

**PERCEPTION OF NETIZENS ON CROSS GENDER ISSUES: A STUDY OF  
MASS COMMUNICATION STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,  
EDO STATE, NIGERIA**

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**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN  
BENIN CITY.**

**JANUARY 2025**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE**  
**REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A HONS)**  
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**COMMUNICATION, FACULTY OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN**  
**CITY, EDO STATE, NIGERIA**

**JANUARY 2025**

**DECLARATION**

This project is based on a study undertaken by Akpobi Faith, in the department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Arts under the supervision of Mr Sunday Akpobo Ekerikevwe [FRHD]. All ideas of the work are the products of my personal research where the views and contribution of others were used, and they were duly acknowledged.

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**AKPOBI FAITH**  
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## **CERTIFICATION**

This is to certify that this research work was written and submitted by Akpobi Faith to the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria.

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**Mr S. A. Ekerikevwe [FRHD]**  
Project Supervisor

**Date**

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**Ag. Dr D.O. Ekhareifo**  
Head of Department

**Date**

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External Examiner

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Date

### **DEDICATION**

This research work is dedicated to God Almighty for his love, strength, guidance and wisdom during the period of the study. Also to my lovely brother for his provision during the course of my study.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

My sincere gratitude goes to God Almighty for the gift of life, wisdom, strength and grace to scale through. I am deeply grateful.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study examined on perception of Netizens on cross gender issues: a study of Mass Communication students of the University of Benin, (UNIBEN), Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to ascertain the awareness level of students of Mass Communication of (UNIBEN), University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria, about cross-gender issues, examines the role of social media in constructing perceptions of cross-gender issues among university students. Premised on the Framing and Uses and Gratifications Theories, the researcher adopted the survey research method to gather data for the study. The major findings of the research revealed that there is high level of awareness about cross gender issues among students of Mass Communication, UNIBEN. Base on the findings, the research concluded that the awareness level of students of Mass Communication of the university of Benin about cross gender issues is high. The researcher therefore recommended among other things that there should be need to promote media literacy education among students, there should be peer education program where students can educate one another and learn from each other regarding issues of gender identities and being inclusive. The researcher also recommended that there should be curriculum inclusion of gender identity, diversity and inclusiveness within the course structure of mass communication.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1:1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Gender is, perhaps, a far more elusive concept. The definition of gender, as defined by Britannica (2001), is an individual's self-conception as being male or female, as distinguished from actual biological sex. For most persons, gender identity and biological characteristics are the same. There are, however, circumstances in which an individual experiences little or no connection between sex and gender. Perry (1999, p. 8) states that gender is the cultural construction of femininity and masculinity as opposed to the biological sex (male or female) which we are born with. The word Netizens has spread widely since the term was first coined. The genesis comes from net culture based on the original newsgroup naming conventions. Network wide Usenet newsgroups included net.general for general discussion, net.auto for discussion of autos, net.bugs for discussion of Unix bug reports, and so on. People who used Usenet would prefix terms related to the online world with the word NET similar to the newsgroup terminology. So, one would find references to net.gods, net.cops, or net.citizens.

Netizens = Net + Citizen. A citizen of the Internet or someone who uses

networked resources. Originally, however, the Net users comprised exclusively the technical and scientific communities. The world of the Netizen was envisioned by J. C. R. Licklider and Robert Taylor in 1968. Licklider brought to his leadership of the Department of Defense's ARPA Information Processing Techniques Office (IPTO) a vision of the intergalactic computer network. Whenever he would speak from ARPA, he would mention this vision. J. C. R. Licklider was a prophet of the Net. Their concept of the sharing of both computing and human resources together matches the modern Net.

Netizens opinion on cross gender issues is very relevant for carrying out this research. There are several opinion of netizen when it comes to cross gender issues especially in the concept of university student. In America, so many citizens support and protect people who identify themselves as cross gender or transgender and they feel that people who identify themselves as cross gendered should use bathrooms that correspond or reflect their gender identity but according to a new survey, majority of America's citizen believe that whether a person is a male or a female is determined by the sex they were at birth.

That's a curious intersection that attitudes about gender exist. In essence, the same moment that most Americans polled by the Pew Research Center say they favor

a variety of policies to protect the rights of trans people, 60% say a person's gender is not different from the sex they were assigned at birth, the May 2022 poll of 10,188 U.S. adults. And that's an opinion that more and more people are keeping, up from 56% when the same question was posed in a survey.

The descriptive terminology used for the "gender" community is extremely fluid, not only in the gender terms themselves but in body/sex/sexuality and medical status terms tied to a given gender identity. This, together with aspects of the population being unwilling to let themselves be labeled or categorized by labels fixed by someone else, makes it almost impossible to receive an accurate census or description of this population. Some might say an individual born genetically female, for example, but claiming he is actually male, refers to himself as an FTM, or female-to-male transsexual and another may claim the label transman. Others still might refer to themselves according to which hormones they are taking ( lo,ho, hi,ho) -transman and still others refer to their "operative status" as a description (pre-op transsexual, post-op transman). Yet others claim that they were MBT (men born trans). Thus, the membership of the transgender community is very difficult to categorize.

The term "cross gender" describes a number of identities and expressions that exceed the traditional binary notions of male and female. It shall include but not be

limited to transgender, non-binary, and gender-fluid individuals. These identities resist strict binary classification of gender, highlighting its spectrum nature and fluid expression. According to Butler (1990) "Gender is performative": constructed by the very repeated social performances that make it seem natural-a fixed attribute rather than a construction. Indeed, it has been quite influential in terms of how gender is communicated and perceived in society.

Social media has an influential role in societal attitude as far as cross-gender issues are concerned. Messages on gender identity and expression are passed through various social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, X (formerly Twitter), YouTube, among others, to a wider audience. These platforms not only change but also influence the public perception and attitude toward cross-gender issues. For instance, the way transgender people appear in Instagram or TikTok may either further stereotyping or help build acceptance and understanding of them.

As such, social media hold a special place at mass communication, UNIBEN, as it plays a vital role in shaping the students perceptions. Discussion, debate, and the sharing of ideas on gender issues are conducted on these social media platforms. It is also a good avenue where one can express oneself and one's experiences. The notion of the "netizen" itself, a term coined to describe active users of the Internet, reveals

the idea of participation and interactivity within this medium. The active netizen is not passively a recipient but engages in contributing to creating and disseminating contents, thereby taking greater part in the shaping of public expression.

A study of netizens' perceptions of cross-gender issues in mass communication, (UNIBEN), university of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria, will be academically and socially relevant. The institution of higher learning is expected to be in the vanguard of social change. Understanding the dynamics of gender expression on campus might, therefore, provide the most relevant insights into the prevailing broader currents in society. Furthermore, this will also help in shaping policies and practices responsible for fostering an atmosphere that is more inclusive and just academically. For instance, the representation of transgender individuals in social media can either reinforce stereotypes or promote acceptance and understanding (Goffman, 1974).

The perception of cross-gender issues has increasingly gained a wider range of interest in contemporary society, especially among students that engaged in different social media channels, where mass communication students in (UNIBEN), University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria, are part of. It could be argued that the factors for these changing perceptions lie first with the nature of gender identities and

expressions themselves, which are challenged against their own traditional frame of acceptability. This sets a contemporary focus on gender as a major area for debate both academically and socially at mass communication, UNIBEN, as is the case in other institutions of higher learning. The present study attempts to measure the perceptions of netizens, which include students, on cross-gender issues with particular concentration on how such perception is shaped and disseminated through various social media channels.

## **1:2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Cross gender individuals are faced with so many issues despite unprecedented visibility and impressive legal success. The transgender movement of the last decade faces blatant forms of discrimination, severely elevated rates of violence, and alarming health disparities. Trans people of color often experience significantly worse health and economic wellbeing as they move through multiple systems of oppression.

These different cross gender issues are health issues, civil rights issues, economic issues, safety and so many others. They faces discrimination when it comes to these different basic needs that are necessary for daily survival.

Despite cross gender issues recently gaining more prominence in the media and public discourse, little has been known about how such issues are perceived

within academic communities. Very few previous researches were into Western societies where discourses on gender diversity have been more engaging and the rate of acceptance of non-binary identities is relatively higher. Empirical evidence is done on the state of perceptions pertaining to cross-gender issues among netizens at Nigerian universities, amidst a socio-cultural setting that is mostly more conservative and less open towards gender diversity.

However, from the anecdotal evidence, it would appear that within mass communication University of Benin, Edo State Nigeria, with a students population exceeding 892, there are various levels of awareness and acceptance of cross-gender identities. At any rate, serious and systematic research will clarify such perceptions and the factors that influence them. This study tries to fill the gap through an in-depth analysis of the perception of cross-gender issues by netizens of mass communication in the University. It will explore just how mass communication students forms such perception and their relationship between institutional, social, and cultural factors.

### **1:3 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The following specific objectives shall guide this work:

The general aim of this study is:

1. Ascertain the awareness level of students of mass communication of

(UNIBEN), University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria, regarding cross-gender issues.

2. To examine the role of social media in constructing perceptions of cross-gender issues among university students.
3. The major factors which shape the attitude of netizens towards cross-gender identities and expressions.
4. To identify the role of cultural, social, and institutional contexts in framing the perception of the cross-gender issue among mass communication students of the University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria.

#### **1:4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The study will examine the following research question;

1. What is the level of awareness of students of mass communication (UNIBEN), University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria, regarding cross gender issues?
2. How does social media influence the perceptions of cross gender issues among university students?
3. What are the key factors which shape the attitude of Netizens toward cross gender identities and expression?
4. How do cultural, social and institutional contexts impact the perception of

cross gender issue among mass communication students of the University of Benin, Edo State Nigeria?

## 1:5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This present study will restrict itself to the perceptions held by mass communication netizens on cross-gender issues; it narrows down to the students who are active users of the Internet and other digital media. The study will also place its attention within the wide cultural, social and institutional contexts that influence attitude towards cross-gender identities.

Geographically, this research is limited to the student of mass communication, University of Benin in Benin City, Nigeria. In any case, this study may be applied to any other university in Nigeria or a socio-cultural setting with similar properties, but initially and foremost it aims at providing a deeply detailed, context-specific analysis of UNIBEN.

These themes of study in cross-gender issues will range from, but not limit to, transgender identities, non-binary and gender-fluid expressions, and challenges which cross-gender people face in an academic environment. It will also analyse the representation of cross-gender issues in digital media and

discuss how these social media platforms foster or hinder talk about gender diversity.

This study will also identify all the different cross gender issues such as health issues, security issues, civil rights issues, economic issues and so on and so forth.

### **1:6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

According to Ikoja Odongo (2000), the importance of a study can be measured by the contributions that it makes to the people under investigation and the society as a whole. This study is important on a number of grounds. The study will contribute to the increasing literature on gender studies, especially in higher education within the Nigerian context. Focusing on UNIBEN, this study has brought to light specific socio-cultural dynamics that shape the perception of cross-gender issues in a Nigerian university. This is important for understanding how global discourses about gender are assembled together with the local environment and tradition.

The second aspect this study will try to underscore is the role that mass communication students, University of Benin Edo State Nigeria, plays in the formation of public perception and attitude regarding cross-gender issues. In today's

digital world, where media dominates even the simplest levels of passing information and social interaction, comprehension of the ways in which netizens interact with and interpret messages on gender becomes important. This suggests that educators, media practitioners, and policy makers are interested in fostering inclusive and fair representations of gender.

Thirdly, the study will avail practical recommendations useful in breeding an inclusively more academic-friendly environment among mass communication students. In elaborating on those factors influencing perceptions of cross-gender issues and challenges faced by cross-gender individuals, this study avails actionable insights that may inform university policies and practices. This shall be highly welcome because a greater awareness of diversity and inclusion issues seems to be gaining momentum in higher education.

## **1:7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

In conducting this research, the researcher encounter some difficulties in accessing previous works on perception. Also, the researcher faced some difficulties in having access to archived materials and datas.

In the process of the research, the researcher found it difficult to have access

to information concerning cross gender issues.

## **1:8 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS**

The following key terms are defined as used in this study to make sure clarity and consistency are maintained:

**Cross-Gender:** The process or habit of assuming the role of the opposite gender by adopting the clothes, hair style, and manner of speaking and gesturing which society considers characteristic of that gender.

**Netizens:** Those Internet users who are active and use digital media for information, communication, and sociability.

**Mass communication students:** It refers to student who are majoring in different fields of communication such as journalism, public relations, public health, etc.

**Perception:** It is the way people come to become aware of a particular phenomenon, issue, or beliefs concerning their experience, belief, and cultural background.

**Gender identity:** An individual's internal sense of their gender, which might or might not conform to the sex assigned to them at birth.

**Gender expression:** This is an external appearance through which one is showing by way of behaviour, body, clothing, voice, haircut characteristics his or her gender identity.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **2:1 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW OF NETIZENS**

The word Netizens started in the early 1990s by Michael Hauben and his wife Ronda Hauben who were studying the political and social implication of the internet and his interactive online research. It has spread widely since the term was first coined. It can be referred to as people who are citizens if the net.

The genesis comes from net culture based on the original newsgroup naming conventions. Network wide Usenet newsgroups included net.general for general discussion, net.auto for discussion of autos, net.bugs for discussion of Unix bug reports, and so on. People who used Usenet would prefix terms related to the online world with the word NET similar to the newsgroup terminology. So, one would find references to net.gods, net.cops, or net.citizens. Netizens = Net + Citizen. A citizen of the Internet or someone who uses networked resources. Originally, however, the Net users comprised exclusively the technical and scientific communities.

According to Collins dictionary, Netizens is derived from combination of two words: Internet and Citizen. It conveys a meaningful idea of Internet Citizen, simplified as Netizens. Simply used for people who have strong presence on Social media such Facebook, Instagram, tik tok, twitter or X among others.

Michael Hauben (1995), defines Netizens as an online people who actively contribute towards the development of the net, they are people who understand the value of collective work and the communal aspects of public communication.

Netizens can also be defined as internet users who converse and debate topics in a helpful manner, who renders help to those who are new online, helps in maintaining mailing list, those who preserve FAQ files, who assist to e-mail answer to people etc. Netizens are not people who come online just for individual gain or people who come online for financial gain, they are not individuals who just come online instead they are people who actively contribute to the growth of the net. It can also be known as a social member.

Michael Hauben (1995), stated that there are two general uses of the term Netizens that has developed, the first is the broad usage to refer to anyone who uses the net for whatever purpose while the second one is the understanding of Netizens. It is used to portray people who care about the Usenet and the bigger net and put effort towards improving the collective and cooperative nature that will be of benefits to the larger world.

They can be seen as people who works towards developing the internet, they represents positive activity in the net. Netizenship has spread greatly as more people

join the online Community to contribute towards the developing of the internet and towards the growth of the great social shared wealth of the net.

Netizens are faced with some challenges as a result of the increasing privatisation and commercialisation of the internet but in order to provide solution to these challenges, it is essential to look back at the pioneering visions and action that has helped make the internet feasible and critically inspect what lessons they provide.

## **2:1:1 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW OF CROSS GENDER**

Cross gender is a very prominent issue in our society that has led to so many disarray especially among the young generation. Cross gender can be seen as a process of taking the attributes of the opposite gender.

American psychological association ( APA) defines cross gender as the process or habit of assuming the role of the opposite gender by adopting the clothes, hair style, and manner of speaking and gesturing that society considers characteristic of that gender. Cross gender is the performance of gender that does not conform to traditional gender norms and expectation (Judith Butler, 1990).

Cross gender is a person who has a strong desire to belong to the opposite sex, by trying to accept the characteristics of the opposite sex, and who wants to be

accepted as a member of the opposite sex.

Transgender can easily be misunderstood on a periphery as a transitioned gender or changed gender. This concept was the earliest perception it had at a time until the changing of the concept to accommodate more, making it a unifying term. As a unifying term, it includes transsexuals and transvestites. In line with the idea of Virginia Prince, a transgenderist, transgender is the condition or identity established when one feels an overwhelming need to dress in the clothes of the opposite gender or change sex completely. When one talks about transgender, bi-concepts come to mind such as transition and gender. While trans as it relates to the topic at hand means transformation, crossing, and eventually going beyond or through gender can be seen as a system of social differentiation and placement. It is also an important part of an individual's identity (EKINS AND KING, 2006, 16 and 33). Bringing the two together, transgender is crossing, a transformation or going beyond or through that system of social differentiation and placements.

Transgender as a composite of two strands of meaning becomes explicit if it accommodates cross-dressers of no Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS) as well as all identities or practices that crossover, cut across, move between, or otherwise queer socially constructed sex/gender boundaries (ROEN, 2006, 658).

Gender identity refers to a person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, and it may or may not conform to the sex assigned at birth; it includes one's personal sense of body, which may involve modification of bodily appearance or function by medical, surgical, or other means, as well as other manifestations of gender such as dress, speech, and mannerisms. We use the term "gender-diverse" to refer to persons whose gender identity-including their gender expression-is at variance with what is perceived to be the gender norm in a particular context at a particular point in time, including those who do not position themselves within the male/female binary; the more specific term "trans" describes persons identifying with another sex than that attributed to them at birth.

In modern times, transgender includes the Transvestite (TV), i.e. the crossdressers, and the Transsexual (TS), which involves those who undergo surgery, hormonal injections as well as pills to suppress the naturally assigned sex, and improve on the newly acquired sex. Transgender involving transsexuals makes it a medical, and psychiatric concept.

Social identity becomes transgenderal if it is concerned with the entire community or collective of those who change their gender either temporarily or permanently (HILL, 1997, 2). Vanessa Sheridan extends the boundaries of

transgender identity as not just about the transvestites and transsexuals but the androgyny individuals, intersex persons as well as drag kings and queens. It covers that not covered by the culturally-rooted binary gender of man and woman. It is about all manifestations of blurring or crossing gender barriers. As a struggle, it is an expression whereby one establishes a platform of being seen and understood in a way that is different from sex at birth (2009, 1 and 2). Though an umbrella term, it is not the same as cisgender or having a traditional gender presentation (LEVITT & IPPOLITO, 2014, 1728).

According to Andrew N. Sharpe (2002, 1), transgender is not just a viable option between transvestite and transsexual, but a term that covers a range of trans-subjectivities, including transsexuals in need or has undergone sex reassignment surgery, those seeking other surgical procedures and/or hormonal treatments, and those whose permanent or temporary gender crossings are unaccompanied by medical intervention .

The last explanation of transgender identity saw it as a middle course between Transvestites (TV) and Transsexual (TS) which differs from its understanding as an umbrella term for the two and similar others. It then poses the word as a problematic term to explain. However, it is more of a broader term than a narrower term.

Transgender identity is more of a status than a role. It is neither cultural nor sociological in itself; rather, it is more psychological because it emanates from an individual's acclaimed feelings, choices, and decisions. There are varieties of explanations for transgender, but one crucial thing is that whether it involves surgery or not, there is always an inner feeling of dissatisfaction with the status quo as well as a feeling that is suppressed, which the encased victim insists on overcoming by such manifestations. The transgender identity goes beyond the culturally and socially approved binary gender (male and female), its terminology and meaning are evolutionary, hence the necessity of the historical knowledge of the development of the term as both a concept, an identity, and a lifestyle.

## **2:2 HISTORICAL REVIEW OF CROSS GENDER**

From Ancient Greece, women were typically barred from theatre so men had to play both the male and female roles. All throughout times, women were thought of as being either weaker or too sexual. Similar stances can be recognized worldwide like in Japan where Kabuki theater is held. Nevertheless, with time women have found their rightful place on the stage. Dressing confidently in women's clothes has long been frowned upon in many cultures; however, three hundred years ago and beyond it was normal for a man to dress up as a woman confidently. It is important to

note that theatre mirrors societies and societies mirror theatre always. Whether political or religious upheaval, most likely it will manifest itself within a theatrical context.

Descriptions of transgender people, including non-binary and third gender people, have been tentatively identified back to ancient times in many cultures. The current terms and their definitions resulting in the understanding of being transgender, gender, gender identity, and gender role came into existence within the 1950s and 1960s. Thus, there is a huge variation in opinions about how to classify past accounts of gender variant people and identities.

Some scholars interpret the classical antiquity *galli* as transgender or third-gender priests. The *kathoey* and *hijra* both enable trans-feminine gender roles in contemporary Thailand and the Indian subcontinent while having thousands of years of history. The *khanith* in Arabia, like the *mukhannathun* centuries earlier, have taken on a third gender role since at least the 7th century CE. Traditional roles for transgender women and transgender men have been part of many African societies, and a few continue to the present day. Fluid and third gender roles in Native North American societies date back to pre-colonial times, such as the Navajo *nádleehi* and the Zuni *lhamana*.

A few Medieval European documents have been researched as potential accounts of transgender people. The lament of Kalonymus ben Kalonymus, born in the thirteenth century, to not being a woman but a man, has been considered one of the very first accounts of gender dysphoria. John/Eleanor Rykener, a male-bodied Briton arrested in 1394 while living and doing sex work dressed as a woman, has been interpreted by some modern scholars as transgender. In Japan, accounts of transgender people go as far back as the Edo period. There are millions of trans-/third-gender waria in Indonesia, and five gender roles are accepted in the extant pre-Islamic Bugis society of Sulawesi.

The genderless Public Universal Friend refused birth name and gendered pronouns in the United States in 1776. Transgender American men and women appear in accounts throughout the 19th century. The first known informal organization for transgender advocacy in the United States, Cercle Hermaphroditos, was established in 1895.

Early sexual reassignment surgeries, performed at a German clinic that would later be destroyed in the Third Reich, included an ovary and uterus transplant in the early 20th century. Christine Jorgensen's respective transition in the 1950s would bring greater awareness of sex reassignment surgery to North America, while

Coccinelle's would do the same for Europe. The grassroots political struggle of transgender rights in the United States produced a few riots against police, including the 1959 Cooper Donuts Riot, 1966 Compton's Cafeteria Riot, and the multi-day Stonewall Riots in 1969. In the 1970s, Lou Sullivan was the first publicly self-identified gay trans man and founded the first organization for transgender men. At the same time, some feminists were opposing construals of 'woman' that included trans women, creating what would later be described as gender-critical feminism. In the 1990s and 2000s, the Transgender Day of Remembrance began in the United States, and transgender politicians were elected to various public offices. It was only towards the turn of the twenty-first century that legislative and court actions recognized the rights of some nations pertaining to transgender people, while some countries and appreciable sections of several societies continue to abridge the rights of transgender people.

The existence of waria in Indonesia is a dilemmatic phenomenon and continues to be debated in society. The term waria, which was coined in 1978 by the DKI Jakarta government, is an amalgam of the words wanita (woman) and pria(man) (Boellstorff, 2004). This term refers to anatomically male individuals who express their gender identity as female (Toomitsu, 2019). Even though they are born male,

waria think they have had jiwa perempuan (woman's soul) since childhood (Hegarty, 2018; Sunardi, 2009; Toomitsu, 2019). For example, waria have shown signs of femininity since childhood, such as spending more time playing with dolls with other girls (Toomitsu, 2019).

Some scholars argue that waria is different from the widely understood notion of transgender. According to Boellstorff (2007), using a term such as transgender will bring the connotation of "moving beyond gender", which refers to the connotation that someone has transitioned from one gender to another, for instance, by undergoing genital reassignment surgery (p. 82). However, based on the research conducted by Boellstorff (2007), not all male transvestites undergo or desire the surgery. He also emphasizes that only a few waria manage to undergo sex reassignment surgery due to financial problems and psychological factors. Additionally, in a book written by Wijaya (2020b), there has been a shift regarding waria terminology. Since 2016, the term wariah has slowly changed to become transgender women (transpuan) in society. This change is because some people argue that the term waria is no longer relevant and is considered rude, as argued by Dinda Syarief, one of Indonesia's transgender figures, in an interview (Corbuzier, 2022, 3:14-3.25).

### **2:3 NETIZENS PERCEPTION ON CROSS GENDER ISSUES**

Among various platforms that influence how men and women are perceived, mass media has always been the most inescapable with the greatest impact. New media includes digital tools such as mobile phones, tabs, laptops, and platforms like social media and the net, which lace through the daily life of people. New media platforms and channels promote contents and create a new culture. Through these, communication channels have become a vehicle of contents portraying images of the males and females in their roles and expectations, an unrealistic stereotype that gradually shapes the perceptions Africans once had of the roles the different genders were supposed to perform. This paper reviews the role of new media in constructing conceptions of gender constructs including roles, norms, and stereotypes and examines how those constructs in turn affect male and female behaviors and well-being.

According to Arias (2019), the new media plays a critical role in people's identity, self-image, actions and even governance by informing and reflecting what people consider to be appropriate for men or women. Mills (2017) notes that one of the ways in which they do this is through portrayals of works of literature, art, music,

films, commercials, and news on new media, where women and men are perceived differently based on gender.

Gender identity is how a person identify themselves, and as defined by Broom (2021) it is a person's internal sense and personal experience of what they are. There has been discontentment along biological sex where people are not able to match that with their gender identity and as such have gone ahead medically to make physical (change in appearance such as clothes, hairstyle), medical (transgender) and social (queer) changes to express their preferred and identified gender (American Psychological Association, 2014). One of such using social media platforms such as Twitter and Instagram, are individuals like Okuneye Idris Olanrewaju popularly called Bobrisky who has been described as Nigeria's most contentious person who, due to a trans personality is famed for her unconventional life. This is championing a strong case for the normalisation of queerness in Nigeria which for many parts of the country is a taboo and an act that should not be associated with in the first place (Obiora, 2018).

Despite unprecedented visibility and impressive legal success, the transgender movement of the last decade faces blatant forms of discrimination, severely elevated rates of violence, and alarming health disparities. Trans people of color often

experience significantly worse health and economic wellbeing as they move through multiple systems of oppression. We've highlighted some key issues below:

**HEALTH:** Transgender people face shocking health disparities, including ravaging rates of HIV infection, lack of primary care, including personalized medically necessary transition-related healthcare, and disproportionate rates of attempted suicide.

**ECONOMICS:** Transgender people face the economic consequences of stigma and discrimination, including high rates of poverty and unemployment, exclusion from educational opportunities, and homelessness. Transgender people are more than two and half times more likely to live in extreme poverty (making less than \$10,000 a year), Latinx transgender people face three-and-a-half times, and Black transgender people face three times, the poverty rate of the general U.S. population[1].

**SAFETY:** Transgender people, and Black transgender women specifically, face terrifying rates of physical violence. For those who engage in underground or criminalized economies, such as in sex work, this is even more true. It is with such brutal regularity that transgender women are murdered with a lack of law enforcement response that the American Medical Association stated violence against transgender individuals is an epidemic.

**CIVIL RIGHTS:** The recognition and respect of the civil rights of trans people are so crucial because their legal needs cut across many aspects of life, from identity documents that correctly reflect who they are to protections from employment discrimination, and immigration rights are just some of the few.

## **2:4 MODE OF CROSS GENDER**

Ekins and King (2006, 34), argue that transgendering individuals transgender between and within these modes following the classification of binary gender, and it includes:

1. Crossing the divide permanently: This is a situation where the person transits to a different gender completely. Oftentimes, it is usually possible through Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS).
2. Crossing the divide temporarily: This mode involves the individual using reversible means of transgendering. For instance, use of pills and hormones to boost the features of desired gender. The individual can as well discontinue usage when needed and return to the original gender gradually.
3. Seeking to eliminate the divide: In principle, the individual decideds not to identify with either of the binary genders (male and female). It is more of a psychological disposition which might or not lead to eventual radical

transgendering.

4. Seeking to go beyond the divide (radical transgendering): This is also a psychological disposition that forms a point of initiation into the journey of radical transgendering from a pre-existing gender to a new one of desire. At this stage, the individual makes necessary inquiries and practical efforts towards changing to a desired gender.

### **3:5 PROCESS OF CROSS GENDER**

In **Transgender Phenomenon** (EKINS AND KING, 2006, 37-38), there are 5 (five) sub-processes of transgender which include:

**1 Erasing:** Here, the unwanted body parts are eliminated. For instance, castration for males and hysterectomy for females while the concerned individuals put on unisex clothes and ungendered mannerisms.

**2 Substituting:** At this stage, the person with or without aid, replaces body parts and former gender attitudes with those of the intended gender. For instance, the male genital replaces the female genital and vice versa, flat chest with breasts/boobs. The degree of efficacy and success of these depends on the finance and project of the individual, healthcare, and technology availability.

**3 Concealing:** At this stage, the characteristics and body parts that conflict with the

intended gender are concealed. For instance, wrapping a scarf around Adam's apple, tucking the male genital (penis), and binding the breast. The level of this is dependent on visible biological characteristics. It can also involve concealing biography like birth and marriage certificates that are gender based.

**4 Implying:** They can or do wear clothes that indicate the intended gender like wearing foams inside a bra, hip pads inside a panty girdle, placement of an object by females to imply male genitals, and so on.

**5 Redefining:** This stage is more psychological. At this level, the nature of the body and its parts, as well as accompaniments, are redefined. Male Trans Female (MTF) sees beards as facial hair. The Male Transvestite (MTV) sees the T-shirt and Jeans as female clothes because he buys them from a feminine boutique and vice versa. It is about the self, body parts, and characteristics as well as gender associates taking on new meanings within the redefined system of classification.

## **2:6 EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

The empirical review provides research works that is related to the current study.

Vany Fitria, Desika Putri Mardiani and Abdulsalam Aderibigbe, "The public perceptions of transgender identity as 'the other' in social media". Journal research

Komunikasi, (2024), Vo. 7, PP 72-85.

This research focus on the public perceptions of transgender identity as the other of social media. It aims to critically examined the public perceptions of transgender, using the case of one of Indonesia's most famous transgender figure, Lucinta Luna. The researcher examined Instagram users' comment on her account to represent how the public correspond to Luna's identity as a transgender individual.

The research makes use of qualitative and thematic analysis as the method of data analysis. To analyse the data, the researcher makes use of Computer-Aided Qualitative Analysis Software (CAQDAS) NVivo. The study also uses Hall's theory of 'the other' to examine critically the people of Indonesia respond to transgender.

The finding reveals that two significant themes came into view from all Instagram users' comments on Luna's identity, which are positive and negative public perceptions. In both themes, three sub-themes was seen: In the positive theme we have comedy, supportive attitude and admiration while in the negative theme we have; Sexual harassment, sarcasm and religious criticism.

In the conclusion, the research shows that the public perceptions of transgender identity Indonesia is positive.

This work is relevant to the present study as they possess some similarities.

Both work has a related subject matter with the aim of finding out public perceptions on transgender gender issues.

The present work would further contribute to the field of knowledge as it focuses on the perception of Netizens on cross gender issues.

Desmond Onyemечи Okocha, PhD and Roxie Ojoma Ola-Akuma, "New media portrayal and the reconstructing of Gender in Nigeria". *Journal of Community & Communication Research (JCCR)*, June (2022), Vol. 7, Number 1, PP 2635-3318.

The second empirical review focused on the impact of new media on the reconstruction of gender role and identities in Nigerians and their exposure to the global digital media space. The study makes use of social learning theory to derive primary data for indepth insight.

The researcher came up with three objective for the work which are listed below;

1. To examine the impact of new media on the (re)construction of gender role in Nigeria.
2. To examine the ways through which new media is framing male and female identities.
3. To outline the perceived gender notions of Nigerians.

The qualitative method of data analysis was adopted in this research using both secondary and primary source of data, the secondary source of data were books, magazine, scholarly literature and videos, while the primary source of data were gotten from focused group discussion of a total of 30 participants drawn from all geopolitical zone in Nigeria which lasted for a period of three weeks.

The findings of the work shows that new media has largely interrupted and opened new prospect of discussion on the traditional connotations and identities associated with the genders within the Nigerian society.

The research work is related to this present study as it focus on how new media portray or describe the reconstruction of gender in Nigeria.

The import of this study on the present study will help to reveal mass communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria, student's opinion on cross gender issues.

S.M. Baqutayan, A.M. Mahdzir, N.A.M. Yusof, I.S. Saimy, S.H. Salleh, "Public opinions and gender issue". Razak Faculty of Technology and Informatics, University Technology Malaysia (UTM), Jalan Sultan Yahya Petra, Malaysia, (2021); 25: 5215-5227.

The third empirical review centered on public opinions and gender issues which reveals transgender as an umbrella terms that explains or portrays people whose gender expression or gender identity does not match with the gender they have been ascribe at birth. The main objective of the study gives an insight into gender issues, instill awareness among members of the communities and make them understand the emotional difficulties and psychological pain that transgender people go through. The research work explained that transgender must be analysed from the perspectives of humanity, ethics and culture.

The study makes use of qualitative method of data analysis and data were gathered using open-ended interviews among nine participants. Also to compliment the data especially about public's opinions towards the transgender, a focus group discussion (FGD) was held among four participants.

The finding of the study shows that the transgender communities usually faces social discrimination as a result of the social stigma towards them. The researcher

concluded that there should be a way of support for those that are faced with gender identity issues. The researchers also recommended psycho-social supports and Community awareness both for the transgender individual and families which will help in dealing with transgender issues.

This research work is relevant to the present study because both possesses some similarities as they focused on people's opinions on transgender issues.

This present study will further contribute to the field of knowledge as it focused on social media perception on cross gender issues.

Julie L Nagoshi, Stephan/ie Brzuzy and Heather K Terrell, "Deconstructing the complex perceptions of gender roles, gender identity, and sexual orientation among transgender individuals". *Feminism & Psychology* 2012 22: 405 originally published online 10 October 2012.

This empirical review focuses on the understanding of the complex perceptions of gender roles, gender identity and sexual orientation among transgender individuals.

The researcher makes use of interview and Eleven self-identified transgender individuals were interviewed about their definitions of, their understanding of the relationships between gender roles, gender identity and sexual orientation and how

they perceived it.

The findings of the work reveals that the analysis is presented in terms of how transgender individuals conceptualised gender roles as social and self-constructs and how they viewed gender identity as being more fluid, compared to binary, essentialist and heteronormative ideas about gender.

The research is related to this current study because it interpret transgender individuals' perceptions of gender roles, gender identity and sexual orientation/identity.

Larry Nuttbrock, Walter Bockting, Mona Mason, Sel Hwahng, Andrew Rosenblum, Monica Macri, and Jeffrey Becker, "a further assessment of Blanchard's typology of homosexual versus non-homosexual or autogynephilic gender dysphoria". *Archives of sexual behavior* 2011, April; 40(2): 247-257.

The empirical review focused on how Blanchard examined association of sexual orientation and transvestic fetishism among male to female (MTF) transgender persons in Toronto Canada. The study reveals that transvestic fetishism were rare among the homosexuals but prevalent among the non-homosexuals.

The study makes use of life chart interview to collect response from respondents and a total of 571 MTFs were recruited for the baseline component of a

large cross-sectioner/longitudinal study of MTFs in the New York City metropolitan area. The findings of the research reveals that multiple measurements of transvestic fetishism were obtained and classified as lifetime, lifecourse persistent, adolescent limited and adult onset.

Blanchard concluded that homosexual versus non-homosexual sexual orientation is a predominant and etiologically important axis for examining and comprehending homosexual versus non-homosexual population.

This research is relevant to the current study as it focuses on sexual orientation and transvestic fetishism among male-to-female (MTF) transgender people. The current study will further compliment this study as it focuses on the various cross gender issues in the society.

## **2:7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **USES AND GRATIFICATION THEORY**

Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) was first propounded by Elihu Katz when he came up with the notion that people use the media to their benefits. The

theory emerged in the early 1970s as Katz and his two colleagues Jay Blumler and Michael Gurevitch continued to expand the idea. Asemah E.S, Angela N.N, Adeline O.A.N (2022).

Wimmer and Dominick (2000) explained that use and gratifications theory takes the view of the consumer. It observes how people use the media and the gratifications they seek and obtain from their media behaviours. These uses (exposure to the media) and gratification (benefits) are determined by the needs of members of the audience. Such needs may include information, entertainment, self-esteem and prestige.

The theory, which is also called "utility theory" seeks to explain what function a particular kind of media content serves in a particular circumstance. The theory seeks to investigate what people do with communication content, instead of what the communication content does to them. Asemah et al (2022).

Uses and gratifications theory explores how individuals actively seek out and use media to satisfy various needs and desires. The same media content may gratify different needs for different individuals. There is not only one way that people use the media contents.(Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973). People's needs are generated by their individual differences. It could be based on sex, educational qualification and

ethnic. Because the needs are determined by who or what they are, and people use the media for the purpose of gratifying these needs (Okunna, 1988).

This theory helps explain why netizens engage with specific types of media content related to cross-gender issues and how such engagement influences their own perceptions. As it claims, netizens are not passive recipients; instead, they actively use media to meet certain personal, informational and social needs.

The theory talks about the mutual understanding among the media and the media consumer. The media are useful to the society and the society is also useful to the media, hence we call it uses and gratifications theory. The theory is a reaction theory. Reaction because it started as a question; researchers asked why certain things were being talked about (effects) and others neglected (uses), (Asemah et al 2022).

However, we can now say that the society use the media to satisfy or accomplish their needs. Uses and gratifications theory, therefore makes us to know that people use the media for several purposes. McQuail, Blumler & Brown (1972), suggested the following individual needs categories:

1. Diversion Needs
2. Personal Relationship Needs
3. Personal Identity/Individual Psychology Needs

#### 4. Surveillance Needs

Also in 1973, Katz, Gurevitch & Hass discovered about thirty-five needs that is satisfied by the media but they categorised these needs into five, which are;

1. Cognitive Needs
2. Affective Needs
3. Personal Integration Needs
4. Social Integrative Needs
5. Tension Release Needs

### **MEDIA FRAMING THEORY**

According to Entman, 1983, p.52, cited in Chukwu & Asemah, (2021), to frame is to highlight some characteristics of a seen reality in a communicative text in order to support a specific issue description, casual interpretation, moral judgement and/or therapeutic prescription for the item described.

Framing theory indicates that the manner in which messages are presented to the audience by the media influences the choices the audience make about processing the information received (Mohammed & Asemah, 2021).

Entman (1993) explains that " media framing theory is talking about selecting some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition- regional, political or religious, casual interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described".

Framing focuses on how media draws the public's eye to specific topics; setting agendas, then takes a step further to create a frame through which the audience will understand such information.

Media framing refers to the way in which media present information and the way in which that information is framed influences audience perception and interpretation of the issues. Media framing of cross-gender issues can have significant influence on public attitudes and beliefs. For example, positive representations of transgender people may foster acceptance, while negative or stereotypical portrayals may be a reason for prejudice and discrimination. This theory constitutes a guide to analyzing the role of mass communication in shaping perceptions of cross-gender issues at UNIBEN.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3:1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

This study is carried out using the survey research method. According to Okwechime (2001), survey research design is used to find out opinions, attitudes, preferences, knowledge level, etc of a people towards the issue being studied.

Hence, in order to analyse the perception of Netizens on cross gender issues: A study of mass communication students, (UNIBEN), University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria, this study will make use of the survey research design and the questionnaire as an instrument to conduct this research.

The survey method is more appropriate for this study because it focuses on people, vital facts about them and also their beliefs, attitude, behaviour, motivations and opinions. This will help the researcher to get vital information about cross gender issues from the students of mass communication.

#### **3:2 POPULATION OF THE STUDY**

According to Best and Kahn (2006), population is any group of people that has one or more features in common distinguishing the group from other individuals.

Research population is the entire group of individuals on whom the result of a study is intended to be applied.

Based on this study, the students of mass communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria, formed the population of the study. The total number of mass communication students in the 2023/2024 academic year are 892.

### 3:3 SAMPLE SIZE

In determining the sample size, the theory of Nwana (1981) will be deployed. The theory states that the size of a sample to take from a population depends on the population's size:

Population of a few hundred: A sample of 40% or more is sufficient

Population of many hundreds: A sample of 20% is sufficient

Population of a few thousand: A sample of 10% is sufficient

Population of several thousand: A sample of 5% or less is sufficient

So in selecting the sample size, the population of many hundreds will be used which is 20% of the population because the population of mass communication students, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria, can be seen as many hundreds. The calculation will be carried out thus;

$$20 \times 892 \div 100 = 178.4$$

Therefore the sample size for this study is 178

### **3:4 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE**

Sampling technique according to Ohaja (2003) can be seen as the selection of some members from the population. The sampling techniques that is adopted in this research is the simple random sampling technique. This sampling technique was used in other to give respondent in the chosen population equal and independent chance of being selected for the sample. Simple random techniques was adopted in order to select the respondent as it was impossible to use all the students of mass communication, university of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria.

### **3:5 INSTRUMENT OF DATA COLLECTION**

In this research, questionnaire was used as instrument of data collection. The questionnaire comes in two parts: Part A which contains demographics data such as age, sex, occupation, etc, and Part B contains psychographics data that involved a close ended questions which requires students giving their answers by ticking from the option given or based on yes or no answer.

### **3:6: VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE INSTRUMENT**

Validity is the extent to which measurements are useful in making decisions relevant to a given purpose. A questionnaire that is set and administered to the students without usage is not valid; in other words, validity is specific because an instrument has validity only for a purpose for which it was intended, Asemah et al (2022 p.185).

Reliability is the degree of consistency between two measures of the same thing. It is the consistency of scores obtained by the same person when retest with identical test or with an equivalent form of the test in different occasions, Asemah et al (2022).

This research work was given to academic scholars and professional in the department of mass communication, university of Benin, Edo State Nigeria, to validate the instrument used in the research work and how reliable it is to the study. It was also validated by the project supervisor that examined it to ensure that the instrument measures the objective of the research.

### **3:7 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION**

In this research work, the online method of data collection was used to collect data from respondent. To get data from respondents, 178 questionnaires was distributed online to 178 respondents personally by the researcher.

Secondary method of data collection was also used in collecting data for this research which were; internet, journals, textbooks from certified authors, project works, notebook and articles.

### **3:8 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS**

The method used in presenting data collected for this research was quantitative method of data analysis. It is the presentation of statistics to answer all questions that had been posed.

The quantitative method of data analysis uses descriptive data such as tables, percentage and frequencies for presentation. The tables which have title contain figures, columns and rows and they were explicitly represented to avoid confusion of data presented. The table will also help in the explanation of analysis

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION/ANALYSIS OF DATA AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter focused on the data presentation and analysis of the questionnaire administered to respondents. The research questions were analysed to determine the perception of Netizens on cross gender issues: A study of mass communication students (UNIBEN), University of Benin, Edo State Nigeria. 178 questionnaires were distributed to collect data for the research work, which were distributed online.

#### SECTION ONE

**Table 1: Showing the gender distribution of respondents**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Male	56	31.5
Female	122	68.5
Total	178	100%

**Source: Field survey 2025**

Table 1 shows that 56 of the respondents were males which give a total of 31.5% of respondents while the female were 122, with a total of 68.5%. This shows that more female participated in the survey.

**Table 2: Showing the age distribution of respondents**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
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16 - 20 years	54	30.3%
21 - 25 years	89	50%
26 - 30 years	28	15.7%
31 and above	7	3.9%
Total	178	100%

**Source: Field survey 2025**

Table 2 shows that the study comprised of respondents within various age distribution. 54 (30.3%) respondents are within the age of 16-20 years, 89 (50%) respondents are within the age of 21-25 years, 28 (15%) respondents agreed that they are within the age of 26-30 years while 7 (3.9%) respondents are within the age of 31 and above.

This shows that a greater percentage of the respondents are within the age of 21-26 years. This indicate that there are more youth in the population of the study.

**Table 3: Showing the distribution of respondents by Religion**

<b>Religion</b>	<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Christianity	119	66.9%
Islam	40	22.5%
Traditional religion	11	6.2%
Others	8	4.5%
Total	178	100%

**Source: Field survey 2025**

Table 3 shows that 119 (66.9%) respondents are christian, 40(22.5%) are Muslim, 11(6.2%) are traditionalist while 8(4.5%) chose other religion. This shows that all the respondents in this survey have different religious and moral background. However, more Christians participated in this survey.

**Table 4: Showing the distribution of respondents by level**

<b>Level</b>	<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
100	44	24.7%
200	45	25.3%
300	34	19.1%
400	55	30.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field survey 2025**

Table 4 shows that respondents were gotten from all the level. 44(24.7%) respondents are in 100 level, 45(24.3%) respondents are in 200 level, 34(19.1%) respondents are in 300 level while 55(30.9%) respondents are in 400 level. This shows that 400 level

students were more available for this study.

## SECTION TWO

This section answer questions that provided psychographic data.

**Table 5: To what extent are you familiar with the term "cross-gender"?.**

Variables	Total respondents	Percentage %
Very familiar	55	30.9%
Familiar	61	34.3%
Not familiar	37	20.8%
Neutral	25	14%
Total	178	100%

**Source: Field survey 2025**

Table 5 shows the extent to which the respondents are familiar with the term "cross-gender". 55(30.9%) respondents are very familiar with the term cross-gender, 61(34.3%) respondents are familiar with the term cross-gender, 37(20.8%) respondents are not familiar with the term cross-gender while 25(14%) respondents replies to be neutral. This shows that the majority of the population are familiar with the term cross-gender.

**Table 6: Have you ever come across cross-gender issues on social media?.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Yes	116	65.2%
No	62	34.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field survey 2025**

Table 6 show that 116(65.2%) respondents agreed that they have come across cross-gender issues on social media while 62(34.8%) respondents reveals that they have not come across cross-gender issues on social media. This shows that majority of the respondents have come across issues concerning cross gender on social media.

**Table 7: If yes, what social media platforms?.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Facebook	50	28.1%
Instagram	51	28.7%
TikTok	44	24.7%
YouTube	16	9%
Others	17	9.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field survey 2025**

Table 7 shows that 50(28.1%) of the respondents come accross cross gender issues on social media through Facebook, 51(28.7%) of the respondents come accross cross gender issues on social media through Instagram, 44(24.7%) of the respondents come

across cross gender issues on social media through TikTok, 16(9%) of the respondents come across cross gender issues on social media through YouTube while 17(9.6%) of the respondents chose 'other' as the medium they come across cross gender issues on social media. This shows that cross gender issues are mostly seen on Instagram.

**Table 8: How often do you come across cross-gender issues on social media?.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Always	42	23.6%
Sometimes	83	46.6%
Rarely	35	19.7%
Never	18	10.1%
Total	178	100%

**Source: Field survey 2025.**

From the table above, 42(23.6%) of the respondents agreed that they always come across cross gender issues on social media, 83(46.6%) of the respondents agreed that they sometimes come across cross gender issues on social media, 35(19.7%) of the respondents agreed that they rarely come across cross gender issues on social media while 18(10.1%) of the respondents agreed that they have never come across cross gender issues on social media. This indicates that a majority of the respondents agreed that it is not all the time they come across cross gender issues on social media.

**Table 9: Does your religious beliefs influence your perception about cross gender issues?.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Yes	111	62.4%
No	67	37.6%
Total	178	100

**Source: Field survey 2025**

From the table above, 111(62.4%) of the respondents reveal that their religious beliefs influence their perception about cross gender issues while 67(37.6%) of the respondents reveal that their religious beliefs do not influence their perception about cross gender issues. This shows that majority of the respondents are influenced by their religious beliefs on the perception concerning cross gender issues.

**Table 10: what is the extent to which societal standards influence your perception about cross gender issues?.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Very high	48	27%
High	60	33.7%
Medium	45	25.3

Low	25	14%
Total	178	100%

**Source: Field survey 2025**

Table 10 shows that 48(27%) respondents agreed that the extent at which societal standards influence their perception about cross gender issues is very high, 60(33.7%) respondents agreed that the extent at which societal standards influence their perception about cross gender issues is high, 45(25.3%) respondents agreed that it is average while 25(14%) respondents believe that it is low. This shows that a large percentage of the respondents believe that the extent to which societal standards influence their perception about cross gender issues is high.

**Table 11: To what extent does your exposure to cross gender issues on social media affect your gender identity?.**

Variables	Total respondents	Percentage %
Very high	39	21.9%
High	52	29.2%
Average	35	19.7%
Low	36	20.2%
Undecided	16	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field survey 2025**

From the above table, 39(21.9%) respondents agreed that the extent to which their exposure to cross gender issues on social media affect their gender identity is very high, 52(29.2%) respondents believe it is high, 35(19.7%) respondents agreed that it is average, 36(20.2%) respondents agreed that it is low while 16(9%) respondents are undecided. This indicates that a large percentage of the population believe that the extent to which their gender identity is been affected base on their exposure to social media is high.

**Table 12: To what extent do you think cultural norms in Nigeria promote cross gender identities acceptance?.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Strongly agree	41	23%
Agree	43	24.2%
Neutral	33	18.5%
Disagree	38	21.3%
Strongly disagree	23	12.9%
Total	178	100%

**Source: Field survey 2025**

Table 12 indicates that 41(23%) of the respondents strongly agree that cultural norms in Nigeria promote cross gender identities acceptance, 43(24.2%) of the respondents agreed, 33(18.5%) of the respondents were neutral, 38(21.3%) of the respondents disagree that cultural norms in Nigeria do not promote cross gender identities acceptance while 23(12.9%) strongly disagree. This shows that majority of the respondents agreed that cultural norms in Nigeria promote cross gender identities acceptance.

**Table 13: How accepting would you say you are of people who identify with cross gender identities?.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very accepting	27	15.2%
Somewhat accepting	43	24.2%
Not accepting	108	60.7%
Total	178	100%

**Source: field survey 2025**

From the table above, 27(15.2%) of the respondents are very accepting to people who identify themselves with cross gender identities, 43(24.2%) of the respondents are somewhat accepting while 108(60.7%) of the respondents are not accepting to people who identify themselves with cross gender identities. This indicates that majority of the respondents are not accepting to people who identify themselves with cross gender identities

**Table 14: What do you think has the greatest impact on your attitudes about cross gender identities and expression?.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Family belief	25	14%
Religious beliefs	36	20.2%
Friends opinions	41	23%

Media	76	42.7%
Total	178	100%

**Source: Field survey 2025**

Table 14 shows that 25(14%) of the respondents agreed that family belief has the greatest impact on their attitudes regarding cross gender identities and expression, 36(20.2%) of respondents agreed that religious beliefs has the greatest impact on their attitudes regarding cross gender identities and expression, 41(23%) of the respondents agreed on friends opinions while 76(42.7%) of the respondents agreed that the media has the greatest impact on their attitudes regarding cross gender identities and expression. This indicates that the media alongside friends opinions has the greatest impact on respondents attitudes about cross gender identities and expression.

#### **4:2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

**RQ 1: What is the level of awareness of students of mass communication (UNIBEN), University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria, regarding cross gender issues?**

Data presented in Table 5, 6 and 7 were used to answer this question.

In trying to establish the level of awareness of students of mass

communication (UNIBEN), University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria, regarding cross gender issues, data presented in the table 5 shows that 55(30.9%) respondents are very familiar with the term cross-gender, 61(34.3%) respondents are familiar with the term cross-gender, 37(20.8%) respondents are not familiar with the term cross-gender while 25(14%) respondents replies to be neutral .

Similarly, Table 6 show that 116(65.2%) respondents agreed that they have come across cross-gender issues on social media while 62(34.8%) respondents reveals that they have not come across cross-gender issues on social media. In addition, Table 7 shows that 50(28.1%) of the respondents come accross cross gender issues on social media through Facebook, 51(28.7%) of the respondents come accross cross gender issues on social media through Instagram, 44(24.7%) of the respondents come accross cross gender issues on social media through TikTok, 16(9%) of the respondents come accross cross gender issues on social media through YouTube while 17(9.6%) of the respondents chose 'other' as the medium they come accross cross gender issues on social media.

Based on the data presented, the findings indicate that mass communication students (UNIBEN), University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria, are very much aware of cross gender issues. It shows that they are familiar with cross-gender issues on social

media. Based on all the findings, we can clearly see that there is high awareness of youth particularly students of mass communication (UNIBEN), University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria, regarding cross gender issues. It also shows the growing influence of social media in shaping the awareness and perceptions of university students regarding cross gender issues.

**RQ 2: How does social media influence the perceptions of cross gender issues among University students.**

Data presented in Table 8, 11 and 14 were used to answer this question. Nation concerning cross gender issues.

In order to provide a better understanding on how social media influence the perceptions of cross gender issues among University students, Table 8 shows that 42(23.6%) of the respondents agreed that they always come across cross gender issues on social media, 83(46.6%) of the respondents agreed that they sometimes come across cross gender issues on social media, 35(19.7%) of the respondents agreed that they rarely come across cross gender issues on social media while 18(10.1%) of the respondents agreed that they have never come across cross gender issues on social media. Also table 11 indicates that 39(21.9%) respondents agreed that the extent to which their exposure to cross gender issues on social media affect their

gender identity is very high, 52(29.2%) respondents believe it is high, 35(19.7%) respondents agreed that it is average, 36(20.2%) respondents agreed that it is low while 16(9%) respondents are undecided.

Lastly table 14 shows that 25(14%) of the respondents agreed that family belief has the greatest impact on their attitudes regarding cross gender identities and expression, 36(20.2%) of respondents agreed that religious beliefs has the greatest impact on their attitudes regarding cross gender identities and expression, 41(23%) of the respondents agreed on friends opinions while 76(42.7%) of the respondents agreed that the media has the greatest impact on their attitudes regarding cross gender identities and expression.

The findings from these tables indicates that social media play a vital role in presenting cross gender issues to university students. It also shows that the media has the greatest impact on the attitude of students towards cross gender identities and expressions. Lastly, the findings indicate that social media exposure has a significant influences on how students perceive their gender identity and how they also perceive other people's gender identities.

**RQ 3: What are the key factors which shape the attitude of Netizens toward cross gender identities and expression?**

Data presented in Table 9, 10 and 14 were used to answer this question.

In order to ascertain the key factors that shape the attitude of Netizens toward cross gender identities and expression, data presented in table 9 reveal that 111(62.4%) of the respondents reveal that their religious beliefs influence their perception about cross gender issues while 67(37.6%) of the respondents reveal that their religious beliefs do not influence their perception about cross gender issues. Similarly table 10 shows that 48(27%) respondents agreed that the extent at which societal standards influence their perception about cross gender issues is very high, 60(33.7%) respondents agreed that the extent at which societal standards influence their perception about cross gender issues is high, 45(25.3%) respondents agreed that it is average while 25(14%) respondents believe that it is low.

In addition, table 14 shows that 25(14%) of the respondents agreed that family belief has the greatest impact on their attitudes regarding cross gender identities and expression, 36(20.2%) of respondents agreed that religious beliefs has the greatest impact on their attitudes regarding cross gender identities and expression,

41(23%) of the respondents agreed on friends opinions while 76(42.7%) of the respondents agreed that the media has the greatest impact on their attitudes regarding cross gender identities and expression.

The findings shows that religion has a role in shaping students opinion towards cross gender identities and opinions. This also indicate that both family belief, friends opinions, religious beliefs are essential factors but the media is the greatest factor shaping attitude. This reveal the media predominant role in bringing discussion around cross gender identities and expression.

**RQ 4 How do cultural, social and institutional contexts impact the perception of cross gender issue among mass communication students of the University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria?**

Data presented in Table 12 and 13 were used to answer the question

Table 12 shows that 41(23%) of the respondents strongly agree that cultural norms in Nigeria promote cross gender identities acceptance, 43(24.2%) of the respondents agreed, 33(18.5%) of the respondents were neutral, 38(21.3%) of the respondents disagree that cultural norms in Nigeria do not promote cross gender identities acceptance while 23(12.9%) strongly disagree.

Furthermore, table 13 indicates that 27(15.2%) of the respondents are very

accepting to people who identify themselves with cross gender identities, 43(24.2%) of the respondents are somewhat accepting while 108(60.7%) of the respondents are not accepting to people who identify themselves with cross gender identities.

The findings shows that cultural norms and societal values significantly has influence on students perceptions of cross gender issues. Also it shows that students are not accepting of people who identify with cross gender identities. This lack of acceptance could be as a result of cultural, social and religious influence which it's intent is to uphold conventional norms and also discourage people from deviating from traditional identities.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5:1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The study was aimed at examining the perception of Netizens on cross gender issues: A study of mass communication students, (UNIBEN), University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. The study was carried out using the survey research method and the survey research make use of questionnaire for gathering data as the research instrument to gather data from the respondents which provided the following:

1. Mass communication students (UNIBEN), University of Benin, Edo State,

Nigeria, are aware of cross gender issues.

2. The level at which social media influence the perception of cross gender issues among university students is high.
3. The media and friends opinions are the key factors that shape the attitude of Netizens toward cross gender identities and expression.
4. Cultural, social and institutional contexts has a high impact on the perception of cross gender issues among mass communication students of the university of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria.
5. Students agreed that their religious beliefs influence their perception about cross gender issues.

## **5:2 CONCLUSION**

This study sought to investigate the perception of netizens, specifically Mass Communication students at the University of Benin (UNIBEN) Edo State, Nigeria, in regard to cross-gender issues. Key findings from the research showed that the students are highly aware of the issues of cross-gender; social media influence their perceptions greatly, while media and peer influence shape their attitudes; cultural, social, institutional, and religious contexts play an important role in shaping these perceptions.

This study confirms that students of Mass Communication at (UNIBEN), University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria, have a good awareness of cross-gender issues, probably because of the nature of their academic studies that exposes them to all forms of information and arguments on several topics and issues. With this awareness, the study has shown how several factors come together to complicate the perceptions and understanding of cross-gender identities and expressions. Social media is a source of information, but it is also a complex landscape of diverse and often conflicting views. This exposure, along with the influence of friends, family, religious beliefs, and broader societal and cultural norms, helps form individual attitudes. Most interestingly, a substantial number of respondents reported that their religious beliefs and societal standards greatly shape their perceptions. This underlines the fact that nuanced discussion and educational work will have to take such diverse influences into consideration. Whereas a majority of the respondents reported having come across cross-gender issues on social media, a significant section showed a lack of acceptance toward people with cross-gender identities. The mismatch between awareness and acceptance identifies the need for further research and interventions focused on understanding and fostering inclusivity.

### **5:3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings gotten from the study, the following recommendations are as follows:

1. Media Literacy Education: In the light of the high influence of media on perceptions of cross-gender issues, there is a dire need to promote media literacy education among students. This education should focus on developing critical thinking skills to analyze media messages, identify biases, and understand the potential impact of media representations on individual attitudes. This should be incorporated into the Mass Communication curriculum at UNIBEN, Edo State, Nigeria.

2. Peer Education Programs: Engage in peer education programming whereby students can educate one another and learn from each other regarding the issues of gender identity and being inclusive. This will ensure and maintain a much more supportive and accepting campus environment.

3. Engaging Religious and Community Leaders: The most appropriate way of responding to religious and social pressures would be the healthy and constructive engagement of religious and community leaders themselves.

This may raise awareness and acceptance of cross-gender identities within greater society.

4. Future Research: The future study should examine forms of media that shape perceptions around cross-gender issues and attempt to assess types of educational intervention that may offer the best methods for encouraging full inclusivity. Given the nature of the subject studied, qualitative inquiry, through in-depth interviewing and focus group discussions, could uncover deeper insight from the experiences of those with a cross-gender identity.

5. Social Media Campaigns for Positive Representation: The social media platforms can be used for running focused campaigns to showcase positive and realistic representations of identities cross-gender. This could help to quash negative stereotypes and create a greater sense of online community acceptance.

6. Curriculum inclusion: Include talks about gender identity, diversity, and inclusiveness within the course structure of mass communication. Eventually, this would widen the understanding of such topics and therefore provide knowledge as well as capability to report such themes both sensitively and responsibly.

Such recommendations, when effected, will help UNIBEN and other institutions in Nigeria to ensure an enabling environment for all students to enjoy their academic career, irrespective of their gender. In any case, such research and deliberation should be done continuously for increased awareness and acceptance within the society..



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**APPENDIX**

Communication

Department of Mass

Faculty of Arts  
University of Benin,  
Benin City, Nigeria  
7th of January 2025

Dear respondent,

**REQUEST FOR THE COMPLETION OF MY QUESTIONNAIRE**

I am Akpobi Faith, a final year student of mass communication. I am conducting a research on, "perception of Netizen on cross gender issues: **A study of mass communication students, (UNIBEN), University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria.**

This research project is in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of Bachelor of Art degree in mass communication.

Your response will be treated with strict confidentiality and all response you give will be used for academic purpose only.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

**Akpobi Faith**  
Researcher

## QUESTIONNAIRE

### INSTRUCTION:

#### SECTION ONE

1. Gender: (a) Male [ ] (b) Female [ ]
2. Age: (a) 16-20 years [ ] (b) 21-25 years [ ] (c) 26-30 years [ ] (d) 30 years and above [ ]
3. Religion: (a) Christianity [ ] (b) Islam [ ] (c) Traditional religion [ ] (d) Others [ ]
4. Level: (a) 100 [ ] (b) 200 [ ] (c) 300 [ ] (d) 400 [ ]

#### SECTION TWO

5. To what extent are you familiar with the term "cross-gender"? (a) Very familiar [ ] (b) Familiar [ ] (c) Not familiar [ ] (d) Neutral [ ]
6. Have you ever come across cross-gender issues on social media? (a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]
7. If yes, what social media platforms? (a) Facebook [ ] (b) Instagram [ ] (c) Tiktok [ ] (d) YouTube [ ] (e) Others [ ]
8. How often do you come across cross gender issues on social media? (a) Always [ ] (b) Sometimes [ ] (c) Rarely [ ] (d) Never [ ]
9. Does your religious beliefs influence your perception about cross-gender issues? (a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]
10. What is the extent to which societal standards influence your perception about cross-gender issues? (a) Very high [ ] (b) High [ ] (c) Medium [ ] (d) Low [ ]

11. To what extent does your exposure to cross gender issues on social media affect your gender identity? (a) Very high [ ] (b) High [ ] (c) Average [ ] (d) Low [ ] (e) Undecided [ ]
12. To what extent do you think cultural norms in Nigeria promote cross gender identities acceptance? (a) Strongly agree [ ] (b) Agree [ ] (c) Neutral [ ] (d) Disagree [ ] (e) Strongly disagree [ ].
13. How accepting would you say you are of people who identify with cross gender identities? (a) Very accepting [ ] (b) Somewhat accepting [ ] (c) Not accepting [ ]
14. What do you think has the greatest impact on your attitudes about cross gender identities and expression? (a) Family belief [ ] (b) Religious beliefs [ ] (c) Friends opinions [ ] (d) Media [ ]