Academic Staff Perception of Editorial Tradition of Selected Newspapers

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ABSTRACT

Editorial reflect the stand or opinion of newspapers on issues. In line with this, it is often said by communication experts that editorials are the souls of newspapers. Many scholars have expressed concern on the paucity of editorial materials, in newspaper on critical issues in the past. On the strength of this, the researchers surveyed some academic staff in three tertiary institutions in Nigeria to find out their perception of the tradition/editorial content of some selected newspapers. To do this, the survey research method was adopted using the questionnaire as research instrument. The findings reveal that the editorial tradition of Nigerian newspapers has not advanced investigative journalism and editorial most times are wishy-washy. Based on the above findings, it was recommended amongst other findings, that the editorial tradition of Nigerian newspapers should be reviewed for effective performance.
INTRODUCTION

From 3,000 to 2,000 B.C., the first symbols evolved from pictographs which at that time had become increasingly stylized. Those symbols developed into primitive alphabets which marked the beginning of recorded history (Okunna, 1999:32).

The press as is seen today developed from the inevitable need of man to communicate, hence, the development of writing. The need to communicate during the pre-historic era was limited by certain deficiencies which amongst others include the limits of human eyes in seeing from a far distance; the need to preserve a message to cure its transiency and to find a traditional code of encoding these messages to a wider audience. This need brought about the first attempts at developing a code through which communications can be established.

Ever since modern civilization bequeathed mankind with the newspaper institution, the latter has moved on, propelled by technology and is ever aware of its sacred responsibility in society. The newspaper has been exalted as the conscience of modern society. It coordinate social communication and furnishes a vital check on other institutions of the nation. Few other establishments can compare with the newspaper on the magnitude of social influence. Newspaper influence is exerted the most through opinion and interpretative writing, which guide and mould social discourse.

MacDougall (1972:14) noted that the daily newspaper is one of any city's most important institution without which its existence would be considerably different. The newspaper, which has the respect and trust of the people, is in a strategic position to exercise considerable power. It is a stabilizing influence, matter of civic pride, and a force of progress. A newspaper, which lack the confidence of its constituents is not only at personal disadvantage as a commercial enterprise but is a social misfortune. All citizens have a profound interest in the development and maintenance of a strong competent local journalistic medium. They need it as much as they need good government, first class schools, recreational and cultural activities and other facilities, which make for good community living today. Good editorial tradition is foremost in giving the newspapers the pride of place in the society.

Generally, editorial tradition refers to the general attitude, position or philosophy which governs a publication. Thus, preference of certain items and the rejection of others; the kind of advertising as well as editorials published and other decisions of this nature are made within the bounds of the editorial tradition.

Editorial tradition is often very specific. The Guardian newspaper, for instance, may decide to include news of crime and disaster and shun topics that bear on religion. A newspaper or magazine editorial tradition is the newspaper or magazine stand on issue (Ukonu,2007:71). it also refers to the overall position or outlook, which governs a publication. It is the path a newspaper elects to follow as it concerns what should be published and how it shall be published. Thus, the choice of certain items and the rejection of others and decisions of this nature are made within the general framework of editorial. This tradition forms the fulcrum on which the newspaper operates (Okoro and Agbo, 2003).

In the same vein, Okoli (2009) asserts that "political leanings, profit motives; economic interests; social trends, general mood of newspaper's; host community and nature of newspaper readership are the factors that determine the editorial and of a publication".

The implication of the above assertion is that the critical factors highlighted above must actively come to mind when determining the tradition of newspapers and other media establishments.

Furthermore, the editorial tradition of a newspaper is often expressed in the first editorial or leading article published by a newspaper. Editorial principles can be represented in a number of ways (Ukonu, 2007:71). Amongst the many ways which editorial tradition can be represented is through editorials.

The editorial is one newspaper content with an absolute difference. It is the only write up credited to the newspaper as its opinion. The editorial is essentially an opinion piece. But it is a distinctive kind of journalistic writing within the realm of opinion pieces. Thus, while other opinion pieces like articles, columns and essays are credited to individuals or joint writers, the editorial belongs to the newspaper as an institution - a social institution.

Editorial writing is the meeting point for other kinds of journalistic writings. Thus, investigative, interpretative and hard news reporting are incorporated into editorials. Objectivity, precision, and advocacy are also styles adopted in writing editorial topics (Ukonu, 2007:p.13).

The distinctive nature of the editorial is testimony of its importance and place within the domain of journalistic writings. Editorial writing has its own class, nature, tone, characteristics and aura. Therefore, the crucial nature and importance of an editorial marks it out as a fundamental area of a newspaper. This, perhaps is why it is said to be the great and undying soul of any newspaper.

Statement of the research problem

It is arguably a fact that the editorial tradition of a newspaper is an important factor that must be given serious consideration when establishing a newspaper outfit. This is because, the kind of editorial tradition adopted by a newspaper can make or mare such paper. The reason is obvious. Editorial tradition connotes the way and manner newspapers are expected to carry out their day to day activities.
Nigerian newspapers have been blamed severally on the unacceptable ways they often use to prosecute their goals. Most academic staff of Nigerian institutions, particularly those in the communications discipline have, as well expressed misgivings on the pattern of newspapers' coverage of events. In fact, the accusing fingers have always been pointed to the direction of the editorial tradition adopted by these newspapers.

It is based on the above that this study was initiated, to find out the perception of academic staff of Nigeria tertiary institutions on the editorial tradition of Nigerian newspapers. This is to among others, ascertain whether the editorial tradition of Nigerian newspapers impedes on the objectivity of the papers.

**Objectives of the study**

To give this study direction, the following objectives were raised:

1. To find out whether the editorials of Nigerian newspapers have helped to generate reports that always reflect the mission statements of the papers.
2. To ascertain the extent to which the editorials of Nigerian newspapers agree with the ethics of journalism practice.
3. To determine whether the editorials of Nigerian newspapers have advanced investigative journalism.
4. To find out whether the editorials of Nigerian newspapers impede on the objectivity of the papers.

**Research Questions**

In line with the objectives raised, the researchers asked the following questions;

1. To what extent have the editorial of Nigerian newspapers helped to generate reports that always reflect the mission statements of the papers?
2. To what extent does the editorial of Nigerian newspapers agree with the ethics of journalism practice?
3. Have the editorial of Nigerian newspapers encouraged investigative journalism?
4. Do the editorials of Nigerian newspapers impede on the objectivity of the papers?

**Significance of the study**

This study will be relevant to Nigeria print media establishments, particularly, the newspapers. This is because it will help them understand how they pattern their editorial traditions for efficient and effective print journalism practice.

Also, tertiary institutions (Universities, polytechnics and colleges of education) will find this study very helpful in teaching and learning of print media journalism.

Furthermore, this study shall as well be relevant to researchers that will want to conduct further studies in this area.

**Operational definitions of concepts**

i. **Academic staff**: These are all full-time lecturers in mass communication departments of University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, and Institute of Management and Technology (IMT) Enugu.

ii. **Editorial**: means the path a newspaper elects to follow as it concerns what should be published and how it shall be published.

iii. **Nigerian Newspapers**: This refers to newspapers used for this study viz the Punch, The Guardian, Daily sun, Leadership, Daily trust, The Vanguard etc.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

This segment of the research was treated under three sub head i.e as follows:

**Editorial Tradition, Editorial Independence and Ethics of Journalism**

Editorial tradition generally refers to the overall attitude, position or outlook, which governs a publication. It is the path a newspaper elects to follow as it concerns what should be published and how it shall be published. Thus, the choice of certain items and the rejection of others and similar decisions of this nature are made within the general framework of editorial tradition. This tradition forms the fulcrum on which newspapers operate.

Also, it is expedient to assert here that the ability of newspapers to produce credible, factual, balanced and objective news, either in the form of editorials, features, opinions, interviews, etc, to readers depends largely on the editorial independence of the professional journalists involved. To give credence to the above assertion, the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) code of ethics, explicitly states that "Decisions concerning the content of news should be the responsibility of a professional journalist". This implies that the journalists must as a matter of necessity, be free from influence or presence from the owners to embrace objective, balanced and well verified reportage.

Editorial independence as an ethical issue is culture-based and defines the particular society where it emanates from. As a standard of practice in journalism, ethics stems from morals (what the society considers right or word). Hence, any journalist that operates from
the premise of ethics is duty bound to uphold the ‘right’ of the society.

For an effective and acceptable editorial tradition, care must be taken to accord adequate attention to relevant ethics. According to Nworgu and Nwamnuo (2007:348) “ethics is defined as the standard of practice for any profession, usually codified by the practitioners as a guide to professional conduct”. From the above, ethics provide guides of operations for journalists and ensures that high standards of practice are upheld to build credibility in journalism.

The relationship that exists between journalists and media owners goes a long way in determining the extent to which editorial independence can be guaranteed. As a matter of practice, editorial independence is the liberty or freedom of journalists to determine the editorial contents without any influence from external forces. A balance between ownership interest and national interest is the task before journalists to ensure that editorial independence does not violate the ethical consideration of truth, fairness, objectivity and balance in all reportage. Just as the individual freedom of every citizen is founded on responsibility, it would not be out of place to point out that the underlying principle to which editorial independence is applied is the obligation and responsibility of the journalist to the society.

Despite ownership influence, the need to ensure editorial independence is indispensable if standards of professionalism must be maintained. It appears to be a struggle between the editor (journalist) and the publisher (owner). While the former operates from the standpoint of maintaining truth, honesty, objectivity and fairness in the light of public (national) interest, the latter considers the commercial and other self serving benefits that contents of the newspaper will secure him.

Over the years, in Nigeria, there has been a clarion call canvass ways aimed at protecting editorial independence through the initiation of fair and objective editorial tradition. Even, across the globe, this consciousness is being awakened going by the prevailing circumstances that threaten the relationship between journalists and media owners. To affirm the above assertion, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) in a press release in 2006 stated that:

“The International Federation of Journalist today backs protests by journalists at Italy’s leading daily newspaper, ‘Corrier Dolla Sera’, over increasing presence from shareholders including some of the country's most powerful industrial conglomerates. The journalist are demanding better protection for independent journalism.”

Scholars argue that the above statement points to the fact that ‘he who calls the piper actually dictates the tune’, which is a gross violation of the ethics of journalism practice across the world. The statement further reads: “we are witnessing a struggle for the soul of Italy's flagship newspaper; it is a battle about the future of independent and quality journalism in the Italian press and beyond”.

This came against the backdrop of a growing interface in the newsrooms by the fifteen major corporations and businesses that make up ownership structure. Hence, there is a wake-up call for a new internal structure to protect the independence of the editorial team.

Most scholars believe that publishing without reference to an owner’s goal requires a frank, truly independent editor. It also requires tolerant journal owners who believe unequivocally and irrevocably that editorial independence presupposes the alienable right of editor to determine the content of the media in such a way as to balance public interest, ethics of professional practice and the factor of ownership.

Making a case for editorial independence, scholars argue that media organization should not only be independent in their action, but must also be seen to be independent. Editorial independence is the oxygen of the professional journalist, and without it, he or she cannot discharge obligations to his readers objectively. These scholars argue that without editorial independence guaranteed by the editorial policy, the journal is as week as a mere lapdog.

**Editorial Tradition and Newspaper Objectivity**

The concept of objectivity stresses factual, accurate, balanced, straight and Deadpan reporting of events, without coloration of any sort. This, scholars have argued, should be adequately reflected in the editorial tradition of newspapers. As from the 1940s to date, objectivity has been under serious fire. Experts doubted the possibility of human beings achieving real objectivity. Proponents of objectivity, however, insist there is a sense in which objectivity can be understood. For instance, Wesley (1972; 75) writes,

Philosophically and emotionally, newspaper objectivity is many thing; “a state of mind on the reporter's and editor's part that includes a conscious effort not to prejudice what he sees, not to be influenced by his own personal reconceptions, predilections, Allegiances, and biases, not to be swayed by the rhetoric of partisans, always to make an effort to see to it that the other side has a chance to be heard. When two sides to a story are heard, the treatment should not favor one side over the other.

Some writers prefer the word fairness to objectivity. Therefore, rather than trying to be objective, according to this group, journalists should aim at fairness, because although real objectivity is an ideal concept, it is difficult to achieve by human beings (Ukonu, 2007: 75).
One important thing though is that Nigerian newspapers through a good editorial tradition should strive to give accurate information, being fair to every party in an issue, yet projecting a clear point of view. Therefore, newspaper, through good editorial tradition, give accurate and precise information.

Amongst the core aspects of the newspaper where objectivity is emphasized is editorial writing. Newspapers use editorials to give concrete and precise information and from such a stand point, advocate a view as social crusaders.

The newspaper, therefore, needs to incorporate interpretation, investigation, precision reporting and advocacy/crusading journalism into editorial writing. The later, though, and quite rightly so, is kept in a different page to separate fact from opinion. Let us consider the following paragraph of an editorial below:

According to a chieftain of the Justice Party, the recent alleged attempt by the president, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, to extend his term beyond 2007 has revealed one nauseating attitude of Nigerian rulers-sit-tight attitude that seems incurable. Human rights activist, Gbenga Oyijimi has also charged that it is unimaginable for the president elongate his stay, having failed woefully in the past seven years. However, proponents of third term are busy publicizing the president's achievements, insisting the achievements cannot be ignored. Additionally, they argue that the president has thrown constitutional amendment open to due process by allowing the national assembly and indeed Nigerians to be fully part of the process.

Without showing immediately which way the editorial would go, the writer displayed a sense of objectivity by showing that each of the parties has some points to backup their argument. The editorial in question was an attack editorial, which ultimately revealed all the fallacies of the tenure elongation logic. The most interesting point made was that the task of governance is never finished. The beauty of governance is the opportunity of change of leadership, which opens up possibility of improvement.

Editorial Tradition of Nigerian Newspapers and Investigate Journalism

One fundamental factor any newspaper must consider in determining its editorial tradition is investigative journalism. Investigative journalism can be defined as going extra mile, beyond the straight or surface news line to bring to the fore or front line, relevant facts or details that will help present an event as it occurred. Nwabueze (2005:12) noted that:

Investigative journalism can be described as the more aspect of reporting. By revealing, uncovering, unearthing, exposing and digging facts, it provides more than is seen in straight news reports. It makes a story more factual, more intriguing, more revealing, more complete, more credible, more controversial, more far-reaching, more result-oriented, mores' it provides. In fact, in investigative journalism the more you 'look' the more you 'see'.

Investigative journalism, (especially in Nigeria) is seen as adversarial journalism. This is because there seems to be an unfriendly relationship between journalists and institutions (particularly government) as well as other individuals (especially government functionaries) because the later see journalists as bent on causing them misfortune. Defleur and Dennis (1994:123) in Ukozor (2003:78) asserts that:

Generally, adversarial journalism has a long tradition and a clear future in the print media. Undoubtedly, this path was defined early in American journalism in the twentieth century when magazine journalists took the lead in exposing political corruption, social problems and economic exploitation in American society through their investigative reports. The period was called the muckraking era-a term coined by President Theodore Roosevelt to characterize journalists who instead of extolling the virtues of the United States, were determined to expose the dark and seamy sides of his administration and the private sector. Rossevelt compared such journalists to the 'man with the muckrake' in John Bunyan's classic 'Pilgrims Progress', in which the central figure would not look up from the filth on the floor even when he was offered a glittering crown.

The editorial tradition of newspapers must seriously encourage investigative journalism because it helps the journalists to uncover all issues that underlie any action of government or other bodies. Some political issues like appointments may have economic, social or even religious issues that underlie them. Appointments may be based on religious or party sentiments. Investigative journalism seeks to find out the unrevealed truth of revealed stories. The generalist and specialist are ready to make do with what the expert has said. They take events and explanations at their face value. The investigative reporter waits to uncover the hidden or undiscovered facts.'

Bruce, an editor with the 'Sunday Times' charges reporters to check fact, never, take anything on trust from people who have an interest in pushing a point of view. Bruce believes that journalism is all about investigation. It is expedient to assert here that investigative journalism is not asking so called newsmakers or information secretaries, what happened, it is burrowing in to unearth especially by asking those who are not happy about an ugly situation; those who want to vent their anger unnoticed. As Spark (1999:6)
puts it'. "Investigative report seeks to gather facts..., someone wants suppressed. It seeks not just the obvious informants who will be uncontroversial or economical with the truth, but the less obvious who know about disturbing secrets and are angry or disturbed enough to divulge them". The later must be based on findings.

**Newspapers' Editorials and Editorial Tradition**

Editorial is a newspaper's reasoned expression of a definite point of view on a very important issue. The editorial is the newspaper's voice on an issue which it decides to comment on. It is critical evaluation, interpretation and analysis of mostly topical issues by a newspaper. This is done as part of a newspaper's social watchdog and crusading functions.

Readers often turn to editorial pages to see the opinion of a newspaper on an issue and to get information and guidance on that issue. Research indicates that readership of editorials or search for editorial comments on burning issues is highest during crisis, tension or periods of important developments. One study found that, generally, editorials were read 10-15% more than other newspaper contents apart from news.

One can say that the editorial is a veritable avenue of social agenda setting and a means of mobilizing people for a cause. It is also an avenue for public opinion moulding and guidance. An often quoted saying by communication expert, Bernard Cohen goes thus: 'the press may not be successful all the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful all the time in telling people what to think about'. Through the editorials, newspaper interpret news for ordinary citizens and present opinions to guide public discussions. Editorials can be written on any public interest issue as a reflection of institutional voice and information companies' contribution to social communication exchange.

The editorial is that aspect of a publication through which newspaper influence the thoughts, opinions or actions of their readers. Editorials are neither false alarmist reports nor big noises that only direct attention to the existence of a problem. Instead, they make a point vigorously and clearly, with facts and argument to support them. Editorials are veritable channels for any topic the newspaper feels strongly about. Editorial writers are at their best when they know what to say, and are willing and capable of saying why they feel as they do.

The editorial is such a vital journalistic writing that its importance can hardly be overlaboured. As news becomes more complex, its relevance often lies underneath the factual report. It is the job of the editorial to interpret news, analyze it and advance opinion on burning matters in the news. Modern living throw up many questions that public opinion must answer. The editorial page speaks in the advocate's voice to trigger and direct the thinking and discussions, which are necessary for finding solutions to problems in every free society. Unlike his modern day counterpart, the pre-18th century publisher hardly spent any time writing editorials. However, his attempt at what seemed as editorial was often biased, one-sided and even anti-social. Unfortunately, these poorly written (often very short) pieces influenced people.

According to Krieglbaum (1956: 334) 'One of the earliest editorials that approached present day standards was Benjamin Franklin's comments on the "present disunited state of the British colonies" during the Albany Congress of 1754. His remarks appeared in the Pennsylvania Gazette at Philadelphia on May 9, 1954. They were reinforced by the first American newspaper cartoon, the "Join, or Die" snake divided to represent the various British colonies. Both the cartoon and editorial were widely reprinted'.

Publicists of the American revolution continued opinion writing through pamphlets, which they distributed from colony to colony. Before independence, American newspapers carried very little that could be equated with today's editorials. After independence in 1776, the publicists continued to write opinion articles, although not many articles got into prints.

Krieglbaum further notes that during the closing years of the Eighteenth century, Noah Webster in the American Citizen, began publishing comments as separate departments, usually on page two or page three. These early editorials were short, generally limited to a single paragraph, and were frequently pilfered by other periodicals. Before the penny press emerged in the 1830s, the editorial had become an established part of some daily papers, but as a rule, this department still was a weak one.

With the advent of the penny press, things began to take shape. The expression 'penny press' was adopted because newspapers of this period were very cheap. Benjamin Day of the New York Sun and James Gordon Bennett, of the Morning Herald, were the pioneers of the penny press era, although they were concerned with news, rather than editorials. It was Horace Greeley, of the New York Tribune, established in 1841, who brought the editorial to a high point of personalized journalism. After a nice time in journalism, having exerted tremendous pressure on public opinion, Greeley wrote that "he (the editorial writer) who is not conscious of having first interpreted events, suggested policies, corrected long-standing errors, or thrown forward a more searching light in the path of progress, has never tasted the luxury of journalism. It is the province of journalism to lead and not to be lead".

Henry J. Raymond brought the editorial to a dispassionate, impersonal level, with his New-York Daily Times founded on September 18, 1851. Raymond was himself tutored by Greeley of the Tribune. Around 1897, writers like Charles Dana of the New York Sun and E.L. Godkin of the New York Evening Post refined the editorial further. They made the editorial more astute by combining simplicity of style with human interest. More impact was created when George Jones, whose exploits
were later carried on by Adoph Ochs, combined editorial writing with investigative reporting at *New York Times*.

Then, the journalistic feud between Joseph Pulitzer, who published the *New York World*, and William Randolph Hearst, of San Francisco * Examiner*, brought competing brands of "yellow journalism," sensational reporting. During this time, it was shown that factual editorial writing with vigour and style could be tremendously potent. There was a shift from the personal and partisan squabbles of the past. Next, Arthur Brisbane, "freed the editorial page from the typographical conventions that made it an ocean of gray”. This helped attract attention to the editorial, thereby increasing readership.

Yellow journalism was followed by the muckraking era, which added a new vitality and enthusiasm to reporting. Muckraking was notable among magazines that were growing up just before and after the turn of the twentieth century. Muckraking era was a period in the twentieth century when magazine journalists took the lead in exposing political corruption, social problems and economic exploitation in American society through their investigative reports. Newspapers afterwards borrowed a leaf from the investigative reporting of magazines. During this period, objectivity remained the dominant reportorial style of the press.

It was after World War I that editors started asking reporters to look for background of situations to put events in context. The depression of the 1930s also contributed to the demand by both editors and readers for explanation of economic and social complexities and for background to fill reader's knowledge. The *Time* magazine founded in March 1923 by Henry R. Luce and Briton Hadden, incorporated opinionating, and along with a new crop of columnists of the 1930s lent a hand in interpretative reporting.

The columnist, as they were called up to the 1930s, however, re-launched the personalized approach towards explaining events, a practice that led to the description of column as personalized editorials, in fact, if the singular pronoun "I" were removed from many a column and replaced with "we", the columns would automatically become editorials.

Around the 1950s, editorial pages became adorned with attractive typographical displays, which not only enhanced the beauty of page layout but also separated news pages from the editorial pages of opinion. The practice drew greater attention to the editorial page, thereby increasing readership. From this time and to date, the personalized and savage attacks of the Greeley era had been replaced with commentary that is more factual. Background, explanation, interpretation, comment and opinion have become enduring traditions of the editorial page.

### Theoretical background

Theories are maps of realities. They are employed to give explanations on why things occur the way they do. For this study, the social responsibility theory was employed. This theory focuses on the consequences of the media and the attendant activities on the society, and places demands of responsibility on the operators without undermining the importance of freedom. The later part of the 19th century and early periods of the 20th century saw a wave of agitations in America on the extent of freedom that should be allowable to the media. By 1947, the Marynard Hutchins Commission looked into the press and freedom. The report from the commission has come to be known as the social responsibility theory of the press. This theory is an offshoot of the libertarian theory.

The social responsibility theory is of the assumption that the media must operate with a high sense of responsibility. The media, according to this theory, owe the public certain responsibilities which amongst others include objectivity, balance, fairness and accurate coverage of events. To this end, the operating style or guidelines of the media must be responsibly fashioned in such manner that supports the actualization of the above media responsibilities.

For Nigeria newspapers to effectively fulfill these responsibilities, the editorial tradition must take the direction that will culminate to fulfilling these responsibilities. The tradition must be carefully crafted in such a manner that it does not impede on the objectivity and other critical aspects of the papers. Simply put, the direction of the editorial tradition of the newspapers will either make or mare the paper.

### METHODOLOGY

The researchers used survey methodological approach to carry out this study. This method made it possible for the researchers to use questionnaire as measuring instruments. All the full-time lecturers in Mass Communication Department of three (3) tertiary institutions in Enugu State formed the population of the study. The schools are University of Nigeria, Nsukka; Enugu State University of Science and Technology and the Institute of Science and Technology (IMT) Enugu. UNN has sixteen full time lecturers, ESUT has nine full-time lecturers while IMT has fourteen full-time lecturers in Mass Communication Department of the schools. A summation of the above gave a total of thirty-nine full-time lecturers. Below is a tabular presentation of the above.
Table 1: Showing the schools, departments and Number of Lecturer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Number of Full-Time Lecturers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNN</td>
<td>Mass Communication</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESUT</td>
<td>Mass Communication</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMT</td>
<td>Mass Communication</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PRESENTATION/ANALYSIS OF DATA

Simple percentage was used to analyze the collected data. It is however, very important to state here that out of the 39 lecturers, the researchers were unable to sample 2 ESUT, 1 from UNN and 2 from IMT. to this, end only 34 respondents were used for the study.

Table 2: On whether the editorial Tradition of Nigeria Newspapers had help to Generate Reports that always reflect the Mission Statements of the Papers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>No (%)</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNN</td>
<td>1(3)</td>
<td>14(14)</td>
<td>15(44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESUT</td>
<td>1(3)</td>
<td>6(17.6)</td>
<td>7(20.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMT</td>
<td>2(6)</td>
<td>10(29.4)</td>
<td>12(35.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4(12)</td>
<td>3(88)</td>
<td>34(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table, 4 respondents, representing 12% of the total population said that the editorial traditions of Nigerian newspapers have helped to generate reports that always reflect the mission statements of the papers, while 30 respondents representing 88% of total population said the contrary. The implication here is that the editorial traditions of Nigerian newspapers have not helped to generate reports that always reflect the mission statements of the papers.

Table 3: The Extent to which the Editorial Tradition of Nigeria Newspaper agrees with the Ethics of Journalism practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Yes(%)</th>
<th>No(%)</th>
<th>Can't say</th>
<th>Total(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNN</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15(44)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15(44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESUT</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7(20.6)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7(20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMT</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12(35.4)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12(35.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>34(100)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>34(100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To find out extent to which the editorial tradition of Nigerian newspapers agrees with the ethics of journalism, all the respondents indicated that it agrees but just to a minimal extent. What this implies is that, to a large extent, it disagrees with the ethics of journalism. Also, all the respondents in the oral interview upheld this finding.

Table 4: On Whether the Editorial Tradition of Nigeria Newspapers has Advanced Investigative journalism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Yes(%)</th>
<th>No(%)</th>
<th>Can't say</th>
<th>Total(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNN</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15(44)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15(44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESUT</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7(20.6)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>34(100)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>34(100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table revealed that all the respondents asserted that the editorial tradition of Nigerian newspapers have not advanced investigative journalism in the country.
On whether the editorial tradition of Nigerian newspaper impedes on the objectivity of the papers. 32 respondents, representing 94.2 percent of the total population affirmed that it impedes on the objectivity of the newspapers while 2 respondents, representing 5.8 percent on the total population stated that it does not. The implication of the data above is that the editorial tradition of Nigerian newspapers impede on the objectivity of the papers. All the respondents in the oral interview conducted affirmed that the kind of editorial tradition of many of Nigerian newspapers affects the objectivity of the papers.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

After the collection, collation and analysis of data, the study unveiled the following:

1. The editorial tradition of Nigeria newspapers has not helped to generate reports that always reflect the mission statements of the papers
2. The editorial tradition of Nigerian newspapers agrees with the ethics of journalism practice, but just to a minimal extent.
3. The editorial tradition of Nigerian newspapers has not advanced investigative journalism in Nigeria.
4. The editorial tradition of Nigerian newspapers impedes on the objectivity of the papers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Sequel to the findings of the study, the researchers made the following recommendations;

1. Nigerian newspapers must understand the fundamental need to ensure strict fulfillment of their mission statements. To this end, the editorial tradition of the papers must constantly help to generate reports that will help/affirm the mission statements of the papers which is the platform on which the papers stand.
2. The expedient nature of journalism ethics in the practice of journalism cannot be overemphasized. Therefore, the editorial tradition of newspapers must be patterned in such manner that it effectively agrees with the ethics of journalism.
3. Investigative journalism, as stated earlier is a critical and very fundamental form of journalism which enables journalists to unravel facts behind the facts. Consequent on the above, the researchers recommend that Nigerian newspapers must structure their editorial tradition in such unique manner that will effectively promote investigative journalism which will enrich their reports.
4. Objectivity is a core ingredient for effective journalism. Nigerian newspapers must ensure they give objectivity a priority by making sure nothing impedes on their level of objectivity. Their editorial tradition (instead of impeding objectivity) must be fashioned to encourage objectivity.
5. A good editorial tradition sells a newspaper. It as well promotes such paper. To this end, Nigerian newspapers must be re-define their editorial tradition for effective performance.

CONCLUSION

As stated earlier, editorial tradition is the path a newspaper elects to follow as their day-to-day duties. This implies that when a wrong editorial tradition is adopted, failure of such newspaper becomes imminent. Consequent on the above, the Nigeria newspapers should, as a matter of necessity and urgency, fine-tune their editorial tradition to effectively discharge their functions. On this platform will journalism thrive.

REFERENCES


