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EXPLORING THE ROLE OF MUTED GROUP THEORY IN UNDERSTANDING WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract
Muted Group Theory describes women as being viewed as a "muted" group because of male dominance. This paper aims to provide an overview of the gaps faced by women, to find out the application of the Muted Group Theory, and to identify the application of the basic concepts of the Muted Group Theory related to the experiences of women in their environment. This study uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method. This research systematically identifies and evaluates women's experiences in several previous studies. However, along with the development of time and technology, communication not only focuses on direct interaction (face-to-face) but can also be carried out on other platforms such as social media or other online media. This can broaden women's opportunities to express and share their opinions.

Keywords: muted group theory, gender, woman

Introduction

There is a dominant expression at every level of society that forms a dominant structure within it (Ardener, 1975). In essence, if a person has this dominant way of expressing themselves, their surroundings will notice it. Muted Group Theory provides an argument for the placement of people in specific societies, in this case, members of the lower class, because it is more difficult for them to voice their thoughts (Chavez & Griffin, 2009). This theory has also been developed to address issues concerning unequal power distribution between dominant and silent groups (Owusu, 2016). Muted Group Theory is a valuable theory for analyzing situations with power differentials (Warner, Dzubinski, Wood, & Martin, 2017).

This is also in line with the perspective of Edwin and Shirley Ardener, who created the Muted Group Theory as an argument for excluding women in anthropological research (Ardener, 1975). Adwin and Ardener (1975) describe how women are perceived as a "silenced" group due to the effects of male-dominated speech. Men are used as communication and behavior gatekeepers in strategies to

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silence women's voices and ideas, making women continually work to be heard (O. Alichie & Oriola, 2022). Due to their different life experiences, men and women have different viewpoints on the world. However, because they have fewer linguistic alternatives than men, women sometimes struggle to express themselves clearly. Women frequently feel excluded from mission and missiology, which inhibits their thinking, contributions, and proposals (Warner et al., 2017). According to the Muted Group Theory, women must mimic men's language to be heard; otherwise, they risk not being understood and being perceived as impartial (Ardener, 1975).

In the context of gender, women constitute a demographic that experiences limitations in their ability to freely express themselves and voice their opinions, primarily as a result of the prevailing dominance of men (Ardener, 1975). Ardener notes that within the field of social anthropology, there is a tendency to overlook the collective experiences of women and their marginalized status within society. The study conducted by Henley and Kramarae (1994) on cross-sex misunderstandings demonstrated comparable findings about the asymmetry in the metastructure of interpretation. These findings indicated that the prevailing interpretation of an interaction tends to favor the more dominant individual (Henley & Kramarae, 1994). This aligns with the viewpoint presented by Spender (1980), who has elaborated on Ardeners' notion to back up his hypotheses regarding how individuals control language. Spender argues that males possess the capacity to exert control over the collective view of reality within society. The voices of women, aiming to articulate their unique experiences, are frequently marginalized due to the inherent limitations of a language system that does not prioritize the empowerment of women (Spender, 1980).

This study uses the systematic literature review (SLR) method to review the literature to determine how Muted Group Theory is applied in research on women's experiences in their environment. This is because Muted Group Theory highlights the inequalities that women face. The following research questions are used to explore these two subjects: (a) what is the Muted Group Theory's application? (b) how does research on women's experiences in their environment incorporate the basic idea of muted group theory?

Muted group theory

The theoretical framework known as Muted Group Theory (MGT) was first developed by Edwin and Shirley Ardener, as evidenced by scholarly sources such as Wall and Gannon-Leary (1999) and West and Turner (2010). Both individuals were social anthropologists who directed their attention toward the study of social hierarchies and systems. The study conducted by Wall and Gannon-Leary (1999) focused on the examination of the rituals performed by Bakweri women in Cameroon. The findings of this research were then published in the journal La Fountaine in 1972 and were further supplemented by another research publication in 1975. In the early stages of his research, Edwin Arderner attempted to clarify the underlying reasons behind the predominance of male informants in the anthropological material collected. In his scholarly work titled "Belief and the Problem of Women," Edwin Ardener observed the peculiar tendency among numerous ethnographers to assert their comprehension of a particular culture

without explicitly acknowledging the significant role played by women, who constitute half of society (Griffin, 2003).

Initially, Ardener believed that the absence of consideration given to the experiences of women constituted a distinct gender-related issue within the field of social anthropology. Nevertheless, the individual came to the realization, alongside his spouse Shirley Ardener, who is also an academic from the University of Oxford, that the absence of vocalization within a certain social group originates from their marginalized position and consequent lack of power and influence. The absence of vocal expression does not imply that marginalized communities lack any form of communication or agency. However, the concern lies in the fact that individuals possess the liberty to articulate their thoughts and opinions in a manner of their choosing, without restrictions on the time, place, or manner of expression. The dominant group does not exhibit any concerns over this matter. Nevertheless, muted groups must modify their vocabulary while engaging in public discourse, making it exceedingly challenging for them to effectively articulate their authentic convictions. They are consequently frequently dismissed, silenced, and rendered invisible—"mere black holes in someone else's universe."

Muted Group Theory's (MGT) central premise is that members of marginalized or subordinate groups are muted or rendered unable to express themselves effectively. Instead of using explicit authority or force, everyday political and cultural practices are used to silence people. Silencing calls for cooperation and a genuine shared knowledge of which groups in society have more authority over others, in contrast to speaking activities that require one player. The dominant group creates and controls the language system that silences the subordinate group. West & Turner (2010) summarized Kramarae's thinking that silencing in MGT occurs through ridicule, ritual, control, and harassment. Men frequently deride women as fussy, spoiled, whiny, gossipy, irritable, and so on.

Rituals can be used to silence women as well. Kramarae claims that the marriage ceremony is the rite that most obviously silences women (West et al., 2010). Women are not allowed to speak at various wedding ceremonies around the world. In the context of the world of sports, the media covers more sporting events involving men than those involving women. Media coverage of women's existence and communication styles is less prevalent.

According to the anthropologists Shirley Ardener and Edwin Ardener (1978), it is suggested that a muted group framework is inherent in every culture. According to Ardener (1978), the group that occupies the top position in the social hierarchy has a significant influence on the communication system that prevails in a society. Muted-group theory (MGT) posits that language serves as a reflection of one's worldview. Individuals belonging to the dominant group gradually construct a communication system that aligns with their conscious and unconscious understandings of the universe. They subsequently perceive this system as the appropriate language for the entirety of society (Ardener, 1975). Members of non-dominant groups are often forced to utilize a communication system that fails to accurately represent their collective experiences (Orbe, 1998).

Orbe (1998) asserts in his journal that scholars in the field of communication subsequently embraced Muted Group Theory (MGT), originally formulated by anthropologists Shirley and Edwin Ardener to examine the experiences of women (Kramarae, 1981) and African American men (Orbe, 1994). The structure of the

silenced group is present within any societal context characterized by asymmetrical power dynamics. The research conducted by Kramarae (1981) and Orbe (1994) utilized the muted-group paradigm to investigate the communication encounters of individuals belonging to non-dominant or co-cultural groups, specifically women and African-American men, respectively.

Shirley and Edwin Arderner laid the foundation for MGT. Cheris Kramarae, however, formulated three fundamental tenets of the philosophy that she focused on communication (Griffin, 2003; West, Turner, & Zhao, 2010).

According to Kramarae (1981), the Muted Group Theory (MGT) posits three fundamental postulates. These postulates assert that men and women possess distinct viewpoints on the world. Additionally, the theory suggests that men consistently achieve and retain political control. On the other hand, women must transform their unique ideas, interpretations, and encounters into masculine language or forms of communication to engage in societal interactions.

These differences are rooted in the division of labor between men and women. Freud's claim that "anatomy is destiny" is rejected by Kramarae because, in her opinion, the unequal relationships between men and women are brought on by the unequal allocation of power between the sexes (Griffin, 2003). Women are positioned as inferior parties who speak like men to be understood by a patriarchal culture due to the various experiences men and women have. The division of labor between men and women results in two quite distinct perspectives on how people experience the world. If a person spends every day at home and takes care of household duties, their worldly experience is closely related to the domestic affairs they manage. Because of the different world experiences between men and women, the vocabularies of women and men are not the same. For example, men create terms related to drinking and competition, while women create terms related to relationships and personal issues such as appearance (West et al., 2010).

According to Cheris Kramarae, the public-private distinction leads to the assumption that women's language is only appropriate in the private sphere or small world of interpersonal communication (Griffin, 2003). In patriarchal settings, the creation of a specifically female language is viewed as unimportant because the "big world" of significant public discussions where male vocabularies resonate is regarded as more essential.

The deliberate suppression of women's ideas and interpretations, which limits their ability to receive widespread societal recognition, contributes to the ongoing establishment of male political dominance. The dominance of men's perceptual systems can be attributed to their political dominance, which in turn undermines alternative models of women's perception and expression of the world (Griffin, 2003). According to MGT, it is argued that the reason behind women's inability to articulate their personal experiences using their language is not due to their lack of knowledge but rather from the limitations of the language itself in accurately representing women's experiences (West et al., 2010). Women often encounter obstacles when trying to express their ideas and experiences due to the limitations of language. According to Kramarae, the publishing sector had a longstanding restrictive practice of barring women from employment for five centuries (Griffin, 2003). It is hardly surprising that, as per her perspective, the dominant form of language expression is characterized as reflecting a male-centric perspective.

MGT highlights that male political dominance creates a space for dominating masculine perspectives. Alternative perceptual forces, like the experiences of women, are subordinate. This subordinate position hinders women's communication. Men gain from male supremacy, which reproduces itself in hierarchical structures. It is considered that the experiences of men, particularly white men, are more prevalent than those of women, let alone women of color. Therefore, to be accepted, successful women of color marginalize their own experiences.

The five principles of MGT posit that: (1) the dominant group assumes the role of constructing the language employed in shaping power dynamics and societal policies; (2) this language fails to comprehensively capture the diverse lived experiences of subdominant groups, leading to their marginalization and suppression; (3) consequently, subdominant groups are compelled to acquire proficiency in the language of the dominant group to maintain or enhance their social standing (Ardener, 2005); (4) resistance against silencing and the potential for transformative change exist; and (5) these dynamics persist even in the absence of the dominant group (Barkman, 2018). MGT places significant importance on the necessity of collective power as a means of reducing the marginalization experienced by vulnerable groups. The significance of muting lies in its ability to hinder the participation of individuals with less influence in accessing social advantages (Barkman & Barkman, 2020).

Ardeners saw that ethnographers silenced the voices of women, children, and other marginalized groups by ignoring their viewpoints. Kramarae's (1981) feminist muted group theory primarily focuses on women; however, it is important to note that her conceptual framework extends beyond the female gender. According to Miller (2005), the dominant group within a culture exercises control over both opportunities and modes of expression, resulting in a preference for their style of expression. About the subject of instructional race-related research, the aforementioned hypotheses exhibit little disparity. To ensure their voices are acknowledged, scientists from diverse racial backgrounds must integrate their study of race into the prevailing research agenda (Wilson, Umi, Reid, & Hendrix, 2022).

Minority groups have the right and obligation to be heard and included. The muted group theory also uses this idea as a concept and construct (Cubbage, 2018). There are lessons to be learned about effective teaching, how to avoid "gendering" the classroom, and how treating students simply as individuals can undermine group learning and social interactions.

Muted group theory and women

Cheris Kramarae believes that women are burdened with conceptualizing thoughts, scanning, and transferring their vocabulary to one that follows masculine logic to be understood by other people, who typically employ a male vocabulary. Women are prevented from becoming "accomplished speakers" by this translation process. According to Kramarae, it is not unexpected that women frequently assist one another, speak simultaneously, and even interrupt one another when attempting to explain something that cannot be communicated under the current linguistic system.

Numerous scholars, prominently Dale Spender and Cheris Kramarae, have derived insights from and adapted the Muted Group Theory, thereby exerting a

significant influence on the feminist movement. This is due to the established, challenging communication patterns between men and women. Therefore, women frequently look for other means of expression than those dominated by men. Kramarae also suggests that although women have unique experiences requiring specialized language, they are unlikely to invent relevant words because they are not picked up through male communication (Wall & Gannon-Leary, 1999). Due to their structural roles in society, women see the world differently than men do. Ardener attributes this lack of verbalization by women to male-dominated social structures (Ardener, 1975).

Cheris Kramarae proposes that women critique audience/consumer-media power relationships by engaging in analyses of such relations as political acts by applying muted group theory to women's relationships with mass media. She argues that it is crucial to recognize the influence of men when defining experiences by identifying language, particularly words invented by men and those in power (based on race and class), to oppress weaker identities. Additionally, it is necessary to deconstruct the language of oppression by offering different meanings to experiences and creating new terms to label experiences (Baldo-Cubelo, 2021).

Mahony (1985), a British classroom researcher from the 1980s, discovered that in British classrooms, it was "normal" for teachers to overlook girls for an extended amount of time, for boys to call out, and for boys to predominate in-class conversation and classroom space. Boys frequently dominate attention in classroom interactions through dominance or the utilization of physical or verbal space. This space usage intrudes on the verbal and physical space reserved for girls in favor of boys. However, Ackers et al. (2001) state that lessons in most African classrooms have teachers who use a 'transmission approach' where children remain passive; the lesson is "teacher-centered with the teacher asking questions and students answering in chorus or, sometimes, individually and copying what is put on the board" (Jule, 2018).

Method

Research method and strategy

The Systematic Literature Review (SLR) was chosen as the research method for this study because it is known for its systematic, explicit, comprehensive, and repeatable way of finding, evaluating, and synthesizing the existing body of finished and recorded work in a certain field (Fink, 2007, as cited in Dobbins et al., 2021). Systematic literature reviews are highly beneficial in offering a methodical and rigorous synthesis of existing knowledge, facilitating decision-making based on evidence.

To guarantee the strength and clarity of the evaluation procedure, this study will adhere to the recommendations established by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA). Page et al. (2021) define the PRISMA guidelines as comprising four fundamental phases, namely identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion criteria for reports that are consistent with the research topic. Adhering to these standards improves the clarity and dependability of the review, establishing a methodically solid basis for integrating and evaluating the existing literature about the topic. The use of both the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method and the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) criteria shows a

commitment to a thorough and structured approach, making this research project more academically sound.

Data criteria

The scholarly journals that have been identified are written in the English language and conform to international standards. The search approach is doing queries on a search engine utilizing certain phrases, such as "muted group theory" and "women." The findings are thereafter carefully organized to identify publications that are relevant to the specific criteria of this study. The primary search phrases employed in this study encompass "muted group theory," "women," "women," and "female," hence facilitating a thorough examination of pertinent scholarly works within the specified research framework.

Data collection technique

The technique of collecting data included a thorough search and deliberate selection of scholarly publications from diverse esteemed online databases, including Scopus, Sage publications, Taylor & Francis, and ProQuest, within the designated period spanning from 2016 to 2022.

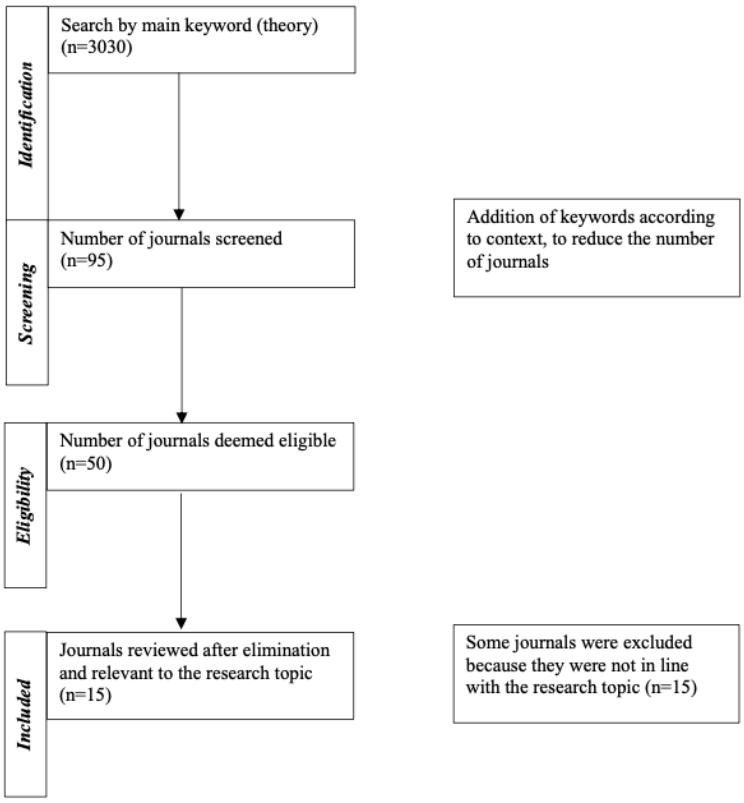


Figure 1. PRISMA chart

The process of journal search involved prioritizing scholarly articles that adhered to international standards, employing certain keywords, and imposing a temporal limitation. The application of this methodology resulted in the identification of a collection of 50 scholarly journals. Following this, a meticulous

selection process was implemented, which focused on the relevance of the journals to the research subject matter. As a result, 15 journals were identified for comprehensive examination. The theoretical analysis undertaken in this study will be based on a selection of 15 journals. These journals have been carefully chosen to provide a focused and complete review of relevant scholarly literature within the chosen timeframe and research topic.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

The results of the systematic literature review's journal search are classified based on many criteria, including the year of publication, geographical location of the research, academic discipline, research methodology utilized, and the actual research findings. Structured analysis facilitates a thorough comprehension of the various aspects of muted group theory within the framework of women. By putting the data from the 15 carefully chosen scholarly articles into clear categories, a clear pattern emerges that helps us understand the many different parts of muted group theory in the field of women's studies. The systematic way of putting results into categories guarantees a thorough look at the topic and makes it easier to spot broad patterns and trends in the academic literature about muted group theory and how it applies to women's real-life experiences.

Table 1. List of selected journal articles

No.	Journal	Year	Author	Research Methods
1.	Mute in pain: The power of silence in triggering domestic violence in Ghana.	2016	Dora Asomani Owusu	Qualitative
2.	Reflections on the 2014 celebration of women in a debate tournament at George Mason University.	2017	Jackie Poapst & Allison Harper	Qualitative
3.	I was able to still do my job on the field and keep playing: An investigation of female and male athletes' experiences with (Not) reporting concussions.	2017	Jimmy Sanderson, Melinda Weathers, Katherine Snedaker, & Kelly Gramlich	Quantitative
4.	Justice meets justification: Women's need for holistic ministry in world mission.	2017	Shawna Warner, Leanne M Dzubinski, Sarah Wood & Colleen Martin	Qualitative
5.	Shop talk: talking shop about creating safe spaces in the HBCU classroom.	2018	Jayne Cubbage	Quantitative
6.	All together now: Choral responses, gender and linguistic space in a Cameroonian primary classroom.	2018	Allyson Jule	Qualitative
7.	Nigerian Women, Memories of the	2018	Nefi Ainesi Wole-Abu	Qualitative

	Past and Visions of the Future through the Communication Narratives of the Media.			
8.	Supporting indigenous women missionaries: An alternative paradigm for mission in the barrios of Tijuana	2020	Linda Barkman & John Barkman	Qualitative
9.	Gender and the national crisis of contested nationhood: news visibility of women in Nigeria's unity debate.	2020	Oyewole Adekunle Oladapo	Quantitative
10.	Women Advertisement-Makers' Standpoint on the Production of Beauty Product Advertisements as Negotiated Co-optation of Feminism.	2021	Julienne Thesa Y. Baldo-Cubelo	Qualitative
11.	Journalistic representation of women in the reportage of military operations against Boko Haram in Northeast Nigeria.	2021	Ben-Collins Ndinojuo	Quantitative
12.	The Dragonfly Effect: Analysis of the Social Media Women's Empowerment Campaign	2021	Aya Shata & Michelle I. Seelig	Qualitative
13.	The Communication Activities and Women's Roles in Rudat Culture Based on Adat Law	2021	Anna Gustina Zainal, Karomani, Yulia Neta & Dian Kagungan	Quantitative
14.	"You don't talk like a woman": the influence of gender identity in the constructions of online misogyny.	2022	Bridget O. Alichie	Qualitative
15.	Still passed over race and the forgotten professors and students of color.	2022	Cicely T. Wilson, Shukura A. Umi, Alice Reid & Katherine Grace Hendrix	Qualitative

Article publication year category

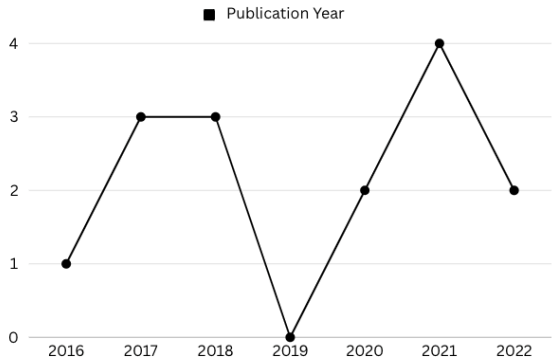


Figure 2. Article publication year category diagram

Upon examining the publication years of the chosen journal articles, a noticeable pattern becomes evident. The year 2021 stands out as the most prevalent year for article publications, accounting for the biggest proportion among the selected set of journals. Specifically, four journals were published this year, representing around 26.6% of the total journals included in the analysis. Significantly, the years 2017 and 2018 exhibit a tight correlation, with each year making a comparable contribution of three articles, accounting for 20% of the overall total. In the subsequent years, specifically 2020 and 2022, a total of two journals were included, representing 13.3% of the journals that were chosen. In contrast, the year 2016 exhibits the lowest level of representation, as it is represented by only one journal, representing around 6.67% of the overall total. The examination of publication years not only offers valuable insights into the time course of research on muted group theory about women but also highlights the evolving nature of scholarly contributions to this topic over the analyzed period.

Research country location category

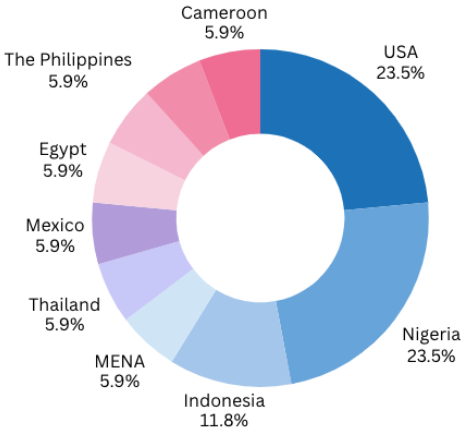


Figure 3. Research country location category diagram

When examining the geographic distribution of research within the selected publications, it is noteworthy to observe the prevalence of studies originating from diverse countries. The two study locations that are most commonly seen are the United States and Nigeria, which collectively contribute four journals, accounting for around 23.5% of the entire dataset. Indonesia is positioned closely thereafter, emerging as the second most prevalent research destination, hosting two journals, which account for around 11.8% of the total. Furthermore, a wide range of nations, encompassing countries from the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region, Thailand, Mexico, Egypt, the Philippines, Ghana, and Cameroon, each made significant contributions. These contributions were represented by individual journals, collectively constituting 5.9% of the overall distribution. The presence of several geographical locations highlights the worldwide scope of study on muted group theory within the realm of women, hence presenting a range of perspectives derived from various cultural and societal contexts.

Disciplines category

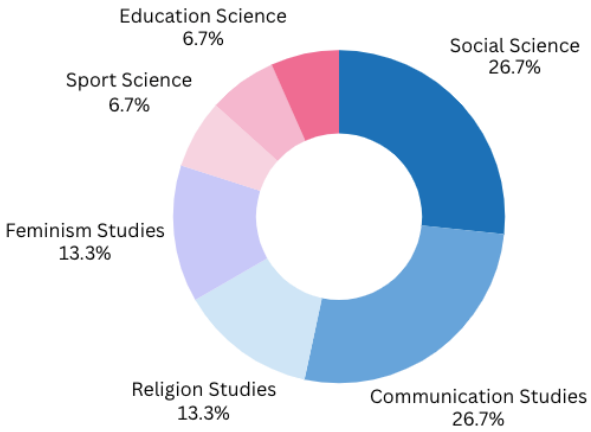


Figure 4. Disciplines category diagram

A comprehensive analysis of the disciplinary allocation among the selected journals uncovers fascinating trends and a wide range of academic fields. The fields of social science and communication science are particularly notable since they each contribute four journals, accounting for a significant proportion of 26.7% of the overall total. The prevalence of these disciplines highlights the crucial role they play in examining muted group theory within the framework of women. The fields of religion and feminism have a similar level of academic interest, as seen by their respective representation in two publications, or 13.3% each. In addition to this, the disciplinary terrain reveals intricate contributions from the fields of law, education science, and sports science, with each field being represented by a solitary publication. Together, these fields account for a combined total of 6.7% of the overall scholarly output. The diverse disciplinary representation in this study not only demonstrates the multidisciplinary character of research on muted group theory but also underscores the various academic perspectives through which scholars investigate women's experiences with this theory.

Research methods category

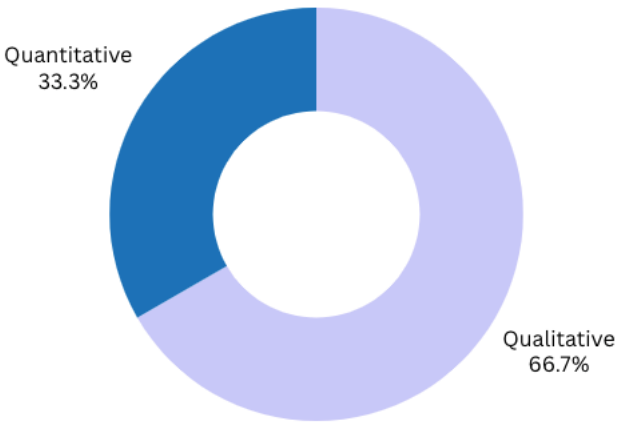


Figure 5. Research methods diagram

The chosen journals demonstrate a significant variation in the research approaches they apply, primarily classified into two broad categories: qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative methodologies are given priority, as evidenced by eleven academic journals, which account for a significant proportion of 66.7% of the overall sample, utilizing qualitative techniques for data analysis. The selection of this methodology frequently entails the utilization of interviews, surveys, and content analysis, facilitating a comprehensive examination of the topic at hand. Conversely, a noticeable subgroup, constituting the remaining proportion, chose to employ quantitative analysis, predominantly conducted via administering surveys. The presence of several methodologies highlights the range of approaches utilized by academics in examining muted group theory within the realm of women. The analyses were conducted using a combination of online and offline methods.

Discussion

According to the findings of the study, women are perceived as less dominant in their expression of arguments and cognitive processes. As a consequence of these circumstances, women exhibit a higher susceptibility to acts of violence, encompassing instances of harassment and domestic abuse. This statement aligns with the underlying premise of Muted Group Theory, which argues that individuals occupying lower positions within specific social structures encounter more challenges when attempting to articulate their viewpoints (Chaves & Griffin, 2009). This hypothesis highlights the significant influence of masculine dominance in language (Ardener, 2005; Benston, 1998). The contributions made by certain individuals have been significantly minimized or completely disregarded to align with predominantly masculine perspectives (Ndinojuo, 2021). Thus, Ballard-Reisch (2010) argues that the subordination of women in matters that have adverse effects on them is evidenced by their reluctance to voice their concerns or take action against harassment (Owusu, 2016). Consequently, the heightened participation of women on digital platforms contributes to the perpetuation of sexual violence within online media, which intentionally constrains their online presence and expression (Alichie & Oriola, 2022).

Muted group theory offers a conceptual framework that facilitates the comprehension of power differentials between dominant and minority groups. The investigation of the topic was undertaken by anthropologist Edwin Ardener, who conducted research centered on language usage and selection. Additionally, Cheris Kramarae (1981), a scholar specializing in communication and feminism, specifically examined the dynamics between men and women, asserting that men had greater societal authority in comparison to women. Muted group theory serves as a valuable framework for comprehending scenarios characterized by power asymmetry (Warner et al., 2017).

Muted group theory can also see a perspective to "investigate the restrictions of white, middle-class, hetero-male-oriented language on those whose world perspectives may be very different" (Poapst & Harper, 2017). First and foremost, it is commonly seen that the dominant group tends to exhibit a lack of regard for the speech of the marginalized group. Furthermore, it is the dominant groups within society that exert influence over the definition of acceptable and adequate knowledge to engage in high-level communication, such as public decision-making and policy formulation. And then, non-suppressed individuals frequently rely on

assumptions and interpretations to understand the experiences of silenced populations. Lastly, it is important to consider the matter of misrepresentation, as pointed out by Kramarae (2005).

The exclusion of women's contributions has been seen, with men often undervaluing and leveraging their relative dominance to advance narratives that favor themselves (Ndinojuo, 2021). This observation highlights the persistent pattern of representing women from a male-centric perspective, wherein sexism and discrimination against women are prevalent, often portraying them as the inferior gender (Ndinojuo, 2021). Nevertheless, it is worth noting that women can mitigate the impacts of the muted group theory by diminishing the prominence of men. This approach can potentially reduce the muted effects experienced by women in predominantly male-dominated societies, thus facilitating the advancement of women's empowerment (Shata & Seelig, 2021).

The dominant groups within a society's communication system exert influence over marginalized groups. In the Nigerian context, it is evident that women occupy a marginalized position, as they are often expected to maintain a passive role within certain Nigerian cultural norms, where their visibility is prioritized over their voices (Wole-Abu, 2018). The practice of silencing is specifically designed to reinforce the impression of women as subordinate individuals who are subordinate to men. The patriarchal structure in Nigerian society effectively silences the voices of women. The phenomenon of women's suppression originated in Nigeria and other societies characterized by patriarchal structures, persistently impeding any expressions of feminist opposition against oppressive institutions (Alichie & Oriola, 2022). The media's portrayal of women and the issues that impact them also reflects this silence (Wole-Abu, 2018). It is crucial to examine the representation and participation of women in the continuing debate surrounding the contentious concept of national identity, as portrayed in Nigerian newspapers as the negotiability of Nigerian unity (Oladapo, 2020).

One prevalent kind of communication is commonly referred to as "mansplaining," which is the act of a person, typically a man, presenting a concept or idea to another person, typically a woman, despite the latter's already possessing a greater understanding of the subject matter (Rothman, 2012). The phenomenon of mansplaining communication can be comprehended within a theoretical framework that examines communication dynamics within marginalized groups. First and foremost, the act of mansplaining serves as a distinct manifestation of disregarding and undermining women's verbal expression regarding a specific matter or subject matter. Furthermore, the term "mansplaining" is used in specific instances to illustrate the continued predominance of masculine viewpoints in shaping communication norms (Poapst & Harper, 2017).

Conversely, emerging modes of communication are gradually influencing women's cognitive processes and facilitating their ability to articulate their perspectives, viewpoints, and affiliations (Zainal, Karomani, Neta, & Kagungan, 2021). Women can utilize this approach to effectively articulate their viewpoints and enhance their level of engagement. The present circumstance demonstrates the limited execution of Muted Group Theory, as women are capable of overcoming communication obstacles in a coed environment and effectively transmitting the message's substance using their language without altering the overall content of the message (Zainal et al., 2021).

Houston and Kramarae (1991) observed in their academic analysis of the marginalization of women's voices that men play a crucial role in the legitimization of language through their control over grammatical norms, dictionaries, and the bulk of publishing outlets. On the other hand, women, especially in their roles as educators, are frequently assigned the responsibility of enforcing these language directions. The aforementioned mode of communication has the potential to empower marginalized groups by affording them a degree of agency. However, prevailing discursive frameworks are continually upheld through both explicit and implicit means. Consequently, the absence of a clearly defined and powerful voice among individuals belonging to non-dominant groups results in an implicit disadvantage and poses challenges to their ability to fight prevailing power structures (Ardener, 1975). Henley and Kramarae (1994) conducted a comprehensive examination of instances of communication breakdowns that transpired between individuals belonging to distinct genders. The results of their study indicated that the dominant understanding of communication occurrences tended to correspond with the viewpoints of those who held higher positions of authority, primarily males. According to the findings of Sanderson et al. (2017), the observed outcome can be attributed to the preferential treatment of male views of reality inside the discursive system. Male athletes may experience a sense of quiet and difficulty expressing their health issues due to the prevailing ideological norms in sports that prioritize attributes such as toughness, masculinity, and the ability to play despite pain. Consequently, these sportsmen may perceive themselves as unable to openly discuss their well-being and perceive themselves as being in a satisfactory condition (Sanderson, Weathers, Snedaker, & Gramlich, 2017).

From the discussion above, it can be seen that the journal explains the concept of silencing women. The muted group hypothesis, however, does not support all research that claims to have silenced women. Muted group theory encompasses the examination of non-dominant groups beyond gender, including but not limited to sexuality, age, disability, and various other categories.

Conclusion

This study's systematic literature review (SLR) gathered several journal papers on muted group theory and its application to the context of women's experiences. This study evaluates prior studies, and it is found that because of male dominance, women continue to feel silence as a barrier to speaking, expressing themselves, and engaging in social interactions. The Muted Group Theory is crucial in giving a general overview of the barriers women confront. However, not all women employ the Muted Group Theory notion similarly. Women's freedom to express their thoughts, attitudes, and sense of belonging without interference from male supremacy makes this possible. This Muted Group Theory idea can be tested in future studies. The Muted Group Theory notion can be used on various platforms, such as social media or other online media, to increase women's possibilities to express themselves and their perspectives rather than just focusing on face-to-face encounters between women. Future research is anticipated to deliver reliable research utilizing quantitative techniques based on empirically verifiable industry data. The effectiveness of the Muted Group Theory on women's experiences in the digital era is interesting and deserves further research.

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