the departments and offices to offer technical assistance in putting the policy into practice. This frequently entails instruction in addition to producing resources like checklists and mainstreaming guidelines.

Instead of producing results in eliminating gender gaps or changing an organization's programming strategy for women's empowerment, gender mainstreaming has turned into a meaningless "tick-the-box" (or add-on) process (Madsen, 2011; Pillay, 2018; Thoretz, 2019; Lokot, 2021). Because of its crucial role in advancing and maintaining divisive narratives, the media was closely associated with the conflict. Both then and now, the media can fabricate and replicate certain realities that mould both individual and societal prejudices and worldviews. Gender equality appears to be diminishing and women's meaningful engagement in public and political life appears to be waning, even if a growing number of women are entering the media and political spheres (GMMP 2020; Haider 2020). In light of this circumstance and the study's

framework, it is reasonable to ask how current realities concerning women and other members of disadvantaged populations are created in many African nations, as well as what gender-related concerns are associated with the subject (Aladi & Okoro, 2021).

The majority of the gender and media studies conducted in Africa have focused on women's engagement, representation, audience response, and other related topics. Studies on women's representation in the media have been conducted all around the world. For example, Johannessen (2009) concentrated on the construction of gender in Tanzanian local television shows and newspapers. Additionally, Meyer's (2003) study on Pentecostal cinema culture in Ghana noted that Ghanaian filmmakers typically strive to create films that suit their tastes to appeal to their female audience, many of whom actively embrace a Pentecostal type of Christianity. Thus, these movies honour the devoted housewife and mother. Studies on how female politicians are portrayed in Ghanaian and Nigerian media suggest that the newsroom culture is masculinized and ignores concerns about women in news reporting. This is because males own, and manage the majority of media outlets (Trabelsi, 2023). As a result, it is plausible to view media coverage of Ghanaian women in politics as highlighting societal gender prejudice. However, as noted by Kari (2020), Ogbbone (2020), and Gever (2020), women play a significant role in a country's growth. Similar opinions are held by other researchers (Asogwa et al., 2020; Okoro & Gever, 2018; Nwabuzor & Gever, 2014). Media study critically examines how women are portrayed in the media because of the media's ability to influence public opinion through its methods of portrayal.

Scholars (Allan, 2004; Burke & Mazzarella, 2008; Omoera & Emwinromwankhoe, 2024) generally agree that public perceptions of gender and the world are influenced by the quality of news media coverage. According to Gadzekpo (2011), media liberalization brought about by the democratic revolutions throughout the continent in the 1990s has rekindled interest in the representation of gender in African media. Gadzekpo (2011) claims that the re-democratization of Africa sparked unparalleled growth in mass media, including print, radio, television, film, the Internet, and mobile phones. Nonetheless, others argue that the patriarchal nature of African civilization is reflected in how women are portrayed in the media. According to Kumari and Joshi (2015), media material mirrors societal norms and values. According to Davtyan-Gevorgyan (2016), media items are typically made by men, to men's preferences, and for men, which is one of the reasons why there are discriminating representations of women in the media.

Kari (2020), Ogbbone (2020), and Gever (2020) point out that women play a significant role in a country's development hence the need to achieve gender equality in all aspects of our lives. Tyson (2015) added that women account for half of the global labour supply and about 70% of global consumption demand, yet continue to lag behind men in economic participation and opportunity by 15 to 25 per cent in even the most gender-equal societies. Also, over the past decade especially, overall global progress towards gender equality has been decimal, slow, and even stagnant. The study of trends in gender equality found that this slow progress is correspondingly replicated in Ghana's performance in the last ten years (Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research,

2023). In cross-national comparative research by Hankivisky (2013), where five countries were studied, the findings show that even though there are many gender mainstreaming guides, tools, and checklists available, putting them into practice can be difficult and confusing due to a lack of clarity regarding the gender mainstreaming strategy's essential terms and concepts, such as gender and equality.

The relationships between men and women are based on massive power differences, interdependence, physical and psychological intimacy (Piano et al., 2014). This is evident in the media landscape as well. According to Scarlotta and Rockmore (2020), patriarchal prejudices may be seen in every part of her on-screen persona, including the amount of time she spends on screen and in what context. It also involves the way she is viewed by other characters and her interaction with them, including the way she is made to appear to them, and the way she dresses. Another more subdued example is the dehumanisation of the female form in advertising. rather than showcasing a woman's whole body, they dissect her into areas of her body that are typically associated with sex, reducing her to simply her lips, breasts, hips, and so forth (Ross, 2012). Mundia (2023) also argued that there is a gender equality dimension related to media as a profession as well as to media content. Regarding media as a profession, women are underrepresented in media ownership, information production, and decision-making positions. However, promoting gender equality should involve active participation from the media. Over time, stereotypes could be eradicated, but this is currently a desired outcome that cannot be entirely achieved or implemented in all regions (Popaa & Gavrilu, 2015).

Women's representation is glaringly inadequate. In addition, far too many women continue to be influenced by gender stereotypes when it comes to their choice of studies and future employment prospects (Piano et al, 2014). To Popaa and Gavrilu (2015) the way gender is represented in the media does influence how we perceive gender roles. Certain gender-specific features can strengthen the image of what a man and a woman are, and how they should behave in relation to each other. Gender inequalities are even more blatant in media content: women as a group are underrepresented from both a quantitative and a qualitative perspective. Globally, women represent only about a quarter of the persons heard, read about or seen in the news. Not only do these clichés appear in movies and television shows, but they also appear in the commercials that accompany them. Women are frequently depicted in advertisements as submissive in home environments and with household items, whereas males are in enterprises involving "masculine" products like automobiles or booze (Scarlotta & Rockmore, 2020).

African media, like media worldwide, has been criticised for its lack of diversity and representation, particularly when it comes to women and other marginalised groups (Mundia, 2023) the few female presences in decision-making positions seem to dominantly "serve" a patriarchal agenda, particularly in Black African countries (Endong, 2017). The way women are portrayed in the media has changed significantly over the years: plus-size models appear on magazine covers, female superheroes rule the silver screen, and #Girlpower has amassed over 26 million Instagram tags. While it is important to acknowledge these developments, female

representation in the media has not much improved, despite what the business would have us believe. Even if there has been an evolution in the image of women, negative gender stereotypes about women are still being spread by the media (Scarlotta & Rockmore, 2020). Also, female journalists and feminist media personnel have been considered by such organisations as strong pillars in governmental and non-governmental initiatives geared towards increasing the access and leadership of women in the media industry (Endong, 2017).

### **Methods and Procedure**

The study “Gender Mainstreaming and Representation in the African Media Landscape” employed a systematic literature review as its research technique. This strategy entails identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing existing literature on a certain topic (Tranfield et al., 2003). A systematic literature review is a relevant research strategy for this study since it provides for a full examination of gender mainstreaming and representation in Ghana as well as in other African countries when it comes to media. The review entails a methodical and organized approach to locating and analysing literature, ensuring that all relevant studies are included in the analysis (Kitchenham et al., 2009). Using this technique, the researcher will be able to discover and analyse current studies on gender mainstreaming and representation in the African media landscape from 2017 to 2023. The systematic literature review was carried out per an established protocol that details the search strategy, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and data extraction techniques. The search was undertaken using terms relating to gender mainstreaming, representation, and media landscape in electronic databases such as Web of Science, Scopus, and Google Scholar. The titles and abstracts of the identified papers were evaluated, and those that matched the inclusion criteria were chosen for full-text evaluation. The data from the chosen studies were collected and analysed using standardized data extraction forms.

### **Data Acquisition**

A systematic search of electronic resources was conducted to uncover relevant studies on gender mainstreaming and representation activities in the African media landscape from 2017 to 2023 for the study's material and methods section. The search was carried out by an established protocol that described the inclusion and exclusion criteria, data extraction procedures, and analytic methodologies (which are further explained in Table 1). Web of Science, Scopus, and Google Scholar were among the electronic databases utilized for the search. These databases were chosen because they are extensive, multidisciplinary, and contain a diverse collection of scholarly publications, conference proceedings, and reports (Sutton et al., 2019).

To guarantee that relevant studies were collected, the search method employed a combination of keywords and Boolean operators. Keywords included “gender mainstreaming”, “representation”, “Africa” and “media”. Other words highlighted include: “gender inequality”, “discrimination” and “opportunities”. The study's inclusion criteria were publications published in English between 2017 and 2023 that

focused on gender mainstreaming and representation in the African media landscape. Excluded studies were those that did not match the inclusion criteria or were duplicates (Sharma & Webster, 2019). The titles and abstracts of the selected papers were evaluated, and those that matched the inclusion criteria were chosen for full-text examination. The full-text review was carried out to assess the studies' relevance to the study questions and aims. The data extraction procedure entailed using a standardized data extraction form to obtain pertinent data from the chosen research. The data extraction form includes information about the author of the study, the year it was published, the research question, methods, findings, and limitations. Content analysis was used to find patterns, themes, and links among the studies using the retrieved data. The process of discovering, classifying, and categorizing patterns and themes in qualitative data is known as content analysis (Krippendorff, 2018).

**Table 1: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

Include if:	Exclude if:
The key concepts of gender mainstreaming and representation in the media are in the title, abstract, keywords, or body of the article.	The key concepts of gender mainstreaming and representation in the media that are not in the title, abstract, keywords, or body of the article
The concepts of gender mainstreaming and representation in the media were fully developed throughout the paper	The concept of gender mainstreaming and representation or its form was only mentioned briefly throughout the paper.
It was a published scientific paper in a peer-reviewed journal, a dissertation, a book or a book chapter.	It was grey literature or paper from a periodic publication (e.g., newspaper), blog, or institutional website.
The language was English	It was published in a language other than English.

**Source: Author's Compilation**

A systematic review was employed as the research approach for this study's material and methods section. A systematic review is a strategy for discovering, evaluating, and synthesizing data from relevant studies to address a specific research issue (Sharma et al., 2019; Tranfield et al., 2003). A comprehensive search of electronic resources was conducted to uncover relevant research on gender mainstreaming and representation in the African media landscape from 2017 to 2023. The search was carried out by an established protocol that described the inclusion and exclusion criteria, data extraction procedures, and analytic methodologies.

This study's systematic review technique offers various advantages, including the capacity to synthesize information from multiple studies, eliminate bias promote



transparency in the research process, and provide a thorough overview of the research issue (Sutton et al., 2019). The technique does, however, have drawbacks, including the possibility of publication bias and the inability to account for variations in research design and quality (Sharma & Webster, 2019). To address these constraints, the procedure for this study was intended to involve a thorough search of different electronic databases as well as the use of a standardized data extraction form to guarantee that all relevant data were acquired and analysed.

## Findings and Discussion

To assist the researcher become familiar with the data, Braun and Clarke (2018) suggested the immersion criteria, which was satisfied by reading the chosen data closely and continuously. To compile information on the study focus, theories, methods, findings, and discussion sections of each piece of literature, the researcher created a table with columns (Bhaskaran et al., 2022). The data that was taken from the chosen works was combined as the last action taken by the researcher. This was accomplished by translating the issues found by looking at the final excerpts under each column. Thomas and Harden (2008), cited in Bhaskaran et al. (2022), define translation as the process of identifying and classifying related concepts from separate investigations. The synthesis's findings are included in this paper's findings and discussions section.

**Table 2: Summary of Findings**

Author/Title	The focus of the Study	Theory(ies)	Method	Journal
Aladi, Jonah Alice and Okoro, Nnanyelugo (2021).	Media Representation of Nigerian Women in the News	Agenda-setting theory and social construction theory	Qualitative (Content Analysis)	Journal of International Women's Studies
Akapule and Paul Kwode (2020).	Media Coverage of Female Parliamentary Candidates in Ghana: An Analysis of the Daily Graphic and the Ghanaian Times Newspapers	Agenda-setting theory	Qualitative	International Journal of Innovative Research and Advanced Studies
Ke Cai (2023).	Representation of gender and development issues in African media from a Southern	Social gender theory and theory of development	Qualitative	Media, Communications, Creative Arts, Language, and Literature

	Theory perspective			
Macharia and Barata Mir (2022).	Global study: Gender equality and media regulation	Agenda-setting theory	Quantitative	Journal of Sustainable Journalism
Gender Links for the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Information and Communications (STC- IC) November (2017)	Media Portrayal of Women and Media Gender Gap in Africa	Agenda-setting theory	Desk review	African Union Agenda
<i>Mweninguwe</i> (2023).	Embracing gender equality in the African media space	Agenda-setting theory	Qualitative	Media diversity institute
Kassova (2020).	A report on women's under-representation in news media; on their continual marginalization in news coverage and on the under-reported issue of gender inequality	Agenda-setting theory	Desk review	Worlds of Journalism
Chavranski, Canino, Lebret (2022).	Gender equality in the media and media content: This study details and deepens the practices and needs in the fight against sexist stereotypes in the media of four sub-Saharan African countries	Gender equality	Qualitative (online interviews)	CFI, Media Development

Yeboah-Banin, Fofie & Gadzekpo (2020).	Status of women in the Ghanaian media: providing evidence for gender equality and advocacy project	Feminism theories	Quantitative (semi-structured questionnaires)	School of Information and Communication Studies, Ghana
Oko-Epelle and Adelabu (2022).	Portrayal of Gender in Select Nigerian Mainstream Newspapers	Gender role and status conferral theories.	Qualitative (Content Analysis)	GVU Journal of Communication Studies
Izunwanne, Nnedimma, Bassey and Elesia, Chukwudubem (2020).	Gender and the Media: Assessing the Visibility of Women in the Nigerian Press from Five Widely Circulated National Dailies	Muted group theory	Desk review	International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)

*Source: Author's Compilation*

### Research Rate

The researcher aimed to highlight the relatively new body of scholarly studies on gender mainstreaming and representation in African media, as the table above suggests. To obtain up-to-date information about the topic. For this systematic review, a total of eleven papers were available for analysis. Only one reviewed article was from 2017 as a majority of them (4) were published in 2020; followed by three (3) published in 2022. Also, two (2) were 2023 articles with one (1) being 2021. This shows that articles related to gender mainstreaming and representation in the African media landscape are gaining ground as papers on the matter seem to increase every year. This notwithstanding, publication information shows that most of these articles (7) were published outside Africa and thus, had international journal sources. Also, it was realized that, multiple disciplines or fields have tackled gender mainstreaming and representation in the African media landscape as the results from the table prove this which gives the impression that, not only journalism and mass communication fields are giving credence to matters of gender mainstreaming and representation in the media space in Africa.

### Discussion of the Findings

The paper sought to identify the focus of scholarly articles on gender mainstreaming and representation within the African media landscape. The findings revealed that all the studies focused on the practice of gender mainstreaming and representation from different contexts. However, under this focus, three themes emerged. These are the *advocacy for women representation* because, from the articles reviewed, female underrepresentation was a regular feature. For instance, the work of Kassova (2020) showed how women in the media space in South Africa and Nigeria were underrepresented. Also, the theme of *gender equality* made headlines in most of the publications as well as “*media opportunities*” were mentioned. According to Canino and Lebret (2022), females in the media space in Ghana, Côte d’Ivoire, Niger and the DRC are discriminated against and there is a stereotype issue as well as big opportunities often go to males and this does not support gender equality and for that matter gender mainstreaming and representation. These three (3) themes were developed because the majority of the articles (6) in Table 2 were qualitative studies and thus, results were more knowledge-driven and tackled issues at hand appropriately. Desk reviews were also more prominent as compared to quantitative studies regarding gender mainstreaming and representation in the African media space. In addition, the agenda-setting theory was the most used theory in the sampled articles with six (6) authors opting for this theory. This is perhaps because, in creating change in gender mainstreaming and representation; setting an agenda becomes important as this agenda is what can be used to develop policies that give equal opportunities for representation in the media space.

### **Identified Gaps**

From a methodological point of view, quantitative studies on gender mainstreaming and representation in the African media landscape are limited which further implies that survey studies on the continent are limited as well. In as much as case studies probe deep and produce findings, such results cannot be generalized and therefore, none of the findings from the articles can represent the entire African situation with regards to gender mainstreaming and representation on the media landscape. Studies on gender mainstreaming and representation in the African media landscape seem to be on the surge but this was not the case a decade ago. However, it is worrying to know that on a continent with 52 countries only a few countries are tackling the issues of gender mainstreaming and representation, especially in the media space hence, the limited number of studies in Table 2. As seen from Table 2, most of the studies were from West Africa notably Nigeria and Ghana. Therefore, this is a gap that must be addressed from a scholarly perspective both in theory and in practice.

### **Conclusion**

This study carried out a detailed evaluation of gender mainstreaming and representation in the African media space from 2017 to 2023. The objective was to acquire insight into the growth and evolution of gender roles in the African media landscape over this period. The researcher discovered major trends, milestones, and obstacles that have formed and confronted the continent through this review. To start with, it is clear that over the last 6

years, Africa has made great progress in developing its gender mainstreaming and representation policies. Although, issues of gender inequality and a lack of representation persist for females; gender barometer reports show that these numbers are steadily falling and further pinpointing areas where improvements can be made. The comprehensive literature search identified 11 academic papers made up of a majority of journals. These articles were critically examined through content analysis to identify research focus and gaps. The review shows that, while research on gender mainstreaming and representation in the African media landscape is still at its infant stage, there appears to be steady but slow progress in the last six years and per the findings, this trajectory is likely to grow even further in the next five years and this also because more of such articles are required if gender issues are to be effectively dealt with in the media space. Findings also revealed that most of the studies have focused on creating equal opportunities and representation for every gender because things have been unfair for a very long time. Insights from the review suggest a gap in the literature relative to methodology and a total commitment by all African countries to write on gender mainstreaming and representation, especially in the media landscape. The study also found that the majority of the examined papers generally addressed many different aspects of women's underrepresentation in various disciplines. It also discusses the need for greater work to be done in combating these sexist assumptions about gender as well as concerns of equity, justice, and gender inequality. Suggestions for additional research can aim to address these subtleties by examining significant obstacles to concerns of justice, equality, and gender parity in urban settings. Additionally, more research can be done to determine how women activists and advocates have contributed to the fight against gender stereotypes in the media.

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