

Report of Gender Policy and Practice in Nigerian Newsrooms

report Women

FEMALE REPORTERS LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

...positioning female reporters for leadership in the newsroom



Introduction

This report sums up the findings of an online survey conducted by the Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism (WSCIJ) on the policy and practice of gender mainstreaming across select newsrooms in Nigeria.

A total of 72 respondents from 15 media houses – Blueprint, BusinessDay, Daily Trust, Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, Guardian, Leadership, New Telegraph, News Agency of Nigeria, Nigerian Television Authority, Premium Times, Radio One, The Nation, TheCable, ThisDay and Voice of Nigeria completed the survey.

This report is a follow up to WSCIJ's 2017 survey-based report on the leadership status of female reporters in newsrooms in Nigeria. The survey was administered between 18 September 2018 and 24 January 2019.

Limitations

The random sampling method was used to pick the media houses from across media platforms— print, radio, television and online to make for a robust representation of the Nigerian media. However, we recognise that the analysis of 15 out of the numerous media houses operational across the tiers and regions in the country may give a limited view into the complexities of the status of gender policy and practice in the country's media.

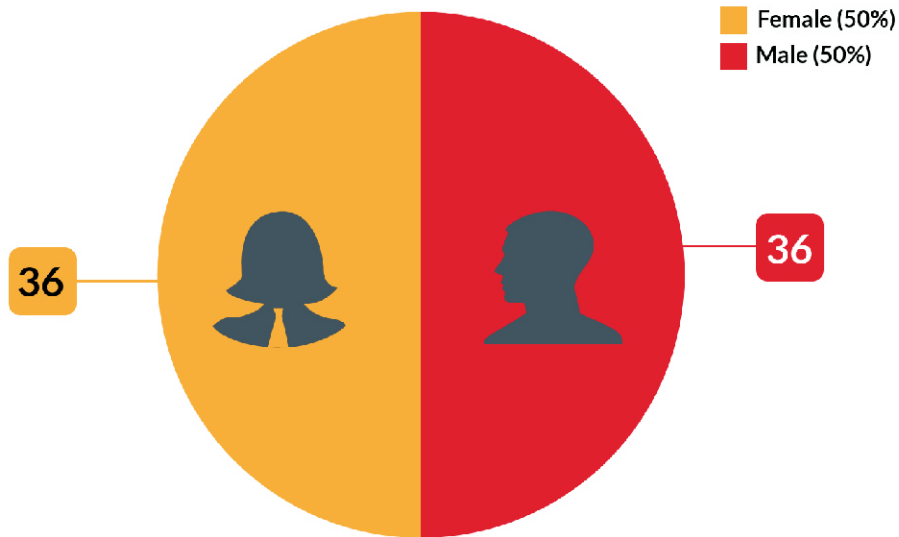
Objectives

The survey is geared at appreciating the status of gender policy and practices in Nigerian newsrooms. Analysis and report of the findings will serve as an empirical tool with which the management of news organisations and other stakeholders will be engaged towards bridging identified gender gaps.



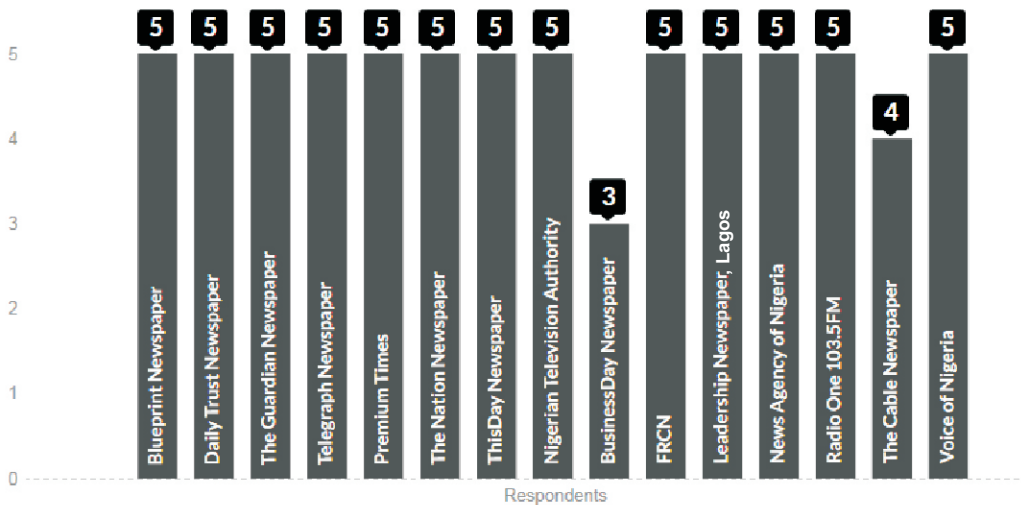
Gender Policy and Practice Survey Narrative

Gender ratio of respondents

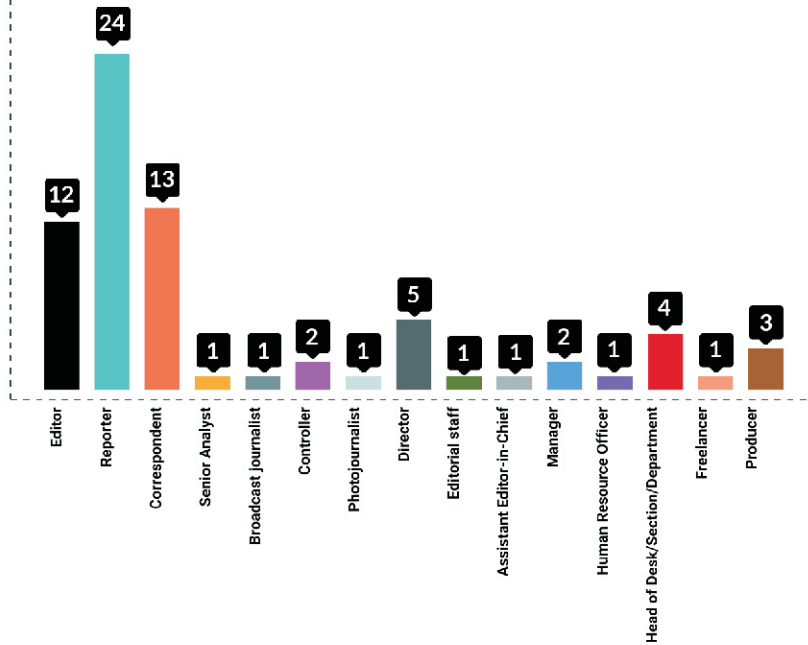


Responses from equal number of male and female respondents were analysed for the survey.

Number of respondents and their media house



Designation of respondents



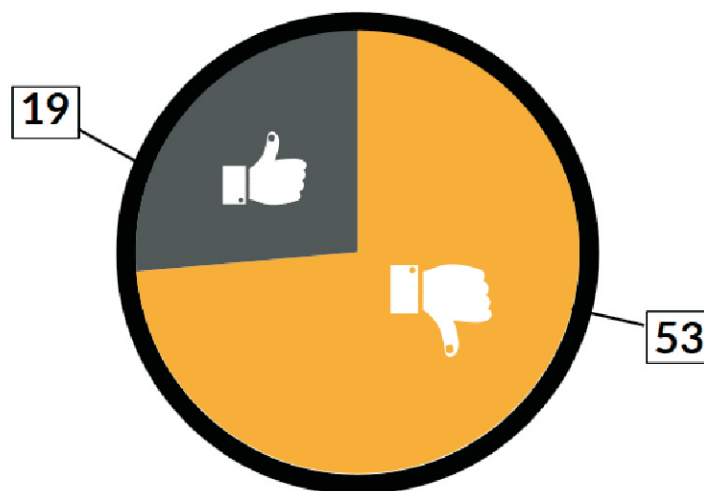
The respondents included reporters, editors, directors, desks editors, producers, managers, controllers, human resource officers, senior analysts and freelancers.

Professional Journalism Experience



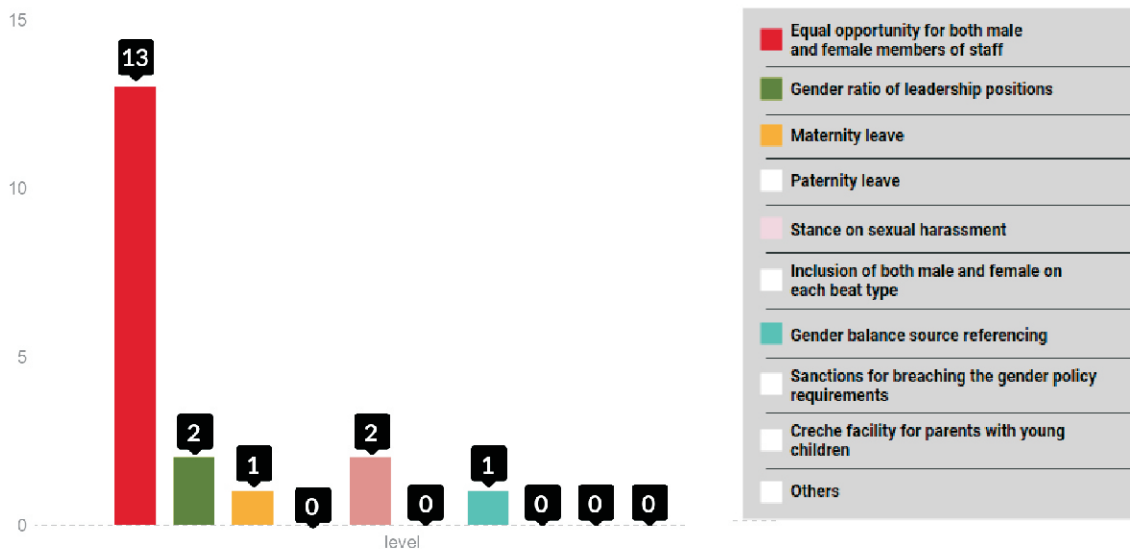
65 out of the 72 respondents whose responses were analysed for the survey, had more than 3 years journalism experience.

Presence of internal policy on gender?



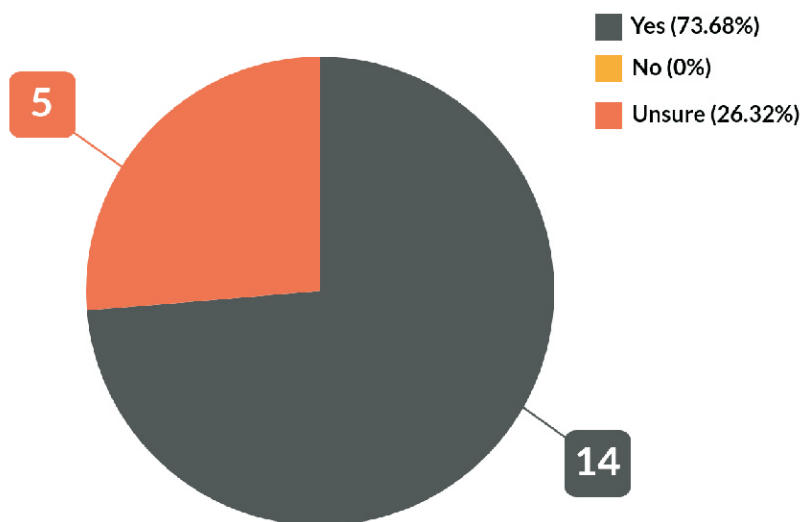
Only 19 out of the 72 respondents indicated that the organisation they work for has a gender policy.

What available gender policy covers



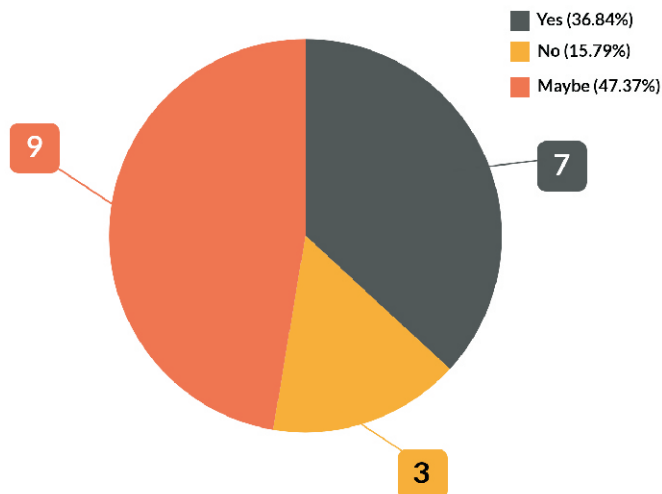
Where gender policy is available, there are no sanctions spelt out for breaching the policy requirements.

Is organisation's gender policy well communicated and circulated?



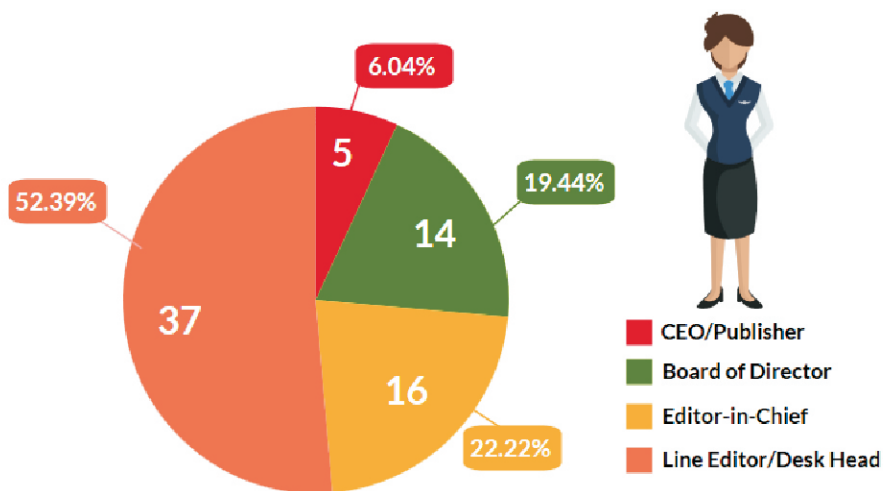
Where available, the gender policy is communicated and circulated, as indicated by over 70 per cent of those whose organisation have a gender policy.

Any designated member of staff in charge of compliance to gender policy?



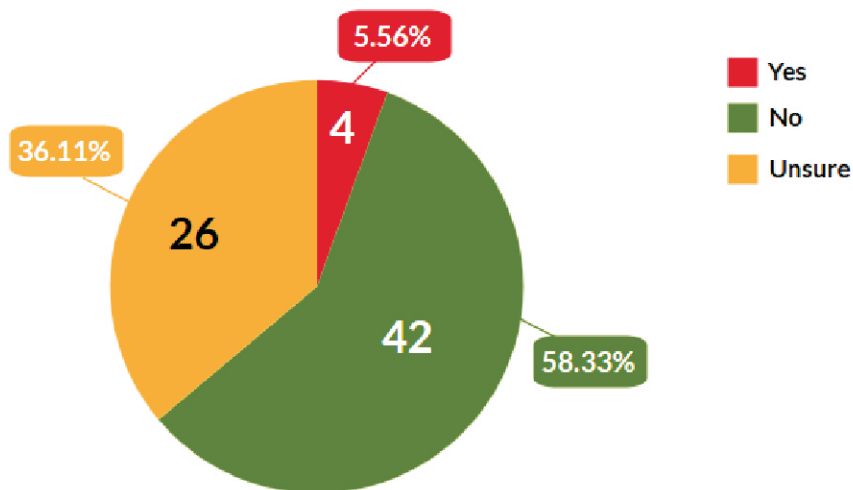
12 out of the 19 respondents indicated no or maybe when asked if they have a designated member of staff in charge of compliance.

Leadership position held by female in media house



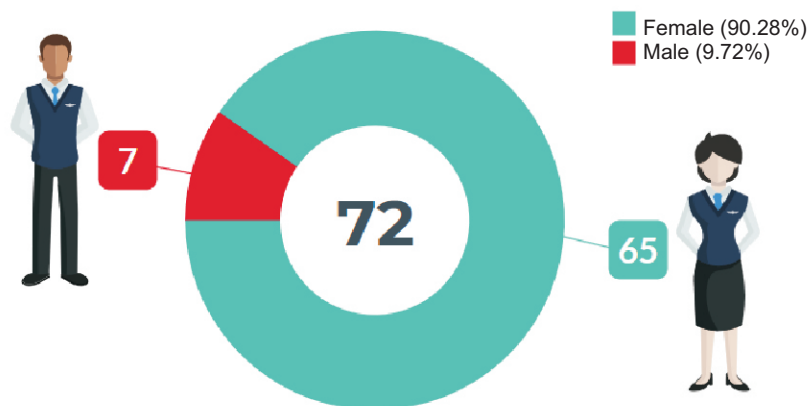
Well over 50 percent of the respondents indicated that females held the position of line or beat editors or heads of desks. However, only about 6.94 per cent of the females are reported to occupy the top position of a Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Editor-in-Chief or Publisher.

Is there a quota system for women representation in decision-making?



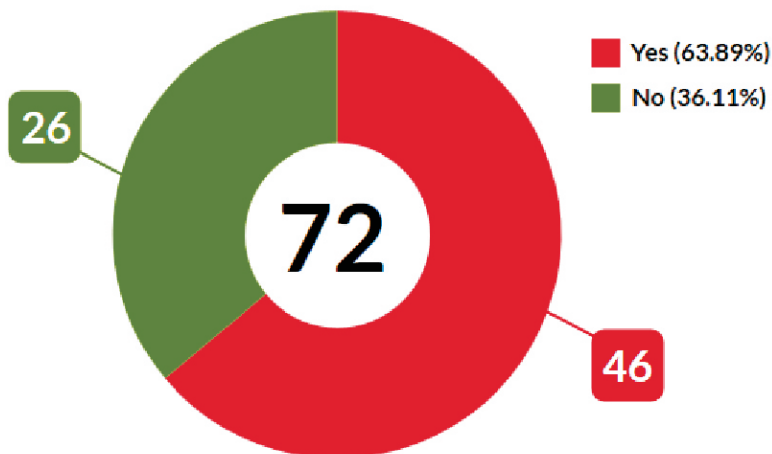
A combination of 94.44% of respondents answered no or not sure to the question on whether or not there is a quota for female persons in leadership.

Who experiences sexual harassment the most?



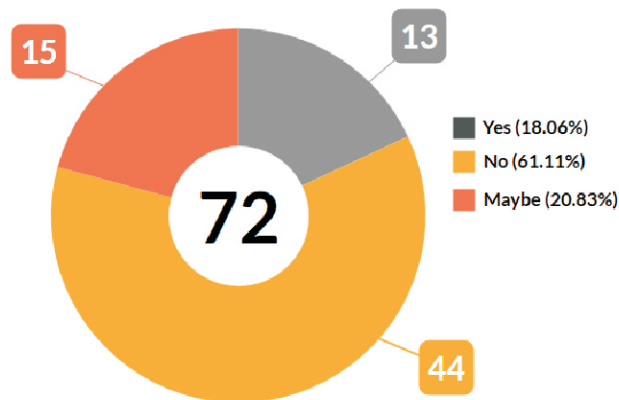
Over 90 percent of the respondents indicated that the female persons experience sexual harassment the most.

Is there a culture of protecting members of staff from sexual harassment?



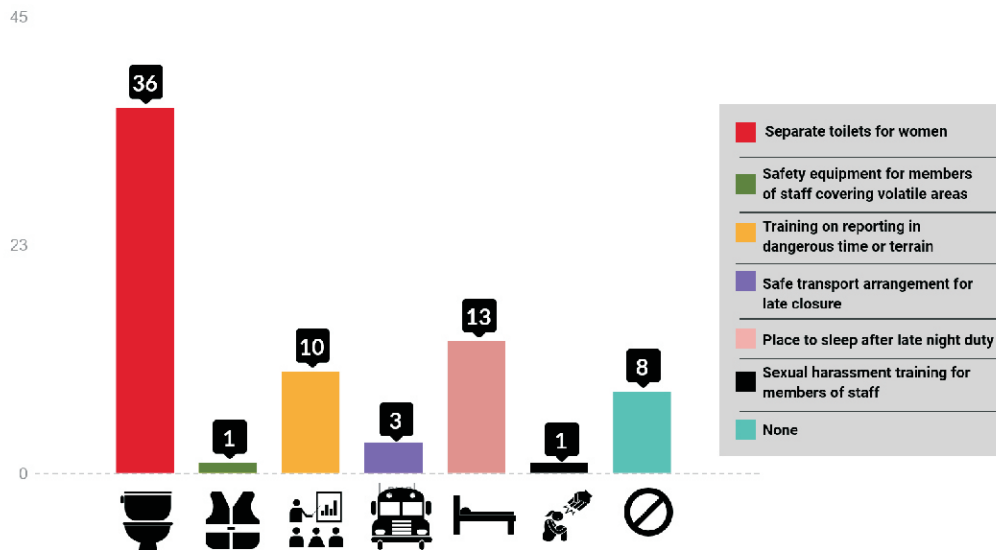
Gender policy may be largely undocumented by the media houses sampled; however, survey result shows that it is a usual practice for members of staff to be protected from or supported against sexual harassment by fellow colleagues or superiors at work.

Is there the likelihood of those who report victimisation on the basis of gender to be stigmatised?



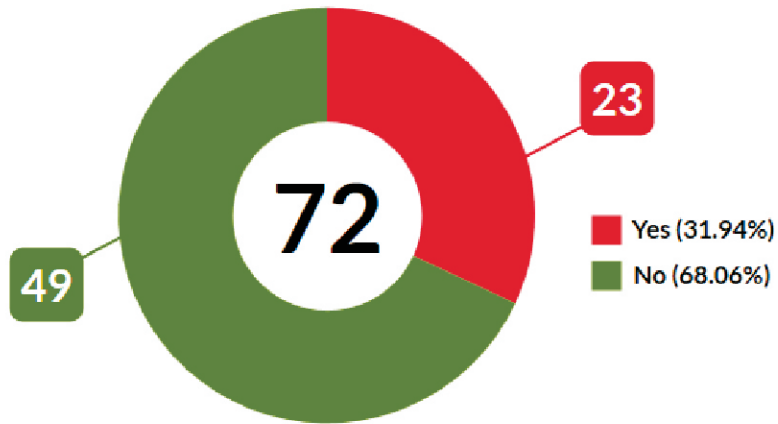
About 18 percent responded in the affirmative to this.

Facilities in place considering the different needs of female and male



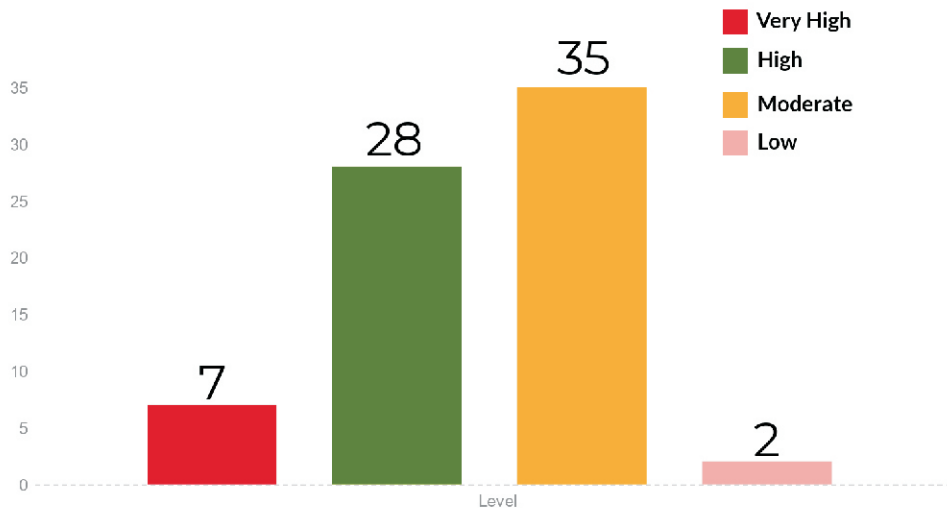
Majority of the respondents indicated that there is provision for separate toilet and place to sleep after night duty, considering the needs of female and male gender. However, the fact that less than 2 percent of the respondents indicated the availability of safety equipment for members of staff covering volatile areas shows that media houses need to pay more attention to the safety of their journalists.

Has there been any deliberate effort by your organisation to train its staff on gender issues/reporting?



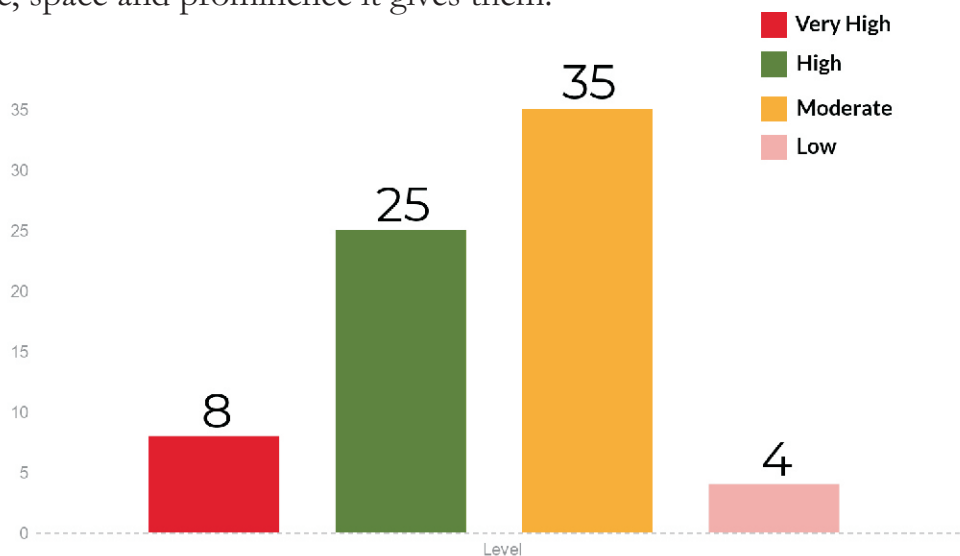
The majority of respondents were of the view that there has not been any deliberate effort by their organisation to train members of staff on gender issues and reporting.

Organisation's rating in terms of the proportion of women used as sources of information in news



Rating shows that women are highly used as sources of news in the media houses. This information contrasts with earlier data from WSCIJ's effort in monitoring select mainstream media on the use of women as sources for news, which proves that women are seldom used as sources for news.

Organisation's rating in terms of how it prioritises stories on gender-related issues in time, space and prominence it gives them.



Survey shows that gender-related issues are moderately prioritised in time, space and prominence in the sampled media organisations. Again, this differs widely from the finding of recent media monitoring by WSCIJ, which shows a low coverage of gender issues in prime time and spot in select media.

Specific Observations

- Many of the media houses sampled do not have a standalone policy document on gender in the newsroom. The mixed responses received from the respondents as to whether there exists a gender policy document in their organisation gives the indication that the existence of such a policy is known to a small group or provisions are made in other general policy documents like the handbook and probably poorly communicated.
- The implementation and enforceability of existing gender policy is an identified issue. Where respondents agree that there are policies they also say that there are no members of staff designated to take charge of compliance of such and the policies mostly lack clearly defined provision of sanctions when breached.
- Most of the media organisations sampled are unintentional about including female persons in leadership, as they have no stipulated quota for women in their recruitment policy for the C-suite. Consequently, just a few female persons get to occupy the position of the Chief Executive in their media houses.
- More females than their male counterparts were found to experience sexual harassment and are liable to suffer stigmatisation upon reporting the harassment.
- Responses show that most of the media houses surveyed do not pay attention to the safety of their journalists, as safety equipment are rarely provided to members of staff covering volatile areas whether male or female.
- A gap is observed in the training of journalists on gender issues and reporting in many of the media houses sampled. Many of the media houses sampled are yet to deliberately organise any training to equip their reporters on mainstreaming gender.

Recommendations

- There is the need for media houses to clarify and amplify their stance on gender issues and communicate it in clear terms to members of staff.
- More females than their male counterparts were found to experience sexual harassment and are liable to suffer stigmatisation upon reporting the harassment as over 90 per cent of the respondents indicated that the female persons experience sexual harassment. This makes a clear case for media houses to put a gender policy place and particularly look into the case of sexual harassment..
- To ensure compliance to the existing gender policy in media houses, sanctions for breach of regulation should be clearly defined and a member of staff designated to take charge of compliance.
- Media organisations need to become intentional with respect to placement of female persons in decision-making positions by indicating a certain quota on gender representation in their policies and implementing this.
- The safety of journalists covering volatile areas should be a top priority for media managers; journalists (both male and female) should be provided personal protective equipment and given appropriate training on safety. The peculiarities of the female persons should be considered and treated while designing and implementing safety measures.
- Balanced reporting of stories and adherence to gender policy requires awareness. Media houses should organise training for members of staff and particularly journalists on gender issues.

Conclusion

While many of the media houses sampled lack a codified gender policy document, we understand from the survey that in practice, they observe some gender mainstreaming and seek to ensure equal opportunities for their journalists regardless of gender. The media stands to gain a lot from mainstreaming gender into its policies and practices. The WSCIJ has commenced a multi-level approach that includes a leadership fellowship for female reporters, engagement with management and members of staff of media organisations on gender mainstreaming and alliance with other stakeholders to support the process. We continue to be available as a partner in seeking to help the media tell fuller stories and change the face of leadership in newsrooms to be as female as they are male.

About Free Press Unlimited

Free Press Unlimited is a foundation based in Amsterdam with media projects in 43 countries around the world. Free Press Unlimited believes that objective information can be of life-and-death importance. The foundation helps local journalists in war zones and conflict areas to provide their audience with trustworthy news and information.

About WSCIJ

Headquartered in Lagos, Nigeria, the Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism (WSCIJ) is a not-for-profit, non-governmental organisation with a vision to stimulate the emergence of an ethical and sustainable media towards a just, inclusive, transparent and accountable society by using the tools of investigative and accountability journalism for exposing corruption, regulatory failures and human right violations.



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Investigative reporting is the vital force for the restoration of human dignity. – Wole Soyinka