

# Evaluation of Professional Safety Measures Adopted By Female Journalists in South-East, Nigeria

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## Abstract

This study examined professional safety measures adopted by female journalists in south-east, Nigeria. The safety of women journalists across the globe has remained a burning issue with far reaching implications on journalism practice. The general objective of the study was to examine the professional safety measures adopted by female journalists in South-East in the mist of insecurity in the region. Convergent Mixed Methods design was adopted for this study. The population and sample size of the study was 440, made up all female journalists in Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo, 422 copies of questionnaire were returned and used for the analysis. In addition, 15 persons were interviewed. One hypothesis was formulated and tested using F-statistic. The safety measures that ranked topmost were that the victim should not try to provoke the abductors/captors to which 98% of the respondents agreed. The least recommended measure is 'Don't try to escape at all'. The findings of this study showed that, the awareness of the safety guidelines for female journalists is the most significant factor that affects the safety of female journalists in the South East Nigeria, attitude of female journalists in South East Nigeria significantly influences their safety while engaging in their professional assignments. Female journalists in South-East Nigeria should, therefore, take deliberate measures to increase their level of knowledge of standard safety measures/protocols especially that of UNESCO. Organization-provided trainings on safety of female journalists on-the-job are also recommended so as to equip female journalists with the requisite knowledge to enhance their safety.

**Keywords: Professional, Safety Measures, Female, Journalists, South-East Nigeria**

## Introduction

Considering the recent security threats occasioned by the activities of the unknown gunmen (UGM), Fulani herdsmen, Ebubeagu vigilante and the agitations of the proscribed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and their militant wing- the Eastern Security Network (ESN) enforcing weekly sit-at-home, this study interrogates professional safety measures adopted by female journalists south-east, Nigeria.

Indeed, the argument for the safety of women journalists in Nigeria and elsewhere in the world has enormous empirical backing. However, the extent to which female journalists and other professional female media workers protect themselves has not been established beyond "avoidance mechanism" (avoiding some topics or events that could lead to security risks). This indeed deserves an empirical interrogation. Unfortunately, Pate (2021) avers that:

Journalists hardly received safety education while in formal journalism training in Nigeria... the NUJ does little capacity building on issues of safety but rises to defend members when violations occur. Some had received on-the-job safety training facilitated mainly by international agencies and NGOs.

Positive answers to these questions may be also indicating positive adherence to practicing professional safety measures in risk situations or insecure environments. Below are some of the protective measures recommended for female media workers working in conflict or risky terrains by the International Federation of Journalists:

**Assignment description:** identify dates of travel, itinerary, and names of staff members, freelancers, and others participating in the assignment. **Risk analysis:** identify potential security risks associated with the assignment, potentially hostile actors and possibly relevant hostile actions or attacks. **Lodging identify:** All hotels and other types of accommodation. Explain why the proposed lodging option is considered safe. Indicate whether the lodging has functioning communication (phone lines, Internet access). Provide contact information. Also Transportation arrangements have to be properly describe, if using public transport, indicate associated risks and how they will be addressed. If hiring a car, explain how the driver has been or will be selected. Provide the driver's information. **Check-in procedures:** Specify check-in procedures for the assignment. **Regularity and times:** specify both the time in the area of travel and the time at location where the security check-in person is based. The usual security interval for check-ins is one hour, meaning follow-up action will be taken if after one hour from specified check-in time. In addition, specify those responsible for receiving check-ins, when they should notify the supervisor; If and when should the news organisation try to reach emergency contacts; What further action should or should not take place (which may include notifying relatives, notifying other media, or contacting the embassy). **Contacts:** Provide all contact information for the following: Staff travelling on the assignment, staff conducting check-ins, supervisors and other back-up contacts in headquarters, non-staff participants (consultants, interpreters, drivers). **Emergencycontacts in-country:** indicate a designated in-country security contact, provide a list of additional contacts, U.N. or humanitarian staff, local NGOs (IFJ, 2014).

The South-East geopolitical zone is one of the six Geopolitical zones of Nigeria. The zone is made up of five states namely Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States. According to the 2022 population projection by national bureau of statistics, the zone has a total population of 23,488,518. Abia State has a total population of 4,143,093; Anambra State has a total population of 5,953,517; Ebonyi State has a population of 3,242,518. Enugu and Imo States are 4,690,053 and 5,459,337 respectively. A summation of all gives us 23,488,518 (NPC 2020).

The indigenous language of the South-East zone is Igbo and the indigenes of the zone are generally referred to as Ndi-Igbo, meaning 'Igbo people.' They are essentially into different kinds of businesses. The existence of two of the biggest commercial cities in the zone (Onitsha in Anambra State and Aba in Abia State), have continued to trigger business interests amongst most of the indigenes of the zone (Onyike, 2019).

### **Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of the study is to evaluate professional safety measures adopted by female journalists in covering insecurity in South-East, Nigeria. Specifically the researcher shall interrogate the following:

1. To examine the professional safety measures female journalists in south east observe when kidnapped/held captive by security operative during Sit- at –home by IPOB
2. To ascertain professional safety measures female journalists in south east observe when confronted with sexual harassment or attempted rape
3. To determine differences between female journalists that observe the safety measures and those who do not

**Research Hypothesis**

H<sub>0</sub>: Extent of observance/adherence to safety measures does not significantly influence the safety of female journalist in South East Nigeria.

H<sub>A</sub>: Extent of observance/adherence to safety measures significantly influences the safety of female journalists in South East Nigeria.

**Concept of Safety and Gender in Journalism**

Women journalists are more likely to be the target of different forms of harassments like gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion. World Health Organisation(WHO), The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine , (LSHTM) and Media Rights Capital (MRC), (2013) in UN Women (n.d.) records that, worldwide, one in three women has experienced some form of physical and or sexual violence in her lifetime. According to Free Press Unlimited (n.d.), a survey was conducted jointly by the London based International news safety institute and the Washington, DC based International Women’s Media Foundation which was launched in august 2013 and completed in 2014 by almost 1,000 women from around the world:

A survey of 2014 found that the majority of threats, intimidation and abuse directed toward respondents occurred in the workplace and was perpetrated by male bosses, supervisors and co-workers. It also found that most incidents of harassment and violence were never reported, even though the majority of women who experienced them said they were psychologically affected.

Ibrahim (2016) in Hadiza and Binta (2021) opines that in Nigeria, “female journalists face many problems in the course of their effort to report stories of public interest.” He further states that “the two factors that aggravate and make the problems more severe in Northern Nigeria are culture and tradition.” With Nigeria being a patriarchal and conservative society, the danger to women journalists is always present. Due to these harassments, female journalists who cannot handle the situation quit their jobs and media organizations have lost good and dedicated female journalists. This could be as a result of societal perception, their working conditions and their safety. Therefore, it is imperative to acknowledge that the safety of women journalists is at the centre of both safety and gender.

For the safety of journalist, Reporter Without Borders safety handbook gave some measures that female journalists working in dangerous areas need to adhere to, Respect the local dress code and err on the conservative side; Wear loose even shapeless, clothes; Wear a long tunic, loose pants with a pullover shirt and a thick belt. These layers will slow down an attacker. Wear comfortable shoes that will allow you to run easily. And if sexually attacked or raped, struggle, shout, and call for help from those around you. If you spot a group of women, call out to them to ask them for help or to sound the alarm or tell the attacker that you have children, that you are pregnant, that you could be his mother or his sister, or try to distract his attention to something nearby (RWB, 2014).

The statistics all over the world for the murder of journalists in 2012 showed that sixty three percent of journalists covering politics were murdered, while fifty one percent covering war were murdered. In countries where politics is practiced as war, the death figures hardly come as a surprise. The other beats showing percentages of journalists murdered include: 9% of those covering Business, 13% of those covering Corruption, 16% of those covering Crime, 14% of those covering Culture, 40% of those covering Human Rights, and 3% of those covering Sports. “With the war within Syria, the country has the highest number of journalists killed in 2012. 22 journalists were killed there (Olorunda, 2019).

Nigeria was among the countries listed for the death of journalists with *Channels* TV reporter, Eneche Akogwu who was shot on January 20, 2012 in Kano. But there has been more before that and hopefully there will not be any more after the death of Eneche. The wasteful death of journalists diminishes the value of press lives, impairs the sanctity and the dignity of the human race. Journalists feared attacks from militant groups and were concerned about the ability of security forces to keep them safe. Several journalists have been beaten while covering rallies. According to media reports, these attacks, as well as bombings, have led the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) to boycott coverage in Rivers State. Members of the union in Port Harcourt, the State Capital, held a peaceful protest on March 9 calling on authorities to ensure the safety of journalists (Olorunda, 2019).

On February 2, in Gombe State, the North-Eastern region of Nigeria, five journalists suffered cuts and bruises and had their bus damaged by a mob when they fled after a bomb exploded minutes after President Goodluck Jonathan and his convoy left a rally. The injured journalists were Adamu Saleh of *The Daily Trust* newspapers, Abdullahi Tukur, of the *Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria* (FRCN), Williams Attah, of *National Mirror* newspapers, and Iliya Habila and Hajara Leman, of the *News Agency of Nigeria*. Timothy Choji, Chairman of the NUJ, Gombe State Correspondents' Chapel, reported that, a mob hurled stones at the journalists as they fled in their bus, which was clearly marked as press. Choji said no police were on hand to intervene and no arrests have yet been made. Choji, who is also the north-eastern bureau chief of the state-owned *Voice of Nigeria*, said journalists in Gombe and the other five states in the north-east, work in fear (This Day, cited in Olorunda, 2019).

According to Choji:

NUJ in Gombe is contemplating boycotting the elections if adequate security for journalists cannot be guaranteed. Our lives are not safe at all; we are left at our own mercy. We have approached the police to give us security cover otherwise we might not be able to go about monitoring the elections.

On February 10, 2015, Eric Etuk, a cameraman with the state-owned *Nigeria Television Authority* (NTA), was beaten and stabbed in the arm while covering a clash between supporters of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the main opposition, All Progressives Congress (APC), in the south-eastern state of Imo. The police retrieved Etuk's camera without the recorded tape, but no one has yet been brought to justice (Olorunda, 2019).

The Lagos-based International Press Centre, which monitors attacks on journalists in Nigeria, documented at least 32 incidents of attacks on the press between November and February. It found that security forces and militants were responsible for 24 of the cases. No one has been brought to justice, the report said. It added: "Police and other security agencies have continued to be the principal perpetrators of attacks on journalists and media practitioners especially in view of the forthcoming elections. The fact that police and other security agencies are culpable is particularly alarming" (Olorunda, 2019).

Women journalists in South-East, Nigeria must continue with their professional activities of engaging the public with the news, regardless of the security challenges threatening the zone and the risks thereof. Professional safety practices as provided for in the *Journalist's Security Guide* are precautionary measures, which if understood and imbibed can prevent or reduce the extent of risks encountered by journalists working in volatile environments

The safety of professional women journalists across the globe has remained a burning issue. The report by Chocarro, Clarke, Gutiérrez and Taing (2020), that "not fewer than sixty-three percent (63%) of female journalists at some point have been threatened or harassed" is an indication of the enormity of this action. What that means is that a significant majority of the women who practice journalism or those that work in media organizations have been attacked at least once in their career. This trend, if allowed to fester could have far

reaching implications on journalism practice and the attitude of women towards the profession, especially in Nigeria where male chauvinism still largely exists.

To curtail the development, there are several professional and legal provisions for the safety of the professional journalist- women journalists inclusive. ‘UNESCO’s plan for safety of journalists’, ‘UN plan of action for safety of journalists and the issue of impunity’, and the ‘journalists’ security guide’, are some of the provisions to protect journalists in discharging their duties. The journalist’s security guide, for instance, provides the basic requirements for a journalist’s protection especially when covering crimes, conflicts and volatile environments. November 2<sup>nd</sup>, has also been reserved as the “International day to end impunity for crimes against journalists” by the United Nations (UN).

Most of these frameworks and provisions for safety are universal declarations, therefore, their effectiveness in preventing crimes against journalists in Nigeria can only be guaranteed if professional journalists adopt these safety protocols.

### **Theoretical Framework**

In giving theoretical backing to this study, Health Belief Model, The Health Belief Model (HBM) was developed in the early 1950s by social psychologists Irwin M. Rosenstock, Godfrey M. Hochbaum, S. Stephen Kegeles, and Howard Leventhal at the U.S. Public Health Service in order to understand the failure of people to adopt disease prevention strategies or screening tests for the early detection of disease. Later uses of HBM were for patients' responses to symptoms and compliance with medical treatments (Onyike, 2019, citing, Boston University School of Public Health, 2013). Demographic characteristics such as socio-economic status, gender, ethnicity, and age were known to be associated with preventive health-related behaviour patterns as well as differential use of health services (Rosenstock, 1974; cited in, Abraham & Sheeran, 2015).

The relevance of this model to this study is that, it underlines the female journalist’s likely motivation for adopting the professional safety guidelines. Unarguably, the decision to adopt or observe the professional safety guidelines is individually motivated and, therefore, may be subject to the female journalist’s evaluation of the level of risk involved in the journalistic practice as well as the extent of her susceptibility to risks, threats and attacks.

### **Methodology**

Survey research method was considered appropriate since the study involves measuring perception of target population. According to Osuala (1987, p.181), “survey research method focuses on people and their beliefs, attitude, and behaviour toward a phenomenon”. Given that this study centres on professional safety measures by female journalists in South-East, Nigeria, survey research method was considered most appropriate. The population of the study constitutes female journalist in South East Nigeria, with a total population of 440 (NAWOJ, 2021). Census was carried out on all the populations because the total population can be managed by the researcher. Instrument for data collection adopted for this study was questionnaire and interview guide, the quantitative data was collated, presented and analyzed with tables, charts and simple percentages. Some of the quantitative variables that have the same response pattern were merged and presented using composite tables. The implication is that in some instances, responses that would have been presented in two or more tables were contained in one table. The likert-scale data were analysed using weighted mean approach. The weights assigned to the responses are the descending-order method, namely, 5 for ‘Strongly Agree’, 4 for ‘Agree’, 3 for ‘Undecided’, 2 for ‘Disagree’, and 1 for ‘Strongly Disagree’. The computed mean value was compared to the likert average which is 3.0 in this study (i.e.,  $(5 + 4 + 3 + 2 + 1) \div 5 = 3$ ).

On the other hand, the research hypotheses were tested using F-statistics computed from one-way analysis of

variance (ANOVA). Also, the qualitative data were presented using the explanation building technique.

**Result**

A total of four hundred and forty (440) copies of questionnaire were distributed to female journalists in south east Nigeria, out of which four hundred and twenty two copies were correctly filled and returned, the respondents were supplied with six points that describe safety measures female journalists can resort to when facing kidnap/captivity. They were to choose one answer from five options: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

**Table 1: Safety measures when facing kidnap/captivity**

S/N	Safety measures when facing kidnap/captivity	SA	A	U	D	SD	N	Point Score	Mean	SD	Decision
I	Appear calm.	241	94	20	45	22	422	1753	4.15	1.222	Accepted
Ii	Don't try to escape at all.	133	127	47	90	25	422	1519	3.60	1.287	Accepted
Iii	Only attempt escape if you know you will succeed.	187	184	17	5	29	422	1761	4.17	1.059	Accepted
Iv	Don't provoke the abductors/captors.	153	237	32	0	0	422	1809	4.29	0.598	Accepted
V	Negotiate with the abductors/captors.	131	154	88	19	30	422	1603	3.80	1.141	Accepted
Vi	Retain your instincts as a journalist and observer because you may need to tell the story later.	190	130	38	64	0	422	1712	4.06	1.071	Accepted
<b>Grandmean (24.07 ÷ 6)</b>									<b>4.01</b>		

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

As shown in Table 1, all the points each has a weighted mean value greater than the theoretical mean of 3.0. As a result, all are admitted as safety measures a female journalist may resort to when facing kidnap or in captivity. The items have varied relative importance according to the data analysed. Item (iv) ranks first with the highest mean value (4.29), item (iii) ranks second with mean value of 4.17, item (i) ranks third with mean value of 4.15, item (vi) ranks fourth with mean value of 4.06, item (v) ranks fifth with mean value of 3.8, and item (ii) ranks sixth with the least mean value (3.6).

**Safety measures to prevent/avert sexual violence**

The respondents were supplied with six points that describe the safety measures female journalists can take to prevent/avert sexual violence. They were to choose one answer from five options: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). We have use the weighted mean and grand mean statistics to judge the relevance of each point through the eyes of the respondents

**Table 2: Result of analysis of Safety measures to prevent /avert sexual violence**

S/N	Safety measures to prevent /avert sexual violence	SA	A	U	D	SD	N	Point Score	Mean	SD	Decision
I	I wear wedding ring.	214	101	17	61	29	422	1676	3.97	1.322	Accepted
Ii	I wear loose dress, even it if is shapeless.	72	148	26	122	54	422	1328	3.15	1.348	Accepted
Iii	I wear comfortable shoes that will allow me to run.	188	179	44	6	5	422	1805	4.28	0.799	Accepted
Iv	I avoid conducting interviews inside a house or hotel room when alone.	148	193	51	27	3	422	1722	4.08	0.887	Accepted
V	I don't get into a vehicle with someone I don't know.	156	203	42	12	9	422	1751	4.15	0.869	Accepted
Vi	I carry whistle or a deodorant I can spray into the eyes of an attacker.	44	62	78	116	122	422	1056	2.50	1.324	Rejected

**Grandmean (21.45 ÷ 6)**

**3.58**

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

We do well to recall that the responses are weighted in descending order from 5 (for Strongly Agree) to 1 (for Strongly Disagree) which gives a mid-point of 3.0. This is referred to in this study as the theoretical or likert mean/average. The ratio of each point score to the total number of responses (N) gives the mean. The last column of Table 1 shows 'Admitted' for points i – v, because their statistical mean values are each greater than the likert or theoretical mean (midpoint) of 3.0. Being admitted means that the research participants felt that those thoughts expressed are valid parameters as safety measures to prevent/avert sexual violence against female journalists in South East Nigeria. In terms of relative importance, point (iii) ranked 1<sup>st</sup> with the highest mean (4.28). However, item (vi) ranked 6<sup>th</sup> (it has the lowest mean). Also the item was rejected because its mean value of 2.50 is less than the theoretical mean of 3.0. This means that the respondents felt that carrying whistle or deodorant spray are not necessarily among the safety measures in place in the study area.

**Defence mechanisms when confronted with sexual harassment or attempted rape**

The respondents were supplied with four points that describe defence mechanisms female journalists can resort to when confronted with sexual harassment or attempted rape. They were to choose one answer from five options: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

**Table 3: Defence mechanisms when confronted with sexual harassment or attempted rape**

S/N	Defence mechanisms when confronted with sexual harassment or attempted rape	SA	A	U	D	SD	N	Point Score	Mean	SD	Decision
I	Tell the attacker that I have children; I could be his mother or sister.	203	130	16	44	29	422	1700	4.03	1.248	Accepted
Ii	Tell the attacker that I'm menstruating.	91	146	112	44	29	422	1492	3.53	1.142	Accepted
Iii	Tell the attacker that I have HIV/AIDS.	170	92	39	70	51	422	1526	3.62	1.451	Accepted
Iv	Appeal to the attacker to use protection because I have a sexually transmitted disease/virus/infection	128	105	49	74	66	422	1421	3.37	1.461	Accepted
								<b>Grandmean (14.55 ÷ 4)</b>	<b>3.64</b>		

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

As shown in Table 3, all the points each has a weighted mean value greater than the theoretical mean of 3.0. Consequently, all are admitted as defence mechanisms a female journalist may combine when confronted with sexual harassment or attempted rape. In terms of relative importance, item (i) ranks first with the highest mean value (4.03), item (iii) ranks second with mean value of 3.62, item (ii) ranks third with mean value of 3.53, and item (iv) ranks fourth with the least mean value (3.37).

**Differences between female journalists that observe the safety measures and those who do not**

The respondents were presented with three points that highlight differences between female journalists that observe the safety measures and those who do not. For each point, they were required to choose one answer from five options: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The analysis is presented below.

**Table 4: Differences between female journalists that observe the safety measures and those who do not**

S/N	Differences between female journalists that observe the safety measure and those who do not	SA	A	U	D	SD	N	Mean	Rank	SD	Decision
I	Observing the safety measures will reduce the risks/threats associated with the job.	279	108	19	16	6	422	4.54	1 <sup>st</sup>	0.753	Accepted
Ii	Female journalists that observe the safety guidelines are safer than those who do not.	135	223	43	14	7	422	4.10	2 <sup>nd</sup>	0.834	Accepted
Iii	Female journalists that observe the safety guidelines record more achievements on the job than those who do not.	190	124	66	42	0	422	4.09	3 <sup>rd</sup>	0.999	Accepted
<b>Grandmean (12.73 ÷ 3)</b>								<b>4.24</b>			

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

As shown in Table 4, all the points listed each have a weighted mean value greater than the likert mean of 3.0. Consequently, all are admitted as differences between female journalists that observe the safety measures and those who do not. The points have been ranked to show their relative importance with respect to their mean values. Item (i) ranks first with the highest mean value of 4.54. Item (ii) ranks second with mean value of 4.1. Item (iii) ranks third with mean value of 4.09.

**Research Hypothesis**

**Restatement of the null and alternative hypotheses:**

H<sub>0</sub>: Extent of observance/adherence to safety measures does not significantly influence the safety of female journalist in South East Nigeria.

H<sub>A</sub>: Extent of observance/adherence to safety measures significantly influences the safety of female journalists in South East Nigeria.

**Result and Conclusion**

Questionnaire Items 15 and 27 in Section B specifically address the third research hypothesis. While Item 15 bothers on the respondents felt safe at work, Item 27 is the rating of the extent the respondents observed safety guidelines in carrying out their professional assignments. The mean responses of these couple of items were combined in a one-way ANOVA framework to determine the F-statistics for testing the significance of the Item. The computations were done using SPSS 20 and the result is presented below.

**Table 5: ANOVA for Research Hypothesis Four**

Source of variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	24.404	2	12.202	21.274	.000
Within Groups	240.326	419	.574		
Total	264.730	421			

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

Table 5 presents the ANOVA result revolving around the extent the female journalists observe safety guidelines in carrying out their professional assignments. The result in the table shows that the F-statistic obtained from the



analysis is significant at the 5% level because its p-value is less than 0.05. Following the stated decision rule, we therefore reject the null hypothesis four under consideration and conclude that the extent of observance/adherence to safety measures significantly influences the safety of female journalists in South East Nigeria. By implication, a female journalist who to a large extent practices the safety guidelines would enhance her safety on-the-job, while those who have a complacent attitude would be putting themselves more at risk than necessary.

### **Discussion of findings**

The study finds that the extent of adoption of safety measures significantly influences the safety of female journalists in South East Nigeria. Overall, the study finds that only 20% of the surveyed 422 participants who are all female journalists to a large extent adhere to safety guidelines in the course of engaging in their professional assignment with the majority 47% adhering only to a low extent and another 33% in between. The study finds that the point that ranked topmost was that the victim should not try to provoke the abductors/captors to which 98% of the respondents agreed. This means the respondents recommend that the best safety measure when facing kidnap/captivity the victim should not try to provoke the abductors/captors. Conversely, the least recommended measure is 'Don't try to escape at all'. The point is that the victim should be on the lookout for opportunities to attempt safe escape. In fact, the second highest recommended safety measure for the situation under discuss is 'Only escape if you know you will succeed'. Granted, this is usually difficult because the victim would usually be held in an unfamiliar location. However, the victim should not resign to fate but can plan and execute successful escape as has sometimes been the case in real life. Similarly, when confronted with sexual harassment or attempted rape.

Result indicates that the respondents felt that the ideas expressed in (i) – (vi) are altogether relevant for preventing/averting sexual violence against female journalists in the study area. But point (iii) ranked 1<sup>st</sup> (I wear comfortable shoes that will allow me to run) with the highest mean (4.28). However, item (vi) ranked 6<sup>th</sup> (I carry whistle or a deodorant I can spray into the eyes of an attacker.) it has the lowest mean.

In the third point, on defence mechanisms when confronted with sexual harassment or attempted rape. Item (i) ranks first with the highest mean value (4.03), while item (iv) ranks fourth with the least mean value (3.37). This means the respondent felt that the strongest defence tactic would be for a female journalist to tell her attacker that she has kids or that she could be his mother or sister; whereas the least coy to employ would be to appeal to the attacker to use protection because she has sexually transmitted disease/infection.

The findings of the current study regarding the extent of risk experienced is in tandem with those of Stahel and Schon (2020) who had found that women experience online abuse more than men. Regarding ways women react to threats and attacks their study had found that women are more likely than men to use avoidance strategy because they are more stressed by attacks. In these aspects, the current study found that 87% of the 422 respondents to the questionnaire agreed that a woman would likely avoid the person who attacked them or the location of the attack. Also 97% had agreed that they were likely to feel traumatized by a violent physical attack. However, unlike the findings of Stahel and Schon(2020), the present study found that only 88% of the respondents would rather report threats and attacks (physical, emotional, or virtual) to security operatives then suffer silently, compared to 62% who would hide the incident from public and rather deal with the emotional stress internally.

On the last objective of this study, the differences between female journalists that observe the safety measure and those who do not, Item (i) ranks first ,which suggests that observing the safety measures will reduce the risks/threats associated with the job. More than 92% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed to this. That is the whole essence of this study. Item (ii) ranks second, the point there is that the respondents strongly are of the opinion that female journalists who observe the safety guidelines are safer than those who do not. This is where

the difference lies. Item (iii) ranks third, the point there is that female journalists that observe the safety guidelines record more achievements on the job than those who do not. If we compare the last two we will notice that Item (iii) is all about safety of the female journalists while Item (ii) is about their achievements. The fact that emphasis is on safety rather than achievement buttresses the usual statement 'Safety first'.

### Conclusion

Despite the importance and recommendation of professional safety measures by different Non Governmental Organization (NGOs) in Nigeria, international organization like UNESCO. International federation of journalist (IFJ), Reporters without borders (RWB), International Press Center( IPC), Nigerian association of women journalists (NAWOJ), Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) adoption of professional safety measure among female journalist in South East Nigeria is still very low which can easily endanger life while carrying out their duties. This study has provided statistical data on interpretation and behaviour of professional journalists towards safety measures for journalists, especially the female journalists. Which explain reasons for more enlightenment and sensitization by the above bodies in South East Nigeria in the mist of reoccurring insecurity in the Zone.

### Recommendation

1. Female journalist should not make any attempt to provoke their abductor and wear comfortable shoes that will allow them run anytime they are going on assignment within risky prone area, in south East Nigeria
2. The study also recommends that female journalist should first tell the attacker that they have children and could be his/her mother or sister.
3. Female journalist should strive hard to observe the safety measures because it reduce the risks/threats associated with the job as seen from the finding of this study. Professional associations and non governmental bodies should not relent in their efforts but organize workshop and training for journalist in South East Nigeria.

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