Editorial Policy Awareness and Its Implication Among Journalists in Radio Nigeria, Abuja

Abdul-hameed Wodi, Dr. Maryam Ibrahim and Prof. Suleiman Salau

Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Social Sciences
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

Abstract

This study examined editorial policy awareness and its implication among journalists in Radio Nigeria, Abuja. The objective of the study is to determine how journalists reconcile editorial policy and their professional demands. The study was anchored in the gate keeping theory, while survey method was employed to generate data for the study. Using a census sampling technique, questionnaire was used as the instrument of data collection from the entire respondents. Findings indicate that journalists in Radio Nigeria were fully aware of the stations' editorial policy which they strictly adhered to in the discharge of their duties. However, some of the journalists feel that the editorial policy in a way limits their freedom to adhere to their professional demands especially when dealing with issues that the government has interest in. Similarly, propagating a government policy is always given priority over other events or issues. Also, findings indicate that government officials sometimes interfere with the stations' editorial policy. Thus, the study concludes that the journalists try their best in adhering to the editorial policy of their station even when itis in conflict with editorial independence and other professional guidelines. The study recommends that editorial policy should be designed by professional journalists in line with public interest and professional demands.

***Keywords**: Awareness, Editorial Policy, Implication, Journalists, Radio Nigeria*

Introduction

Every media organization, irrespective of the type and pattern of ownership, should have an editorial policy which defines the mission and vision of such organization. It spells out the philosophy on which media outfits operate; it also spells out to journalists, what to cover, how to cover it, and how to present it. It also serves as a barometer to measure performance of journalists in a station. Owums (2007, 2008) and Asemah(2011) agree that every station has a principle that is described as a written or unwritten statement that guides performance of managers, editors, reporters, presenters, and programmers within such a station. It stipulates the

acceptable norms of performance which each worker in the station must observe in order to comply with the rules and codes established by the station. It contains the mission statement as an avenue for attaining the purpose of the station. It also contains the house style that determines how programmes are to be produced for the station.

Awolowo (2009) notes that every media outfit has its own operational guidelines and laid down rules and position or stand on some issues, which professional communicators in such organization (the gate-keepers) must adhere to.

In Nigeria, there are both government and privately-owned media stations. Each of these radio, television, newspaper and magazine outfits has an editorial philosophy or policy defined by its owner in line with what the station is set out to achieve. The policy also regulatesthe activities and measuresthe performance of journalists (Akinfeleye cited in Momoh, 2010). Christopher and Onwuka (2013) note that, through editorial policy, owners of media outfits determine what journalists select and how to present it.

Ojo (2003) notes that religious, political, regional and ethnic interests of media owners influence the editorial policy of media organizations which never gave journalists the chance for responsible reporting. To him ownership determines a media organ's outlook and operation. The author also notes that broadcast media controlled by respective governments largely serve the interest of party in government while the private media also serve the interest of its owner. This is in agreement with the dictum that "he who pays the piper, dictates the tune".

However, Uwom and Aloa (2013) observe that the reason behind editorial policy is to use the media to achieve accelerated growth and transformation of the society, in different spheres and at different levels of national life. The implication of this, according to Akpede (2011), is the destruction of editorial independence, which states that news must be the product of a professional journalist. Nkem and Agbo (2010) argue that an editor, reporter, or

presenter is expected to resign or be fired if he/she is no longer disposed to such editorial policy of his organization.
With regard to the foregoing, the Radio Nigeria, Abuja which functions as Nigeria's publicly funded radio broadcasting organization is not an exception. The station has an editorial policy which provides sufficient details of policies and style of the organization as well as obligations of its workers and associates. Among the items in the policy areitem 2.3 (i) which provides that Radio Nigeria shall always ensure that all reports, comments and programmes are fair, balanced and factual and item 2.6 (iv) which reads thus; it is the responsibility of Radio Nigeria to explain to the public new government policies, the intention for the policy, the implications of the policy as well as the expected roles of the public.

This study examines the editorial policy awareness and its implication among journalists in Radio Nigeria, Abujain the discharge of their functions.It also seeks to ascertain how the editorial principle of serving government interest affects the professional tenet of objectivity and how government influence on editorial policy impinges on their editorial independence.

Statement of the Problem
In journalism, editorial policy serves as a guiding principle to the activities of journalists. However, editorial policy presents to journalists conflicting values to uphold in the discharge of journalistic functions (Buttler, 2009).Christopher and Onwuka (2013) lament that this situation tears apart a journalist who must find a way of reconciling any conflicting issue in the course of discharging his functions.

Radio Nigeria, Abuja Network Centre has an editorial policy which includes item 2.3 (i) and item 2.6 (iv) which conflict each other. While item 2.3 (i) implores journalists to uphold the professional ethics of fairness, balance and factuality in their reportage, item 2.6 (iv) requires the station to serve government interest by explaining its policies and intentions to the public

thereby making the station a subordinate and mouth piece of government.

Nwosu (1990) says that most media in Nigeria owned by the government end up serving as a mere mouthpiece for communicating various government's activities at various levels. This is done most times at the expense of balanced, fair and objective communication thereby inhibiting the government-owned media from living up to expectations.

It is, therefore, against this background that the study sets out to examine how journalists cope with serving the interest of the government and at the same time striving to meet up with the professional standard in a government media station like Radio Nigeria, Abuja.

Thus, thestudy examines how journalists manage conflicting editorial policy and also how the editorial policy of serving government interest affects the professional ethics of balance in selection and rejection of news worthy events by journalists. It also seeks to determine if government ownership of Radio Nigeria interferes with the editorial decision of journalists in the station.

Objectives of the Study

This research examines editorial policy awareness among journalists of Radio Nigeria, Abuja and its implication in the discharge of their functions. To achieve this, the specific objectives are:

1. To examine the level of editorial policy awareness among journalists in Radio Nigeria, Abuja.
2. To determine whether the editorial policy of serving government interest affects the professional ethics of balance in news selection by journalists in Radio Nigeria, Abuja.
3. To determine whether government ownership of Radio Nigeria Abuja affects the editorial decisions of journalists.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following questions:

1. To what extent are journalists aware of the station's editorial policy in Radio Nigeria, Abuja?
2. In what ways does the policy of serving government interest affect the professional ethics of balance in news selection by journalists in Radio Nigeria, Abuja?
3. To what extent does government ownership affect the editorial decisions of journalists in Radio Nigeria, Abuja?

Essence of Ethics in Journalism

Journalism has a code of conduct that governs activities of journalists. This is so because it has the potential power to influence not only an individual but the society as a whole. This influence can be for political, socio-cultural and economic good or to the detriment of the nation. According to Egbon (2007), the media is viewed as a distinct profession of great social importance, exercising special powers that require special regulation and checks. However, Olalejikan (2014, p.4) points out that the class ofethics that governs mass media practice is called media ethics. According to him, "media ethicsis the subdivision of applied ethics dealing with the specific ethical principles and standards of media, includingbroadcast media, film, theatre, the arts, print media and the Internet". Also, the BBC (2014, p.10) points out that "media ethics mainlyrevolves around truthfulness, accuracy, fairness, objectivity and editorial independence. Othertopics covered by journalism ethics according to the BBC include news manipulation, truth and values, truth and fantasy, truth andpublic interest, privacy, taste and conflict with the law.

Butler (2009, p.1) states that "Journalists who adhere to professional standards, who strive to produce accurate reporting in an ethical manner, certainly gain professional satisfaction. They also earn credibility with their readers and viewers, and areputation for reliability for their news organizations". Thus, adherence to professional ethics enhances the reputation of a journalist and at the same time earns him credibility in the eyes of his audience.

According to Okoye (2011, p.263), "the purpose of journalism ethics is to stipulate rules, guidelines, norms and principles that would guide the journalist in making moral decisions". Similarly,

McBride (1980, p.243) submits that the purpose of journalism ethics is tied to the following cardinal proponents:

(i) To protect the consumer-readers, listeners, viewers or the public in general
(ii) To protect and inspire the working journalist, broadcaster or others directly concerned with the gathering, writing, processing and presenting news and opinions
(iii) To guide editors and others who take full legal responsibility for what is published and broadcast
(iv) To define the responsibilities of proprietors, shareholders, and the governments who are in a position of absolute control over any particular form of mass media communications activity; and finally;
(v) To deal with issues of advertisers and others who buy into the services of the media.

On a general note, Wright (2009, p.257) avers that a system of ethics incorporates four fundamental principles as thus presented:

(i) Building trust and cooperation among individuals in the society,
(ii) Serving as a moral gatekeeper in appraising the society of the relative importance of certain moral values,
(iii) Acting as a moral arbitrator in resolving conflicting claims based on individual self-interest; and
(iv) Clarifying for society the competing values and principles inherent in emerging and novel dilemmas.

Ownership Influence on Editorial Policy

The extent to which journalists can be in charge of what they publish has been declining particularly due to media ownership (Christopher &Onwuka, 2013). A newsroom survey by McManus (1997) shows that there is a strong decline of journalistic autonomy and editors may not ultimately be in charge of news stories and emphasis. The study noted that journalists are no longer individually responsible for their actions, noting that many news

stories are influenced outside the news room although news stories do not bear the names of media owners but they are obviously the major determinants of news bulletin via editorial policy.

In the same vein, the International Centre for Journalists, ICJ (2009) found that the owner of a media organization may never have set foot in a newsroom but his/her influence is at the top even in absentia.

In the case of Nigeria, Olayiwola (1991) says media owners especially the politicians amongst them determine the plank on which political news stories are reported. He maintains that:

> The fact of ownership is not only the key which determines how the mass media are used for molding the citizen's perception of political reality in the country, but it is also a more precise means of understanding and investigating the role of the press in political stability or instability, national integration or disintegration (p.44).

On the side of government ownership of the media, Chinedu (2009) claims there is virtually no state government in Nigeria that does not own a television or radio station and even newspaper publishing houses. He notesthat, in government owned print media, journalists are made to give the activities of their government owner more prominence at the expense of other important issues through the laid down editorial policy. When they fail to do so, regardless of their role or importance to the media organization, the reporters risk being sacked or demoted unless they are lucky. The issue is not different in the broadcast media. According to Udeajah (2004):

> Everything points to the fact that ownership has had some significant effect on the operations of broadcast organizations in Nigeria. The policy of the person who pays the broadcaster's salary determines the operation of the media station (p.300).

Also, Chinedu (2009) notes that ownership is a principal determinant of independence. What then determines

independence? According to World Development Report (2003), Ownership is a central factor of independence because it is the owners who control information flow and thus influence economic, political and social outcomes. Also, the overdependence of government media on government subvention makes these media subject to manipulation by their owners.

The World Development Report (2003) is however of the view that government control of the media could distort and manipulate information in the incumbent government's favor. In total agreement to this, Nwosu (1990) says that most media in Nigeria are owned by government and so end up many times serving as mere mouthpieces for communicating various government's activities at various levels. This, she continued, does not make for balanced, extensive and fair communication. She concludes that Government-owned media have always been accused of not living up to their expectations.

In view of the foregoing therefore, individuals/organizations with proven journalistic education and sound financial footing should be allowed to run the media. This is so because a professional mind will put into consideration journalistic norms of practice while formulating editorial policy for his/her media outfit. And government should desist from influence on editorial decisions of its media houses. This will unequivocally reduce the rate of unprofessionalism arising from the media industry due to ownership influence on editorial decisions.

Implications of Ownership Influence on Editorial Policy

Journalism hazards as faced by journalists especially in government owned media outfits according to Ogbiti (2006)make journalists, no matter how talented and resourceful they are, regret ever working there. He notes that apart from being confronted with the problem of "he who pays the piper, calls the tune" they groan under poor remuneration and are lately plagued with the enormous challenges of government self-sustenance policy. In this regard, ownership influence on editorial policy of a media outfit either in government owned or privately owned has resulted in non-

professional acts among media practitioners. These according to Sharma and Trinity (2003) includeconflict of interest, pressure, higher level of manipulation of news, analysis and comment to suit the owners' financial and political interest, paid news, sycophancy, bribe taking, privacy and moonlighting.

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored in the Gate Keeping theory. The term "Gatekeeping" was first used by Kurt Lewin to describe a wife or mother as the person who decides which dinner foods end up on the family's dinner table (Lewin, 1947). According to Lewin, housewives are key gatekeepers who control what food enters the "channels" that ultimately bring it from the garden or supermarket into the household and ultimately onto the dining table. Each channel is walled into sections surrounded by gates – the decision-making points that determine whether the food will enterthe channel to start with, or move to the next section. And along the way, forces exertpressure to accept or reject food.

Bittner (2003) defines a gatekeeper as any person or formally organized group directly involved in relaying or transferring information from one individual to another. According to Folarin (2002), the concept Gatekeeping means no individual can transmit all the messages it receives in the course of the day's routine. The author notes that some individuals have to decide which information to transmit, which to defer, which to modify and which to delete entirely.

The central idea of Gatekeeping theory, according to Anaeto, Onabajo and Osifeso (2008, p.91), is that it "deals with the processes and the factors which influence decisions of media organizations to select or reject potential newsworthy items for publication". Asemah (2011) states thatgatekeeping entails the media men making decisions on what should be emphasized and what should be de-emphasized. McQuail (2005,p.512) holds that the core idea of the theory is that "the news media indicate to the public what the main issues of the day are and this is reflected in what the public perceives as the main issues.McGregor (1997)contends that editorial gatekeepers choose what news to use

and how to use them and these selection procedures inevitably result in the reflection of the gatekeepers' ideologies and organizational beliefs.

Also, Olalekan (2014) asserts that the basic idea of Gatekeeping is that there is some selectivity in how and which items are selected to the audience. However, the assumptions of the theory according to Anaeto et al. (2008, p.91) are:

(1) Media organizations as well as key professionals act as gates to the flood of information coming in from the larger society.
(2) The gate can either be opened to let some kinds of information through the processing and publication; or shut to deny other kinds of information the opportunity for processing and publication.
(3) Gate sections are governed either by impartial rules or by gatekeepers, with the power to make decisions or to transfer, but that the power is independent on other channel regions and ranges of impartial rules.

The relevance of Gatekeeping theory to this study is hinged on the strength of the theory as held by Adepoju (1999) and Asemah (2011) that the theory allows conformity of information to established standard i.e., conformity to organizational policy; audience needs and preferences; personal disposition of the communication professional; characteristics of the information sources; nature of the media and professional ethics. Hence, this study investigates how journalists manage conflict of editorial principles in Radio Nigeria Abuja.The theory helps to explain why journalists in Radio Nigeria Network Centre, Abuja select or reject some newsworthy items to meet up with editorial policy of serving government interest by explaining new government policy and intention and to meet up with the policy of ensuring fairness and balance in reportage. Also the theory helps in explaining how editorial policy of serving government interest makes journalists to downplay reports that negate the interest of the government which is inimical to the professional ethics of objectivity and balance. The theory also helps to explain how government officials

influence editorial decisions of Radio Nigeria via top management of the station.

Method of the Study

This study employed the survey method.The survey is a research method which allows the study of the characteristics of a sample through questioning that enablesa researcher to make generalization concerning his population of interest (Ohaja, 2003). Itis usually employed in studies of attitudinal and behavioral trends in which the researcher seeksto uncover their demographic underpinnings.

Accordingly, the questionnaire was used as the instrument of data collection. Copies of the questionnaire were administered on the entire journalists in Radio Nigeria Network Centre, Abuja totaling 96 staff in the year 2016. Out of the 96 questionnaires administered on respondents at Radio Nigeria, Abuja, only 91 were retrieved and analyzed.

Findings

Findings reveal that a majority of the respondents were awareof the existence of editorial policy in Radio Nigeria, Abuja. Specifically, data indicates that 97 per cent were aware of the existence of the editorial policy of ensuring fairness, balance and factual reportage of events and the policy of serving government interest by promoting new government policies and intentions, while 3 percent were not aware of the policy as shown in the table below:

Table 1: Respondent Awareness of the Editorial Policy

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Yes	88	97
No	3	3.0
Total	91	100

Table 2: Respondent Description of the Editorial Policy

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Normal	77	85
Conflicting	14	15
Abnormal	0	0
Dangerous	0	0
Total	91	100

From the data above, 85 percent described the policy as normal while only15 percent described the policy as conflicting. However, none of the respondents described the policy as abnormal or dangerous. This indicates that a majority of the respondents are satisfied with it.

Table 3: How Respondents adhere to the editorial policy of serving government interest

Frames	Frequency	Percent
Commentary	20	22
Special report	31	34
News report	40	44
No response	0	0
Total	91	100.0

From the data above, 22 per cent of the respondents adhere to the editorial policy of serving government interest by explaining new government policies and intentions through writing and airing commentaries on Network Service.34 per cent of the respondents adhere to the policy by writing special reports, while 44 per cent of the respondents adhere to the policy in their news reports.

Table 4: How the editorial policy of serving government interest affects balance in reportage

Variable	Frequency	Percent

Positive	31	35
Negative	48	53
No response	12	13
Total	91	100

From the data above, 35 per cent of the respondents say the editorial policy of serving government interest positively shapes their reportage, while 53 per cent of the sample size say the policy negatively shapes their reportage. However, 13 per cent of the sample size did not respond to the question. This indicates that a majority of the respondents feel that the policy affects their reportage negatively.

Table 5: The editorial policy of serving government interest makes the policy of ensuring fairness, balance, and factuality in reportage difficult.

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	18	20
Strongly disagree	9	10
Neutral	17	19
Agree	42	46
Strongly agree	5	5
Total	91	100

The above data show that 20 per cent of the respondents disagree that the editorial policy of serving government interest by explaining new government policies and intentions make the policy of ensuring fairness, balance and factuality in reportage difficult. 10 per cent of the sample population strongly disagree. 19 per cent were however neutral, while 46.2 per cent of the respondents agree with the option and 5 per cent of the respondents also strongly agree with the option. This outcome indicates that a majority of the reporters feel the policy does not allow them fair and balance coverage of events.

Table 6: The editorial policy of serving government interest makes journalists' work difficult.

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	28	31
Strongly disagree	6	7
Neutral	18	20
Agree	29	32
Strongly agree	10	11
Total	91	100

The above table shows that 31 per cent of the respondents agree that the editorial policy of serving government interest by explaining new government policies and intentions makesjournalists' work difficult.7 per cent of the sample size also strongly agree with the option. 20 per cent of the respondents were however neutral on the issue. 32 per cent of the sample size disagree to the option, while 11 per cent of the sample size strongly disagree to it. This finding indicates that serving the interest of the government limits the ability of journalists in the station to explore professional skills in their work.

Table 7: Government officials do interfere with editorial board decision.

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	24	26
Strongly disagree	9	10
Neutral	5	6
Agree	50	55
Strongly agree	3	3
Total	91	100

The above data shows that a majority of the respondents feel that government officials do interfere in the editorial decisions of the

station. This indicates a clear case of "who pays the piper, dictates the tune" scenario.

Table 8: How editorial board decisions are made

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Director has the final say	23	25.3
Based on consensus	54	59.3
Don't know	12	13.2
Through voting	2	2.2
Total	91	100

The data above shows that 25.3 per cent of the respondents were of the opinion that the News Director has the final say on editorial decisions, while 59.3 per cent of the respondents were of the opinion that decisions were based on consensus of the editorial members. This shows that decisions in the station are based on the opinion of the majority of the editorial board members.

Discussion of Findings

The analyseddata indicate that there is high level of awareness of Radio Nigeria's editorial policy of serving government interest by explaining new government policies and intentions and the policy of upholding the professional ethics of fairness, balance, and factuality in reportage among journalists in the station. This is evident in table 1 when 88 (97%) respondents said they are aware of the policy while 3 (3.3%) respondents said they are not aware of the policy. This finding goes a long way to describe the journalists in Radio Nigeria Network Centre as knowledgeableof their organizational demands/obligation. In this regard, Defleur and Rokeach (1989) said, in mass media practice, knowledge of the laws and ethics ofjournalism helps in determining the choice between alternatives in the conduct and practice of the professional.

Also, a majority of the respondents described the policy as normal in the discharge of their duties as table 2 shows that 77 (84.6%) respondents out of the 91 participants see the policy as normal while 14 (15.4%) respondents said the policy is conflicting and none see the policy as either abnormal or dangerous. This outcome is in line with the findings of Adeyemi (2013) which state that the activities of the Nigeria journalists are guided by his in-house policy.

On how journalists in Radio Nigeria Abuja manage the editorial policy of serving government interest by explaining new policies and intentions and the policy of ensuring fairness, balance and factuality in reportage, it was found that journalists manage the two policies by being neutral, that is, doing what is demanded of them by their in-house policy that is, writing news reports, commentaries and special reports on new government policies when the need arises, forgetting their personal or professional prejudice but only presenting all sides of a story on issues in which government has no interest.

Based on this finding, it is a fact that Radio Nigeria is committed to serving the interest of its owner which is the Federal Government of Nigeria by either writing positive news reports, downplaying the negative, or via commentaries and special reports. This result however is in line with the finding of a study by Dohnanyi (2003) which claim that media owners are very influential on the activities of their media outfit. Also, the result is further similar to a study by Gondwe (2014) which revealed that the ownership of the media is one critical factor that hinges on the ethical reporting of journalists,noting that the question "who owns the media? iswhat controls the journalists' agenda".

Also, as the study investigates how the editorial policy of serving government interest by explaining new government policy and intentions affects the professional ethics of balance in selecting news worthy events by journalists, the study found that the policy of serving government interest negatively affects balance in the selection of news worthy events as most respondents hold that it negatively affects their sense of professionalism as they are meant to give government interest priority and that stories that go against the interest of the government are usually thrown out with no consideration for the populace. This finding is contained in the analysis in table 4 which shows that out of 91 respondents, 48 (52.7%) respondents say the policy negatively affects their sense of balance in selecting newsworthy events. 31 (35.7%) respondents say it positively shapes their sense of news selection; hence, it helps them understand what their employers want, while 12 (13.2%) respondents did not respond to the option.

Findings also show the editorial policy of serving government interest has negatively affected balance in news reporting as journalists kill stories that go contrary to the interest of the Federal Government of Nigeria.

The foregoing finding is similar to a study by Chinedu (2009) which found that government policies affect media content negatively. Also, the finding is further similar to the work of Wang (2003) which found that media ownership affects, to a high degree, the objectivity of news reportage.

In addition, this study further reveals that the editorial policy of serving government interest does not only negatively affect balance in news selection but it makes it difficult for journalists to ensure fairness in news reportage because the station is owned by the government. This is anchored in the fact that table 5 shows

that, out of 91 respondents, 42 (46.2%) respondents agree that the policy of serving government interest makes it difficult for them to be fair in their reportage. 5 (6%) respondents strongly agree to the option while 17 (19%) respondents were neutral on whether the policy of serving government interest makes it difficult for them to ensure fairness in their reportage. However, 18 (20%) respondents disagreed to the option while 9 (10%) respondents strongly disagreed to the option. It is therefore evident that the policy of serving ownership interest in Radio Nigeria has made fairness in news selection not a guarantee in Radio Nigeria Abuja.

Also, this study investigates if the editorial decision of journalists in Radio Nigeria is under government interference.It was revealed that the editorial decision of Radio Nigeria Network Centre Abuja is under government influence as government agents through the top management of Radio Nigeria interfere on what should be aired and what should not and also query any broadcast output that does not suit their interest. This fact is shown in table 7 which shows that 50 (55%) agree that government officials interfere with editorial decision of Radio Nigeria. 3 (3.3%) strongly agree to the option while 5 (5.5) respondents were neutral on whether government officials interfere with the editorial decision of Radio Nigeria. However, 24 (26.4%) respondents disagree to the option while 9 (10%) respondents strongly disagree to the option.

Furthermore, on how editorial decisions are taken, the study found that decisions during editorial board meetings are taken by consensus. This is shown in the analysis in table 8 which shows that 54 (59.3%) of the respondents say editorial board decisions are taken by consensus. 23 (25.3%) respondents said the Director has the final say, while 12 (13.2%) respondents said they don't know how editorial board decisions are taken. However, 2 (2.2%) respondents said editorial board decisions are taken through

voting. This outcome could be that editorial board of the station prefers taking decision on issues based on the general agreement of the board in order to avoid conflict.

Therefore, for journalists in Radio Nigeria to have aligned their activities to the provisions of their in-house policy which call for balance in reportage by presenting every side of the story especially on issues that is government interest free is in tandem with the notion of the Gatekeeping theory as held by McGregor (1997) which states that editorial gatekeepers choose what news to use and how to use them and these selection procedures inevitably result in the reflection of the gatekeepers' ideologies and organizational beliefs.It is also worthy of note that the commitment of Radio Nigeria to serve the interest of the Federal Government of Nigeria is in line with a work on the theoretical framework of this study, the "Gatekeeping theory" by White (1950). White notes that, in the Gatekeeping process, editors/reporters select and reject certain stories based on the criteria of fit and appropriateness. According to White, editors/reporters base their decisions on idiosyncratic and subjective perceptions.

Thus, the motive of media organizations in making editorial policy is to direct journalists on what to select and what to reject and even how to present it is in conformity with the background of this study's theoretical framework which is the Gatekeeping theory.

Conclusion

This study examined editorial policy awareness and its implication among journalists in Radio Nigeria, Abuja. It was found out that a majority of the respondents were aware of the editorial policy of the station. The findings also revealedthat journalists in Radio Nigeria try as much as possible to reconcile editorial policy demands with professional requirements.It was also found out that

government officials do interfere in the editorial decisions of Radio Nigeria Network Centre, Abuja.

The study concludes that journalists working in Radio Nigeria are fully aware of the stations' editorial policy. Also a majority of them see it as normal even thou at times it makes their work difficult especially in a situation where government officials interfere in their work.

Recommendations

With regard to the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Editorial policy should be defined based on public interest and professional demands.
2. Editorial policy should be devoid of conflicting provisions; as such, professional hands should be vested with the responsibility of making editorial policy.
3. There should be media autonomy in government owned media outfits by giving journalists the free hand to do their job and generate revenue and pay themselves.

References

Adepoju, A. (2007). Corruption of language and Nigeria's debased value system.*Nebul*, 4 (3), 339-356

Adeyemi, A. (2013). Nigerian media practitioners and ethical values: Audience assessment. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*, 4(2), 215-222.

Akinfeleye, R. (2007). *Essentials of journalism: Introductory text for the beginner* (4th ed.). Lagos: Unimedia.

Akpede, K.S. (2011). Implementation of ethics practice by the Nigerian media practitioners: The journey so far. In Idebi, K.& Madaki, W. (Eds.),*Journalism ethics: A philosophical approach to issues in the Nigerian media*(pp. 31-50).Ibadan: Cobweb Book Publishers.

Alao, D. & Uwom, O. (2013). Analysis of media policies in Nigeria and Ghana. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, 2(8), pp.62-75.

Anaeto, S., Onabajo, O.& Osifeso, J. (2008). *Models and theories of communication*. USA: African RenaissanceIncorporated.

Asemah, E.S. (2011). *Selected mass media themes*. Jos:Maktol Press.

Asemah, E.S. et al. (2012). Research methods and procedures in mass communication. Jos: Great Future Press.

Awolowo, D. (2009). Influence of mass media and gatekeeping.http://doraawolowo.blogspot.com/2009/03/influence-of-mass-media-gatekeeping.html?m=1.

Chinedu, N.N. (2009). *Constraintson journalistic practice in government-owned media organization in South-South Geo Political Zone of Nigeria.* Master's Thesis.University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Department of Mass Communication.

Christopher, N.M. & Onwuka, O. (2013). Media ethics in the development of journalism in Nigeria. *Central European Journal of Communication*, 7(1), 33-48.

Egbon, M. (2007). *Problems of ethics in the mass media. In the line editor as gatekeeper: The Nigerian Press Council.* Abuja: Diamond Publication Ltd.

Folarin, B. (2002). *Theories of mass communication: An introductory text* (3rd ed.). Abeokuta: Link Publications.

Gondwe, G. (2014). *Reclaiming media credibility: Examining the efficacy of virtue ethics in the Zambian media*. A case study of the Zambian National Broadcasting Corporation. Master's Thesis,School of Journalism and Communication, University of Oregon, Zambia.

McQuail, D. (2007). *McQuail's mass communication theory*(6th ed.). London: SAGE Publications.

Momoh, T. (2010). *Journalism in Nigeria. So far, how well*. Lagos: Media Law and Development Centre.

Nwosu, I. E. (1990). *Mass communication and national development*. Aba: Frontier Publishers.

Ojo, E.O. (2003). The mass media and the challenges of sustainable democratic values in Nigeria:Possibilities and limitations. *Media,Culture & Society*, 25(6), 821–40.

Okoye, J. (2011). Ethical issues in Nigerian media management. In Ndolo, I. (Ed.), *Contemporary issues in communication and society.* Enugu: Rhyce Kerex Publishers.

Okunna, C.S. (2003). *Ethics of mass communication*. Enugu: New Generation Books.

Wang, X. (2003). *Media ownership and objectivity*. Bachelor's Project,Graduate Faculty, Louisana State University.

Wimmer, R. & Dominick, J. (2010). *Mass media research* (10th ed.). California: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

World Development Report (March 2, 2003). The role of the media. https://www.dawn.com/weekly/books/archive/030302/books2.htm.