
An Appraisal of Ethical Issues in Journalism: The Nigerian Case in Perspective

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ABSTRACT

In this study, survey research method was employed and questionnaire was administered to a sample population of 160 which comprises eighty members of the Nigerian Union of Journalists and eighty Media Relations Officers in Benue, Edo and Anambra states and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja respectively. The findings revealed that Nigerian journalist possess the pre-requisite qualification to practice journalism, but they do not wholly uphold the ethical standard of journalism practice. Also, they are censored, poorly remunerated and often harassed by security agents of the state. The paper concludes that it is the responsibility of the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) and the Nigerian Press Council (NPC) to implement their codes of practice towards raising the standard of journalism in Nigeria and also support the signing into law the enhanced salary structure for Nigeria journalists. The paper recommends that the teaching of ethics should be enforced by accredited training and higher institutions. Furthermore, media operators should provide modern communication gadgets: computers, internet, fax machines, digital cameras, e-mail services for journalists. Finally, security agents in their affront to gag the press and censorship by media owners should be outlawed.

KEYWORDS: *Journalism, Ethics, Issues, Perspective and Practice*

INTRODUCTION

Journalism as a profession entails information gathering, writing, editing, interpreting and dissemination of information gathered to a mass audience (general public) while upholding truth as the cardinal principle of the ethics of the profession. This is important in the sense that the Nigerian constitution has bestowed on journalists the right to monitor the government and the citizens and to hold government accountable to the people in all respect. Chap II Section 22 of 1999 Nigerian constitution spelt thus:

The press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this chapter and highlight the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people.

This injunction as guaranteed by the constitution places journalists in a tight corner, in the process of news gathering, and make it incumbent on them to educate, inform, motivate, entertain and to correlate issues both on the side of the government and the governed. While carrying out these functions journalists have always been accused of attacking people,

invasion of privacy as well as presentation of false news and information. The practice of journalism according to Enobakhare requires that journalists should be professional and not sentimental, objective and accurate in news reporting and should strive to maintain a balance between fair competition and the need for solidarity within the profession (114).

Statement of the Problem

The imperative of journalism practice in any society cannot be over-emphasized. They are charged with the functions of being the watch-dog of the society, education, mobilization, information, status conferral and correlation of events. In the course of executing these functions a journalist is to have respect for the truth to the best of his knowledge; truth is given a sacred position that makes it sacrosanct to publish only facts, never falsify to suit his own purpose or any other purposes. This is the sacred duty of a journalist. This being the case, he or she should out rightly refuse any reward for publishing or suppressing news or comment other than salary or allowance legitimately earned in the discharge of his or her professional duties (Black in Enobakhare, 112).

However, contrarily, journalists have been accused of having fallen standard of the ethics of their profession. In view of the fore-going, this study sets to find out if Nigerian journalists do uphold the ethical standard of journalism practice and if not, to determine the impediments

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

- 1 To find out if Nigerian journalists are professionally qualified to practice journalism.
- 2 To ascertain if Nigerian journalists fall short of ethical standard in the discharge of their duties.
- 3 To determine if any, the challenges hindering journalists in the performance of their duties.

Research Questions

- 1 Are Nigerian journalists professionally qualified to practice journalism?
- 2 Do Nigerian journalists fall short of ethical standard in the discharge of their duties?
- 3 What are the challenges if any, hindering journalists in the performance of their duties?

Hypothesis

This hypothesis is postulated.

1. H₀: There is no significant relationship between the relevance of ethical standard and the discharge of duties by Nigerian journalists
2. H₁: There is significant relationship between the relevance of ethical standard and the discharge of duties by Nigerian journalists

Area of the Study

The study covered a state each from three geo-political zones in Nigeria. They are, Benue – North Central; Edo- South South and Anambra- South East and Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory. The inclusion of Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria in this study is quite central because journalists from the congregating states of Nigeria work in the media

houses in Abuja which means that the result from the study can to a large extent be generalised.

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprises members of the Nigerian Union of Journalists and Media Relations Officers in the states under study and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja respectively.

Sample Size

The sample for this study is made up of 80 practicing journalists and 80 media relations officers who were chosen through simple random techniques. The questionnaire served as the research instrument for data collection.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used in this paper is the Social Responsibility Media Theory. The theory proposes that journalists should not take an assumed position on topical issues on behalf of the citizens, but rather, should raise conflicts and public issues to the plane of discussion. This technique would enable majority of the people contribute directly to public debates and discussions on matters of national significance which in the essence of democracy. But for journalists to be able to play this role, they must earn public respect and recognition through excellent professional conduct that can only be made possible as media practitioners adhere to the ethics and codes of journalism.

In the light of the above facts, the theory according to McQuail pre-supposes that:

1. Certain obligations to society should be accepted and filled by the press.
2. These obligations are to be fulfilled by setting high proof standard of truth, accuracy, objectivity, balance and fairness.
3. In the discharge of their duties, the media should be self regulatory within the framework of the law and established institution.

The society and the public have a right to expect high standards of performance from the media and intervention can be justified to secure the public goodwill since journalists should be accountable to society. For media practitioners to be able to maintain sound ethical standards, they must be socially responsible to the society as corporate citizens (86).

Ethics- Conceptual Perspective

Ethics has a long history and dates back to the times of Ancient Greece and its philosopher especially Aristotle in the 4th century BC. The concept originated from the Greek word “ethos” which means character. Generally, ethics as a branch of philosophy is the platform for evaluating the soundness of an argument in a decision making process within an organisation, government and also including the arguments that emanate between and among citizens in their day-to-day interpersonal communications. Public adherence to moral ethics for instance, is the nexus that holds society together and facilitate the safety of lives and property of the citizens in society.

Ethics as a branch of philosophy involves thinking about morality, moral problems and moral judgments. This definition presupposes that journalists must always weigh their actions using societal norms and values as parameters for assessing the fitness of their profession while

reporting on public events and issues, supposed functions to society to take decisions while reporting events. Black, Steele and Barney observed that:

For excellent journalism practice, ethical issues must be considered paramount by journalists. This will help to stem the tide of mounting resentment from a highly critical public. The approach is doing ethics, a belief that good ethical decision making in journalism is a craft and skill comparable to good writing, good photography and good editing if done it will ensure that journalists can maximize the truth telling obligation, while minimizing harm to vulnerable news sources and consumers (1995).

Ethics as moral philosophy makes it imperative for journalists to consider what is right and acceptable in journalism. Ethics as Ekeli, sees it is a moderating mechanism which checks the excesses of journalists in whatever they do (33).

In journalism, ethics has to do with duty to self and to others. (Merrill as cited in Ekeli (2010,5) According to Merrill as cited in Ekeli ethics in application is self-regulatory and self-determined and this makes its enforcement rather difficult when compared to law (12). The practice of journalism requires that journalist should be professional and not sentimental, objective and accurate in news reporting and should strive to maintain a balance between fair competition and the need for solidarity within the profession. Also, journalists should realise that their social responsibility requires them to always act within the ethics of their profession (Enobakhare, 2013, 114).

Code of Ethics

According to Black, Steele and Barney posit that the society of professional journalists believe that enlightenment is the forerunner of justice and that it has a constitutional role to seek the truth as part of the public's right to know the truth. They believe those responsibilities carry with obligations that require journalists to perform with intelligence, objectivity, accuracy and fairness. (6) To this end, they declared acceptable standards of practice as follows:

Responsibility

The public rights to know about the events that occurred in their environments is one of the overriding responsibility of the mass media... journalists who is in the habit of promoting their own interest and other unworthy motives on the platform of their profession have therefore violated the public trust bestowed on them.

Freedom of the Press

The freedom of the press was evolved to guard the inalienable right of the citizens against possible abuse. Freedom however carries with it the responsibility of the citizens to the states as well as the role of government in national development and to the citizens towards ensuring that they are able to live above the minimum standards expected of human beings.

Ethics

Journalists must not be censored if they must be able to carry out their duties of truth and honesty in the dissemination of public information. To this end, the following tenets should be observed. They:

- i. Must not accept gifts, favours, or solicit special treatments from people.

- ii. Must not engage in secondary employment, or partisan politics.
- iii. Should grant equal access to citizens to use the media.
- iv. Must ensure that the interest of the public is uppermost in their operations.
- v. Must guarantee and preserve the confidentiality of news sources.
- vi. Should avoid the unethical practice of plagiarism.

Accuracy and Objectivity

They must adhere to accuracy and objectivity of news reporting in defence of public interest in its entirety:

- i. Objectivity of news should be upper most in the mind of journalists.
- ii. No excuse for inaccuracies and lack of thoroughness.
- iii. Newspaper headlines should be fully warranted by the content of the articles they accompany.
- iv. Sound practice makes clear distinctions between news reports and expressions of opinion.

Fair Play

Journalists at all times should show respect for human dignity.

- i. The news media must guard against invading the privacy of individuals.
- ii. They should make prompt correction of any observed error in their stories.
- iii. Journalists should be accountable to the public for their reports and the public should be courageous to voice its grievances using the media.

In an attempt to answer the question that has been a source of worry on how the Nigeria journalists uphold these ethics, one would need to take a cue from journalistic practice that says: “the press always tilts towards the political ideology that guide the structures and operations of the society in which it exist.” Going by this proposition, the Nigerian journalists have for 30 years worked under dictatorial governments but with only 16 years of civil democracy. The implications of these two structures are quite evident in the performance of journalists in Nigeria.

The implication of this is that Nigerian journalists have for 30 years worked under Authoritarian Government or theory of the press. Hence, censorship, harassment, detention, ethnic rivalry and the negative influence of ownership have adversely affected the profession. Despite the glistening contributions made by journalists in Nigeria, some of them were however accused of lack of commitment to fairness and objectivity, invasion of privacy, lack of in depth news analysis together with sensationalism.

Ownership

It is often said that: “he, who pays the piper, dictates the tune.” This assertion is true because of the philosophy or motive behind the establishment of many of the mass media houses in Nigeria. Government media houses do serve the interest of the government in their daily coverage of news and events. Journalists are however expected to present objective accounts of issues without necessarily taking side in their reports to ensure that the interests of their owners are favourably represented in all respects.

During the industrial strike action of the Nigerian Labour Congress over the increase of petroleum products in 2013, most of the government owned media stations gave minute-by-minute support and publicity to ensure that government’s position on the issue was constantly

reported. And some private media owners in Nigeria went into the business of public information management so as to use their organizations to influence government's decisions and secure appointments into political office. Some journalists have been dragged into ethnic rivalry and politics of the North and South dichotomy in Nigeria. The North has been accusing the South of dominating the operation of the Nigerian press; to the extent of believing that it has some negative consequences on the political interest of the Northern region.

Official Secrets

Government functionaries are often in the habit of withholding public information even to the detriment of the citizens who ought to be informed of the occurrences and events happening in the society through the press. In the effort of the press to break these barriers, some journalists in the past were either harassed or incarcerated for divulging information which the government wanted to keep secret from the people.

An important example was cited by Osinbajo of Tony Momoh Vs the Senate in which the *Daily Times* Newspaper published an article on how some Senators in the Nigerian Second Republic lobbied the government for contracts. The Senate invited Tony Momoh to disclose the sources of his information, but he refused (64). It should be noted that despite the deliberate decision of government to starve the people of the relevant information, the Nigerian people still find a way of knowing what happen daily in government.

Brown Envelope

No journalist will openly agree that he or she takes bribe before reporting events; but when press conferences are scheduled by government or private individuals, journalists are usually given money in envelopes- whether in brown or white colour. This, they accept because of the poor condition of service under which they work: like lack of transportation, good welfare package, irregular payment of salaries many others.

Personal Interest and Political Motives

Every practicing Journalist in Nigeria thinks of the day he or she will be appointed as Press Secretary or Public Relations Protocol Officer in government office. This crave for personal ambition is one issue that, to a great extent influences journalists to violate the ethics of the profession. Nduka Iraboh a veteran Journalist, was in the Fourth Republic elected as an Honourable Member of the House Representatives. The likes Chief Nnamdi Azikiwe and Obafemi Awolowo all grew from the Journalism practice to eventually make their homes in State House.

Sensationalism

A cursory look at the headlines in some Nigerian newspapers will reveal an air of exaggeration in manner some of the stories are written. On July 27, 2003 the *Sun Newspaper* in page one of the paper that was captioned "Chief Chris Uba Arrested" but gone through the story, It was discovered that what actually was written in the body of the paper was that he was summoned by the High Court in Enugu State.

In fact, the Nigerian press may be said to have fallen short of ethical standard of the profession. One would have taugt that with the ongoing democratic dispensation that things would probably be better but the reverse is the case. The press is dancing to the tone of

Music being played by some political parties. In some electronic media houses, some opponents are not allowed to air their views. This is against the principles of fairness and objectivity in news reporting. There was case of this nature in the Radio Benue that the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) had to call the management of the station to order.

In view of these ugly developments, one wonders what the NUJ is doing to curb these excesses that appear to be inherent in Journalism practice in Nigeria. Writing on the history of NUJ, Okwori observes that the Nigerian Union of Journalists established on 25th March 1955 has a dual status of being a trade union body as well as the professional body for Journalists. (1) As a professional body it is charged with the following duties as contained in the constitution:

- 1) To ensure adequate training for its members
- 2) To ensure strict adherence to the code of profession conduct and practice as contained in the union's constitution.
- 3) To guarantee the advancement of the education and training of Journalists.

Eyong quotes Akinfeleye as saying that the truth about the Nigerian Journalists is that the African mass media lost or is rapidly losing credibility because journalists have fallen short the attributes of honesty, integrity and commitment to objectivity (9).

Regrettably, the Nigerian Union of Journalists whose responsibility it is to raise the general standard in the performance of journalists as well as to foster the consciousness of social responsibility among its members, does not seem to be living in the status of that expectation. The Union has remained polarized and factionalized. From the foregoing revelations, it is evident that the press in Nigeria is not being checked by its own code of ethics as the body responsible for that, the NUJ appears to be inactive (Eyong 1998, 9).

The Image of the Nigerian Journalists

It is true that journalists in Nigeria have at one time or the other set agenda for Public discussion on matters of public significance. But, according to an assessment of the professional conduct of journalists can be best done against the backdrop of the ethics of journalism guiding principles to the behaviour of journalists (Alemoh 2011, 298). Akinfeleye citing Alemoh classifies Nigerian journalist into types namely: a) Cocktail journalists who are pleasure seekers at the expense of professionalism; b) Journalists of next-of-kin who are praise singers of those in power; c) general older journalists who are errand boys in the ministries and government parastatals and; d) Journalists of conscience who uphold professionalism even at a risk to their lives. Ironically, all of these referred to above are trained journalists but have chosen to practice journalism in an unethical way with exception of those in the last category (309).

In essence what this suggests is that lack of training may not necessarily be the cause of unethical practice among journalists compared with the journalists' drive for egoistic considerations demonstrated in the quest for materialism. Though, when journalists are weighed in the balance of ethical conducts, many among them tend to fall short of the standard expected of them (Alemoh 2011, 304). This is because, according to Alemoh, the environment or organisational influence weighs on the journalists much more than the knowledge of ethics learnt at school hence we are to look beyond lack of training as major cause of unethical practice in journalism to examine what goes on in the work environment of the Nigerian journalists (318).

In this respects, in dealing with the issue of professionalism in journalism, “... one should be able to understand the contextual or operational environment in which the journalist practices” because, “some of the journalists, even when they appear competent are often subdued by the attitudes and polices of their individual media houses to the detriment of their profession honour (Pate 2004, 7).

According to Fab-Ukozor cited in Alemoh:

The situation is such that the few rich ones who own the media are either business friends of government or professional journalists who appreciate the position of the ‘fourth power’, but are reluctant to go headlong in search of truth due to government’s stance of intimidation and oppression. As a result, practitioners in the country are often faced with a conflict emanating from the need to protect their proprietor’s interests and the need to serve public interest. Thus, the press in Nigeria has not been consistent in their application of ethical precepts to societal issues (318).

Data Presentation and Analysis

The data collected on the 16 item questions were analysed using mean statistics based on Likert Scaling System and presented in tables. The level of acceptance is any item with mean value of 3 points while mean value less than 3points are to be rejected. The following keys are used in the tables:

Key	SA	-	Strongly Agree
	A	-	Agree
	U	-	Undecided
	D	-	Disagree
	SD	-	Strongly Disagree

Table 1: Response of Media Relations Officers

S/N	STATEMENT	RESPONSE							Total Sample	Total Points	Average Score
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree					
1	Nigerian Journalists always have regard for public interest in their news reports.	1	2	3	4	5					
		0	5	1	49	25	80	334	4.18		
		0%	6.25	1.25	61.2	31.25					
2	Nigerian journalists do strive to ascertain the truth of every event before reporting.	0	12	7	48	13	80	302	3.78		
		0%	15%	8.75	60%	16.25					
		0	24	%	192	%					
3	In reporting news, journalists respect the privacy of individuals and their families unless it affects public	0	9	5	47	19	80	316	3.95		
		0%	11.25	6.25	58.75	23.75					
		0	%	%	%	%					

	interest.		18	15	188	95			
4	Nigerian journalists do not observe the universally accepted principle of confidentiality and the non-disclosure of sources of information.	4 5% 4	30 37.5 %	11 13.75 %	33 41.25 %	2 2.5% 10	80	239	2.99
5	Journalists always make comments regarding a person's ethnic group, religion or sex in their publications.	2 2.5% 2	16 20% 32	17 21.25 %	22 27.5 %	23 28.75 %	80	265	3.31
6	Nigerian journalists do solicit gratification to either suppress or publish news stories.	2 2.5% 2	25 31.25 %	15 45 50	33 41.25 132	5 6.25% 25	80	254	3.18
7	Nigerian journalists sometimes interview children under the age of 16 who are involved in crime or witchcraft either as victims or witnesses.	4 5% 4	5 6.25 %	11 13.75 %	39 48.75 %	21 26.25 %	80	308	3.85
8	In reporting politics, Nigerian journalists, to a great extent portray personal interests and political motives in their news coverage.	0 0% 0	13 16.25 %	3 3.75 %	46 57.5 %	18 22.5% 90	80	309	3.86
9	Due to inadequate remuneration, Journalists tend to have developed unwholesome attitudes to compliment their pay.	1 1.25% 2	17 21.25 %	9 11.25 %	36 144 %	17 21.25 %	80	282	3.53
	TOTAL	13	132	79	353	143	72 0	260 9	32.6 3

Source: Field Survey 2017.

According to data from table 1 on items one, two, three and four respondents agree that Nigerian journalists always have regard for public interest in their news reports having an average score of 4.18, do strive to ascertain the truth of every event before reporting (3.78); have respect for the privacy of individuals and their families unless if it affects public interest (3.95) and disagree with the statement that they do not observe the universally accepted principle of confidentiality and non-disclosure of sources of information having scored 2.99.

However, on items five, six, seven, eight and nine the respondents were of the view that Nigerian Journalists always make comments regarding a person's ethnic group, religion or sex in their publications having an average score of 3.1; do solicit gratification to either suppress or publish news stories (3.18), that the sometimes interview children under the age of 16 who are involved in crime or witchcraft either as victims or witnesses (3.85), that to a great extent they portray personal interests and political motives in their news coverage (3.86) and have developed unwholesome attitudes to compliment their pay 3.53.

Table 2: Response of Practicing Journalists

S/N	STATEMENT	RESPONSE					Total Sample	Total points	Average Score
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree			
10	Most Nigerian journalists have pre-requisite qualifications to practice journalism having obtained Diplomas, National Diploma, certificates and Degree in journalism or mass communication courses	1	2	3	4	5	80	316	3.91
		1 1.25% 1	9 11.25% 18	5 6.25% 15	43 53.75% 172	22 27.5% 110			
11	Nigerian journalists are not well remunerated	2 2.5% 2	0 0% 0	4 5% 12	27 33.75% 108	47 58.75% 235	80	357	4.41
12	Due to inadequate remuneration, Journalists tend to have developed unwholesome attitudes to compliment their pay.	2 2.5% 2	4 5% 8	9 11.25% 27	37 46.25% 148	28 35% 140	80	325	4.06
13	Treatments meted on Nigerian journalists by Security Operatives have no doubt made journalism an endangered profession.	1 1.25% 1	5 6.25% 10	1 1.25% 3	44 55% 176	29 36.25% 145	80	335	4.11
14	Media owners do not provide the needed state of the art equipment to facilitate the duties of Nigerian journalists.	0 0% 0	10 12.5% 20	3 3.75% 9	42 52.5% 168	25 31.25% 125	80	322	4.03
15	News stories are covertly censored by Editors to represent the interest of media owners.	0 0% 0	13 16.25% 26	10 12.5% 30	40 50% 160	17 21.25% 85	80	301	3.71
16	Most times non availability of mobility prevents Nigerian journalists from carrying out their assigned duties.	2 2.5% 2	7 8.75% 14	6 7.5% 12	33 41.25% 132	32 40% 160	80	320	4
	TOTAL	8	48	38	266	200	560	2276	28.23

Source: Field Survey 2017.

Data from table 2 with respect to the responses of Practicing Journalists, show that Nigerian Journalists are qualified to practice journalism as 22 (27.5%) and 43 (53.75%) respondents chose strongly agree and agree options and having scored 3.91 points. That 4.41 points was scored against the statement that Nigerian journalists are not well remunerated. Also, that due to inadequate remuneration, Nigerian Journalists tend to have developed unwholesome attitudes to compliment their pay was scored 4.06 points; that Security Operatives have no doubt, made journalism an endangered profession was scored 4.11 points. That media owners do not provide the needed state of the art equipment to facilitate the duties of Nigerian journalists had a score of 4.03 points; The respondents scored 3.71 points to the statement that news stories are covertly censored by editors to represent the interest of media owners and most times, non availability of mobility prevents Nigerian journalists from carrying out their assigned duties was scored 4 points.

Analyses of Research Questions

Research Question One: Are Nigerian journalists professionally qualified to practice journalism?

Taking cognizance of the responses from table one it is evident that Nigerian journalists are qualified to practice journalism having scored 3.91 points. This corroborates the finding of Egbulefu in an article titled “Awareness of Defamation amongst Journalist in Abuja” in which 33 out of 50 journalists agreed that to practice journalism the pre-requisite qualification should be either a degree or diploma in either mass communication or journalism. (2009)

Research Question Two: Do Nigerian journalists fall short of ethical standards in the discharge of their duties?

From the data provided in table two it depicts that Nigerian journalists do not completely uphold the ethical standards of journalism having been engaged in unwholesome attitudes to compliment their pay, stories are censored by editors to present the interest of media owners and that while reporting politics they tend to portray personal interest, religion and ethnicity. This study is in consonance with the work of Udoakah, Senam and Udoh on the Influence of Mass Media Law and Ethics on Journalism Practice (2014) In their study, they found that, out of 343 respondents 271 representing seventy-nine percent (79) disagreed to the statement that Nigerian journalists do adhere to the applicable media laws and ethics of their profession as against fifty-five, representing sixteen percent (16) of the respondents who agreed to the statement. This implies that many journalists in Nigeria do not adhere to the ethical standards in the discharge of their duties. This is not a commendable development. (Udoakah, Senam and Udoh 2014)

Research Question Three: What are the challenges if any, hindering Nigerian journalists in the performance of their duties?

To answer this research question we relied on the answers provided in table 2 on questions 11, 13, 14, 15, and 16. According to this research it was found that the challenges that confront Nigerian journalists not to perform their duty as should be are enormous. They include poor remuneration, harassment from security agents; media owners’ not providing modern technological know-how and most times lack of mobility to investigate stories.

Testing of Hypothesis

The hypothesis postulated states that:

1. H_0 : There is no significant relationship between the relevance of ethical standard and the discharge of duties by Nigerian journalists
2. H_1 : There is significant relationship between the relevance of ethical standard and the discharge of duties by Nigerian journalists.

To test the hypothesis, questions 2, 3, 4, 6, 8 and 9 in table one were juxtaposed with questions 12 and 15 from table 2 to produce table 3 as shown below.

Table 3

S/N	STATEMENT	RESPONSE					
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Sample
		Freq	freq	freq	freq	Freq	
2	Nigerian journalists do strive to ascertain the truth of every event before reporting.	0	12	7	48	13	80
3	In reporting news, journalists respect the privacy of individuals and their families unless it affects public interest.	0	9	47	19	19	80
4	Nigerian journalists do not observe the universally accepted principle of confidentiality and the non- disclosure of sources of information.	4	30	11	33	2	80
6	Nigerian journalists do solicit gratification to either suppress or publish news stories.	2	25	15	33	5	80
8	In reporting politics, Nigerian journalists, to a great extent portray personal interests and political motives in their news coverage.	0	13	3	46	18	80
9	Due to inadequate remuneration, Journalists tend to have developed unwholesome attitudes to compliment their pay. (from media relation officers.)	1	17	9	36	17	80
12	Due to inadequate remuneration, Journalists tend to have developed unwholesome attitudes to compliment their pay. (from practicing journalists)	2	4	9	37	28	80

15	News stories are covertly censored by Editors to represent the interest of media owners	0	13	10	40	17	80
	TOTAL Observed frequency & percentages	9 (1.4%)	123 (19.2%)	69 (10.8%)	320(50%)	119(18.6%)	640 (100%)

Source: Field Survey 2017

From the data provided in table 3 above, the expected frequency is calculated thus, total response / mean which is $640/5=128$.

$$\text{Therefore } X^2 = \frac{(O - fe)^2}{E}$$

$$X^2 = \frac{(9 - 128)^2}{128} + \frac{(123 - 128)^2}{128} + \frac{(69 - 128)^2}{128} + \frac{(320 - 128)^2}{128} + \frac{(119 - 128)^2}{128}$$

$$= \frac{50847}{128} = 397.24$$

This hypothesis was tested using chi-square test of independence or contingency table analysis at 4 degree of freedom and .05 level of significance. The result shows that the Null hypothesis was rejected while the Alternate hypothesis was upheld since the $X^2 \text{ cal} = 397.24$ is greater than the Chi-square table value $X^2 \text{ tab} = 9.5$ thus, the conclusion that there is a significant relationship between the relevance of ethical standard and the discharge of duties by Nigerian journalists.

Findings

Taking cognizance of the research questions raised in this study, the following findings were made:

- i. That Nigerian journalist posses the pre-requisite qualification to practice journalism.
- ii. That Nigerian journalists do not wholly uphold the ethical standard of journalism practice.
- iii. That Nigerian journalists are poorly remunerated and often harassed by security agents of the state.

CONCLUSION

Okunna relates ethical issues in mass communication to those obtained in the entire society which means that whatever deterioration is seen in the media circles today is a reflection of the corruption that is going on in the larger society (1995). Of course, the media as part of the social system influence and are in turn influenced by other components of the system in accordance with the tenets of the normative press theories. This means that a demonstration of unethical conduct by Nigerian journalists is a spill-over of the moral decadence that prevails in Nigerian society.

Though, to whom much is given, they say much is expected; deductively, to whom the public require much from, much should equally be given to, so as to be able to meet public's expectations. This implies that the government and media operators should pay journalist the

required remunerations commensurate to what their colleagues in the Medical profession and the State house receive as salaries and allowances. The National Union of Journalists (NUJ) and the Nigerian Press Council (NPC) must as matter of urgency join hands with other relevant bodies to revolutionize journalism practice in Nigeria, by maintaining the ethical standards and flushing out mediocre from the profession.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There is need for the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) to ensure that the teaching of ethics to form a philosophical base for new entrants into the profession must be enforced by any accredited training institution and also ensure that the orientation on ethical integrity starts from the classroom.

There is need for professional bodies in the country to strive for the payment of enhanced emoluments to journalists by advocating the signing into law of media practitioner's salary package by the Federal Government. This will enable journalist not to violate the Article 7 of the code of conduct which is rewards and gratification.

Journalists need an enabling environment to professionally practice their trade, so there is need to provide modern communication gadgets: computers, internet, fax machines, digital cameras, e-mail services and reduce interference of security agents in their affront to gag the press etc.

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