

African Journal of Social Sciences. Vol. 9 (1), pp. 13-37

2019

ISSN:

**EVALUATION OF ADHERENCE OF JOURNALISTS TO THE CODES OF
JOURNALISM PRACTICE IN ENUGU STATE**

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Abstract

This work critically evaluated the adherence of journalists to the codes of journalism practice in Enugu State. This study asked among other questions; to what extent do the practice of Enugu based journalists corresponds with the Nigerian code for professional journalism practice. Social responsibility and socialization theories served as the theoretical framework of the study. The researchers adopted survey method using questionnaires as instrument for data collection. Considering that the registered journalists with the Nigerian Union of Journalists, Enugu Chapel were 210, a census of 210 registered journalists in Enugu State was studied. The findings of the study revealed that 54.8% of the journalists were awareness of the codes of the profession. It was also revealed that the knowledge level of journalists about the codes of the profession was not above average of 50%. Further findings showed that all of the Nigerian codes for professional journalism practice were adhered to except the code for Discrimination. It was recommended that journalists should consider discrimination (balance and fairness) as one of the key codes for journalism profession and adhere to it.

Key words: Media, Journalism, Practice, Code, Ethics

Introduction

Over the years, professional journalism practice has attracted different debates from different quarters on what true professionalism should be. Nolan (2008) notes that the debate about professionalism in journalism practice may appear rather bewildering but it has remained the central issue of debate within and outside the academia. The debate itself rests on the series of contradictory problems and different assumptions about professionalism in journalism practice.

The difference in assumption on the issue of professionalism may not be unconnected to the fact that journalism practice houses both trained and untrained personnel's'. In the words of Wilson (2011), journalism as widely practiced profession in the modern world has attracted both trained and untrained hands, which mingle at the task of reporting events in the society. For this singular reason Wilson noted that the journalism profession has fallen into doubts of its authenticity as a profession

In regards to the fallen authenticity of the journalism profession in the views of the public eye, Boyd-Barrett (2010) argues that this shortcoming in journalism "could weaken the possibility of public recognition of the occupation as a profession, or indeed as an occupation of high status. A recent survey of radio journalist working in the two radio stations in Enugu Nigeria shows that only 25% of the journalists possessed degrees or diplomas in Journalism/Mass Communication at initial employment.

The practice of professional journalism has been shaped and reshaped, interpreted and misinterpreted, defined and explained by many. As a result of the diversity in the practice of journalism in Nigeria, professionalism in journalism has been affected to a very large extent, and as such, journalism practice in Nigeria has raised a lot of questions as to the propriety of referring to it as a profession. In respect to journalism as a profession, Nigerian Union of Journalist (NUJ) has set out to squarely preserve professionals in the field of journalism in Nigeria (NUJ, 2011). The professionals in this case are those who have acquired the nitty-gritty of the profession and are fully aware of the code of conducts that govern the affairs of those involved in the profession.

The Nigeria Media System had to undergo various changes, surmounted different obstacles and challenges to get to where it is today and set a standard of professionalism in journalism practice. As a result of the afore mentioned under gone situations, Nigeria Media System has as much as possible aimed and worked towards Maintaining a close to perfect standard system.

However, another issue that led to the emergence of professional journalism practice in Nigeria is the fact that reports on the happenings around us far supersede the manifest content of traditional mass media. This simply means that most events occur without being reported either because there is no conventional journalist on site or none assigned to cover such beat. Burkholder (2010) .

Absence of conventional journalist not only affects professionalism in journalism practice but has created a room for poor production of information to the public. According to Ekpu(1982,p.7) "some of the stories published in the media looked "more like the products of a the fertile imagination of a hack writers from the party headquarters than stories hammered out in a modern newsroom". Unfortunately, sometimes there is usually not the opportunity for journalist

to capture news. Like in case of the London underground bombed on July 7, 2005, photos of the event were published on websites and blogs, and made their way to the mainstream media. It was the people with camera cell phones that captured the images, not reporters. That is say that more often than not, when major news happens and there is no conventional journalist around to report it the output of the report possibly comes out as mess. By way of interviews and records of the event, reporters are able to re-create it for the morning paper.

Journalism, like other professions, has direct impact on the citizenry and the society at large. Practitioners are expected to be guided by a code of conduct which members are expected to comply with strictly, and to be enforced by a body acceptable to all the stakeholders as aforementioned in the previous fourth paragraph. Journalist seemed to have been found wanting both in expertise and credibility. These inadequacies, according to Uyo (1982, p.8) “emanate from lack of professionalism on the part of Nigerian Journalists”.

The lack of professionalism has still remained a pressing issue in journalism practice in Nigeria despite the modification done to create room for a change. Public criticism of Nigeria tends to centre on those who work in these media, their skills and training, their values, attitudes and degree of social responsibility. Such criticism was greatest between 1978 and 1983 when media practitioners turned themselves into putty in the hands of second Republic Politicians. Journalist were hired and fired like casual laborers; editorial seats, like musical chairs, rotated mostly among party loyalists. So debased did journalism become that politicians themselves, concerned media practitioners and educators, as well as lay men and women expressed concern about the journalism practice in Nigeria and the integrity of the entire profession.

The loose definition of the criteria for membership has made the profession an all-comers-affair. Also, the absence of a prescribed qualifying test has made it difficult to moderate the standard of journalism practice in Nigeria. Ugboajah(1983) opined that the trouble could be that journalism itself is an indeterminate occupation, which is inadequately professionalized.

To restore credibility to the profession, the gap between school curricula and journalism practice must be bridged. A revisit to the existing code of conduct to explicitly state those who can practice journalism in Nigeria is necessary. Also, an acceptable remuneration package comparable with other professions must be worked out. In what Benneth and Hokenstad (1976, p.24) described as the “first systematic statement regarding the criteria for a profession”. Flexner (1915, p.87) sets out six distinctive criteria of a profession which include that a profession is (1) based on intellectual activity, (2) requires from its members the possession of a considerable amount of knowledge and learning, (3) has definite and practical purposes, (4) has certain techniques which can be communicated, (5) has an effective self-organization and (6) motivated by a desire to work for the welfare of society.

It is noteworthy that the integrity of the media has hardly ever been on the line when issues of national importance are involved. Challenges come mainly when issues revolving around individuals or group and, at that point, the media, in itself entirely, is overwhelmingly castigated over the perceived offence or professional misconduct of few practitioners.

It is as a result of perceived offence and misconduct that every profession is governed by ethics and code of conduct. The early and the nationalist press was not governed by any formal ethics and code of conduct. For example, editorial policies didn't exist, from the four paged bilingual

Iwe Iroyin to paged Daily times. On ethics and code of conduct in early Nigeria journalism practice, Udoakah and Nnadi (2007) opined that there was no regulation in the profession and anything went through. This accounts for one of the reasons why up on until today, journalism in Nigeria is still not being seen as a profession but rather as an all-comers affair.

It can't be disputed that in connection with some of the reasons why journalism practice is still viewed as all-comers affair, Low literacy rate contributes to a large degree of journalism inefficacy and also to a low standard of professional journalistic standard performance. Journalism profession has suffered serious setbacks in its developmental process in Nigeria because: Nigeria has not given priority to degree programs Journalism. Rather graduates from other discipline such as international relations, political science, Accounting, Sociology and English etc. are given on- the- job training in Professional journalism and these non-professionals do the cause damage to the profession because they lack the basic foundations of the profession.

In regards to the above, Gboyega (1989) frowned at the inability of the of the very many press barons in Nigeria to make deliberate efforts to transform journalism in the country to an enviable profession that can compete favorably in its organizational structure , effectiveness and thoroughness and Virility as in other professions like legal, Engineering and banking professions. This works sought to evaluate adherence of journalists on the codes of journalism practice in Enugu state.

Statement of the Problem

Professional journalism practice in Nigeria seems to be the problem in Nigeria today. It is no longer news that our journalist are continuously been criticized for lack of professionalism in our society today. In as much as the criticism may be wrong, some internal and external factors, such as financial problems, influence of media ownership, political instability, rapid advancement of technology in the world, bribery(brown envelope syndrome), illiteracy level and inadequate job security Pose as big threats and challenge to the practice of professional journalism practice and further complicates the issue.

Not only has the afore mentioned factors posed as a threat to journalism, but studies (Adaja, 2012: Oso, 2012) have shown that the absence of a prescribed qualified test has made it difficult to moderate the standard of journalism practice in Nigeria. The codes of conducts established by journalist at different levels exist to ensure professionalism and reduce the problem of the profession to a minimum level. Hence, this study sought to evaluate how journalists in Enugu are fully aware and how they adhere to the codes of ethics for professional journalism practice in their practice of journalism in Enugu State.

Objective of the study

The general objective of this study is to evaluate the adherence of journalists to the codes of journalism practice in Enugu State. The specific objectives were to:

1. Find out the extent to which journalists in Enugu State are aware of the codes for professional journalism practice in Nigeria.
2. Ascertain the knowledge level of journalists on the Nigerian codes for professional journalism practice.
3. Identify the major Nigeria codes for professional journalism practice adhered to by journalists in Enugu State.
4. Evaluate the extent to which the practice of Enugu based journalist corresponds to the codes for professional journalism practice in Nigeria.

Research Questions

This research work was guided by the following questions.

1. To what extent are journalists in Enugu State aware of the Nigerian codes for professional journalism practice?
2. What is the knowledge level on the Nigerian code for professional journalism practice?
3. What are the major Nigerian codes for professional journalism practice adhered to by Enugu State based journalist?
4. To what extent do the practice of Enugu based journalist corresponds to the code for professional journalism practice in Nigeria?

Literature review

Professionalism and Journalism: The Nigeria Experience

It is pertinent to note that Nigerian Journalism took off much earlier than the proclamation in angulations of the Nigerian nation. Evidently, Nigerian Journalism was not guided at inception by any law or regulations. Precisely, there was none in place to define the requirements, composition and operations of the players in the industry. Nigerian Journalism was dominated, at the beginning, by people drawn from several pools.

According to Agbaje, “practitioners included the commercially frustrated local elites driven out of business by unfair competition from European monopolists, the unemployed, those sacked from jobs in ailing European firms, drop outs from other professions, etc.”(Agbaje, 1992, p. 42).

The above shows that the forerunners of the profession, apart from the fact that they lacked the basic educational prerequisites, did not know or even see the job as a profession. Early practitioners went into the profession either to make ends meet or to obtain a meal ticket. This perception continued, even, after independence in 1960.

History has it that, at an interview session between students of the International Press Institute (IPI) in Lagos and the Director of the Institute, Tom Hopkins, during the opening ceremony of the center by President Nnamidi Azikwe in 1964, a student told the Director that: You are just trying to make us feel good about being Journalists as though we had an important career before us. Don't you realize that all of us here are the throw-outs? And outcasts from other jobs. (Barton, 1979, p. 25). Thus, obviously, the early group of Journalists that attended formal School of Journalism equally harbored the notion that Journalism was not a profession. This affected their output as well as their disposition and self-estimation among their colleagues in other professions.

Okunna (1995) states that the Nigerian society is filled with all sorts of ethical maladies that have defiled all cures over the years. She attributes the major cause directly or indirectly to the all-encompassing problem of materialism. Under this umbrella of materialism Okunna (1995) itemized bribery and corruption, kickback, ten per cent, kola, settlement, the Nigerian factor.

Duyile (1988) states that while the journalist and indeed any person may react to the social conditions of his environment and develop the urge to join the bandwagon, there is a natural law that sometimes provides a constant check on his movement, his willingness to share the pollution and participate. The law spells the "dos and don'ts" of the club to which he belongs and from where he practices his profession. Traditionally, even in the Western world, Journalists learned or acquired their skills through on-the-job-training, the method changed in the early 20th Century when the first school of Journalism in the United States was established at the University of Missouri in Columbia in 1908. And, a bequest from Joseph Pulitzer led to the creation of a graduate school of Journalism at Columbia University, New York City in 1912 (Castro, 2009). History has it that, Journalism in the developed world started through "apprenticeship method" – a system of learning the skills of a craft or trade from experts in the field by working with them for a period of time. The on-the-job-training method continued un-abused in most of the developed nations until the early 20th Century when formal Journalism Schools were established for the training of would be Journalists.

Journalism Practice in Nigeria: Issues and Challenges

Although, Nigerian Journalists most often lay claim to the observance of the professional tenets of objectivity, neutrality, impartiality, and the rest, it is however doubtful whether it could be said that Nigerian Journalists practice and belong to a profession in the real sense of it. Momoh (2005, p.11) opines that: A profession is qualified to be one only when it can be identified by the body of knowledge to be imbibed by those who would be its members, a membership register, a code of conduct that would find its monitors, a disciplinary body that would enforce the code.

Moonlighting according to Okunna (1995) is for different reasons but, particularly to make ends meet, journalists sometimes take two jobs, often working for competing employers. This leads to divided loyalty and jeopardizes the interest of the journalist and that of employers. It could also lead to lack of objectivity because when one is working at two places, one wouldn't want to write anything that could affect the interest of both. Contributing in the same vein other unethical problems that plague the Nigerian society and its media according to her are sycophancy, nepotism, squander mania, character assassination, pressures, brown envelope, moonlighting etc.

Evaluating the Nigerian Journalism practice, as presently constituted, with the above requirements, one would agree with the view expressed by Adaja (2011) that, the Nigerian Media cannot be fully referred to as a profession. Although, the Nigerian Union of Journalists parades a Code of Conduct in which in its Article I (i) referred to the Union as professional body as well as a trade union (Nnameka et al, 1989, p.276). The Code, however, failed to state or identifies the body of knowledge to be imbibed by its members. Again, the membership provision was so loose that anybody that has anything to do with media organization can call him/herself a Journalist. The provision provides for Public Relations Officers/Practitioners, those who are employed as editorial staff, those who had completed a probationary period of 12months, etc. to be called Journalists, without stating any minimum qualifications. Also, no acceptable body to all the stakeholders was created or established to regulate the practice of Journalism and enforce its rules and regulation in Nigeria has done in other advanced countries of the world. For example, in 1952, Britain established the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ).

The body was charged with the task of securing minimum standards for journalism practitioners. The body, subsequently, introduced qualifying examination, the proficiency test, as a measure of control and career advancement. According to Boyd – Barret (1980, p.323): The purpose of the proficiency test was to indicate the completion of training during the apprenticeship period, and thus to qualify the holder of a proficiency certificate for advancement to the status of senior journalist and its associated salary advantages.

The National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ) provides that candidates must have passed four basic subjects of English language, law, public administration and shorthand before admitting such candidates for the proficiency test. Although, emphasis was placed on apprenticeship; the on- the- job-training was designed to lead to some visible goals inform of passing an examination. At the same time, the apprenticeship was expected to last for 30 months, so as to regulate the practice of journalism in the land. This is very much unlike the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) provision of 12months and without any qualifying examination (Nnaemeka, 1989).

Again, the practice of journalism in Nigeria has been characterized by flaws that had prevented it from being referred to as a profession. At inception, the Nigerian media space was occupied by practitioners who neither saw themselves as professionals nor made professionalism their watchword. The first newspaper in Nigeria, Iwe Iroyin funAwon Ara Egba ati Yoruba, was established by Rev. Henry Townsend who never had the opportunity of attending a school of Journalism. He never belonged or subscribed to any known body of knowledge and never practiced journalism. The closest experience he had was that he “watched” his brother established a newspaper in one of the British Colonies before coming to Nigeria. Evidently, the foundation of journalism in Nigeria was erected on the wrong footing. And, if the foundation be destroyed, what can the righteous do.

It is instructive to note that the Nigerian Journalists have been in perpetual fluid drifting from neutrality to partisan politics both in the period preceding independence and after. Before independence, Nigerian journalism landscape was polarized along ownership structure.

Although, Nigerian journalists worked together to fight a common enemy, the colonial master, in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, the creation of the three regions brought about ownership/party

loyalty and affiliation. Journalists and media organizations jettisoned their professional tenets of neutrality, objectivity, impartiality, etc., and took on the garb of partisan politics. Journalists shifted allegiance to their owners, regions as well as the dominant party or government of the region. Media organizations and Journalists became divided among the three major parties – the NPC, NCNC and AG. Journalists, thus, became politically– minded and politically – partisan to the extent that all the allusions professional standards were consigned into the dustbin.

Again, the liberalization and commercialization policy of the federal government of Nigeria of the 1980s and 1990s threw a lot of challenges to the professional standards of journalism practice in Nigeria. The policy made all forms of news coverage to be evaluated from the commercial point of view. The impact of the policy became noticeable on journalists’ sense of news judgment, especially in the broadcast media. News events not sponsored were hardly aired.

According to Oso (2012), the journalist is not allowed the autonomy and detachment required for the practice of his trade. His professional judgment has been compromised. The sale of news is killing professionalism in Nigerian Broadcast journalism. Of a truth, commercialization of broadcasting has contributed to the death of serious journalism in Nigerian Broadcasting. The commercialization phenomenon posed a lot of challenges to the credibility of the news stories reported by Journalists because stories of events are usually arranged to suit their sponsors. Usually, the stories “add nothing tangible to the quality of life of the people” and “there is nothing journalistically newsworthy about them” (Oso, 2012).

Furthermore, the issue of role conflict (that is dual roles) has seriously affected the output of the average Nigerian Journalist. The oscillation between the professional requirements of objectivity, neutrality, impartiality, etc., and the societal norms and values, especially the social responsibility theory, has made journalism in Nigeria to be in a perpetual state of flux. Journalists usually engage in a “constant war of independence” (i.e. between two worlds of “patriotic journalism (perspective)” and “professional Journalism (perspective)”. This “crisis of identity” has marred the integrity and credibility of journalism.

According to Tsfaty and Libio. (2003) as cited by Zandberg and Neiger (2005). Journalist’s identities are not fixed and clear but fluid and unstable, and we see journalists as neither members of the professional community nor members of the national – hegemonic community – but as moving constantly between them.

Freedom for the Media- key issue of Professional journalism Ethics in Nigeria

Ndolo (2005) opined that freedom is legacy in Antiquity .No political or social system exists with a totally free of flow of information .despite a nations’ media theory, the right to publish and to get the truth is either denied or constant attack. It is a common understanding that the quality of journalism is closely related to the basic values of a free and democratic society. Press freedom is definitely a fundamental element in democratic media reforms.

Alete (2013) opined that society grants the media both the freedom of expression and free access to information, not as privilege, but as an obligation to use them responsibly for the advancement of democracy and civil society. The prerequisite is that journalist is that journalist enjoying this freedom upholds moral values and norms of professional ethics.

Douglas carter who popularized the idea that the media is the fourth branch of government that serves the public by acting as a watchdog, a kind of German shepherd – whose glittering eye is eternally fixed on the executive, legislative and judiciary to make certain that they do not abuse their power (Ndolo, 2011).

In countries like USA, UK, Britain, Germany, Japan that are first world countries press freedom and media belongs to the individual and secondarily to private groups, political or economic formed by individuals. Where in communist world country like Russia or Ukraine the media are still politically controlled, and press freedom is limited or non-existent (Mickiewicz, 1998).

In developing third world country like Nigeria, press freedom is principally a government prerogative and secondarily belongs to various vested interest whether economic, political, ethnic or power based. Control has many faces (1) direct police or military faces. (2) several laws, edicts, decrees are promulgated. (3) Extensive pre and post –publication censorship (Ndolo, 2005).

After censorship was abolished in the early 1990s, no new legal regulation was established as a replacement. As such, a moral Vacuum was created, where old values and conventions were repudiated, but the replacement were not yet articulated nor agreed. Journalist interpreted press freedom as freedom from any restraints, which created a euphoric atmosphere of absolute freedom with no need to consider what to say and how to say it publicly, which led to violation of many good journalistic practices, several of which ended up in a court, and undermined the public trust in the media.

Like all other freedom, Freedom of the media should not be used as a license. It should not be misused to create a situation of the law jungle. The press should observe certain self-imposed limitations on itself, so that instead of publishing views detrimental to the interest of the nation, it strengthens the national unity, upholds the laws of the land and contributes towards the emotional integration of the country Singh. (2012)

Regulation and Self -Regulation of Media in Nigeria

In countries that continue to struggle with unsolved political, economic and social problems media self-regulation is developing under specific circumstances. Media self-regulation emerged as a new development in these countries and has largely remained under control of media elites. As Richter (2007) states, ethical charters and conventions are generally drawn up, adopted and signed by media proprietors and executives rather than journalists. The top ten people are De-Facto supplanting professional with corporate solidarity and ethics, and asking the rank and file to reconcile themselves to an often highly conditional form of in-house censorship in order to avert pressure from the state.

The press after during colonial era was concerned with colonial ills against the people and this led to the problem between the colonial regime and the pre-independence newspapers. In the case of fighting the colonial masters, the press normally paid the price –of losing its much – needed freedom and this created a constant hatred between the two institutions (press and government) (Nworgu, 2011).

After independence, attention of the press was moved from colonial regime to how the emerging ruling class will govern the people. With the change in leadership, there came a wide spread of corruption among the leaders and this act attracted the attention of Nigerian press, and also put them against the government. When the military came to power in 1996, the tempo of the hostility between the government and the media became higher. The military boys were not going to tolerate what they see as the excesses of the media. They started churning out different press laws and decrees to “clip the wings of the press (Nworgu, 2011). At various times, these Laws have affected the activities of the press and cost them their much needed freedom.

In Nigeria, where there is no strict adherence to any press theory, however, press freedom has always been subject to environmental factor and relative to media organization. Which entails the government of the day, the ownership of the media house, social and political factors and financial strength defines the extent of the press freedom in a particular country. This is against what is obtainable in countries that have a definite theory, which serves as an index to press freedom.

Empirical Review

According to Thomas A. Alemoh in his work *Journalism training, Workplace Influence; and the quest for professionalism* noted that Individuals, organization, and even governments need information for their daily activities. Where adequate and accurate information is not obtainable, problems would definitely crop up which might lead to avoidable unpleasant situations. It is more worrisome when information is manipulated for sinister purposes. the issue therefore arises: if information that is carelessly handled could rub on the society adversely, then the managers (handlers) of information in society need to trained and more careful in the way they go about their business , in others words there is a need for journalists to live up to professional integrity , a knowledge of which he supposedly acquired through training both in school and on the job, which brings us to the issue of professionalism in journalism , true, the use of the old and New media technologies would still be abused by journalists if the issue of professionalism in journalism practice is not carefully isolated, explored and squarely addressed.

Pate (2004) as cited in Alemoh *Journalism Training , Workplace Influence; and the quest for Professionalism* as cited by Des Wilson (2011) *communication for social change and Development* observes that the only unholy romance between journalists and those of in the corridors of power is another way of muzzling professionalism in journalism practice. Journalists go almost cap in hand begging for assistance in cash and kind from those who are supposed to watch over as watchdogs. How professional could such journalist be I the discharge of their duties?

Carr-Saunders and Wilson (1933, p.265) describe journalist list’ professional status as uncertain, Moore (1970, p.122) name journalists among “borderline professions”. as cited by Ajia O (1994) *Professionalism and constraints in Nigerian journalism* as cited in Ugboajah et al *communication Training and Practice in Nigeria* (1987) carr-Saunders and Wilson do not deny the Salience of journalism to public welfare ; they actually stress its moral obligation to report the truth and to inform the conscience of nations. But they note that journalism does not possess a jurisdictional monopoly over any technique, and that practitioners had been unable to control the main lines of development in the profession. They also found the journalists of their time a discredit to the honor of their profession, and unable to organize effectively.

Surlin after his study of values of journalism practitioners before and after undergoing course in media ethics opines that the media ethics course had a noticeable and ethically positive effect upon the student value system. Consequently, one might assure that this shift in values will lead to more ethical and responsible decision making by these soon-to-be media professionals.

Okunna, C.S (1991) the *changing patterns of Journalism Education and Recruitment in Nigeria: A journal of the Common wealth Association for Education in Journalism and Commonwealth*. Stated that merits of higher education for journalists have become widely recognized in all parts of the world. A review of studies in professionalism conducted in both developed and developing countries show that journalists with higher formal education exhibit more professional orientation in the performance of their duties, and are generally classified as high and medium professionals in contrast to their low professional colleagues most of whom have not had formal higher education

To earn respect, recognition, and credibility for the Nigerian Journalism profession, truthfulness must be held sacred, while neutrality and objectivity should become sacrosanct. As a profession, the code of conduct should be revisited and reworked to state clearly the prerequisite qualifications necessary or required of a profession especially as it relates to the contemporary demands of the profession.

Although, there exist in Nigeria, today, a number of institutes, colleges/schools, polytechnics and universities Offering Journalism or Mass Communication. These schools should do more than just teach journalism, and do critical analysis. According to Tabuwe and Tangjong (2010), “Journalism education should do more than teaching students how to write, it should teach them to think, to verify, to acclaim, to criticize and to synthesize”. Again, the gap between school curricula and journalism practice needs to be bridged. According to Chibita (2010) in a study in which people were asked the most critical gaps between Journalism Curricula and practice, “top on the list was investigative and analytical skills, language proficiency (particularly English), writing skills, computing skills, and lack of depth in cognate areas such as political science, economics, sociology and literature”.

According to Egbon (2006), journalism is often criticized and hardly enjoys public confidence as a result of what journalists do or fail to do. Every profession is usually guarded and guided by certain laws, rules and regulations - whether formally coded or only recognized as conventions. A professional must therefore maintain some decorum and keep to certain standards of integrity to earn trust and respect and command respect in the performance of his chosen career.

Barger and Elliot (2000) cited in Hason (2002) Learning Journalism Ethics: The Classroom versus the Real World in *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* notes that, “Entry level; of journalism are often blinded by the routine of news gathering and the heavy socialization that takes place when they enter into the field” Robinson and O’ Leary-Kell (1998) add that entry level journalists may adopt that attitudes and standards of the workplace , whether those standards of the workplace are ethical or not”. Hason (2002) supports this .Alemoh *Journalism Training , Workplace Influence; and the quest for Professionalism* as cited by Des Wilson (2011) *communication for social change and Development* explains that what the brief literature review shows is that the issue of unethical practice in journalism is a fact but its causes vary from lack of training to poor attitude of journalists to the job as well as negative influence on the journalists

Akinfeleye (1987) *Essentials of African journalism* classifies Nigerian Journalists 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 order of journalist 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 those referred to above are trained journalist but have chosen to practice journalism in an unethical way with the exception of those in the last category.

To Igwala (2012), Television Broadcasting and challenges of the New media: A case study of Edo Broadcasting Service Television (EBS TV) indicated that the face of journalism is changing rapidly as new media technology increasingly lowers entry barriers and enables ordinary people to lend their voices and perspectives to day-to-day events, and this reality she calls “citizen journalism or citizen reporting.

Theoretical Framework

This study hinges on socialization theory and Social Responsibility theory. The Socialization theory developed by Kunczik (1988) and expounded by Folarin(1998) and the social responsibility theory developed by the 1947 Hutchins Commission on the freedom of the press as part of working theories of mass communication.

Social Responsibility Theory

The social responsibility theory of the press details the key journalistic standards that the press should seek to maintain. As summed up in McQuail (2000), among others, the media have an obligation to the wider society and media ownership is a public Trust; news media should be truthful, accurate, fair, objective and relevant, and the Media should follow agreed codes of ethics and professional conduct. By this treatise, Media ownership is a form of stewardship rather than unlimited private franchise. In other words, the media are established to serve the intent of the public rather than personal interests. Yet, the quest for personal aggrandizement seems to have infiltrated the practice of journalism in Nigeria and beyond. Ndolo (2005) further explains the purpose therefore to ensure that the press should be open to anyone with something to say. That is to say that the media by virtue should be controlled by community opinion and consumer action.

McQuails (2010,p: 171) cited Picard (1995) coined the term ‘ democratic – socialist theory of the press’ to describe the European ‘social welfare’ model of mass media this period . In number of countries (especially Britain and Sweden), searching public enquires were undertaken into the state of the media .these looked at the press diversity and concentration, and in some cases subsidies were introduced to maintain a range of competing newspaper and especially to support ailing and minority publications. The guiding objective was certainly the health of democracy. The public interest was interpreted justifying various forms of intervention by the state in what had been a free market, although actual intervention was kept as to minimum. That is to say in the words of McQuail, that the media have obligations to the society , and media ownership is a public trust . News media should be truthful, accurate, fair objective and relevant .the media should be free from , but self –regulated. The media should follow agreed code of conduct of

ethics and professional conduct. Under some circumstances, government may need to intervene to safeguard the public interest.

The 'theory of social responsibility' involved a view of media ownership as a form of public trust or stewardship, rather than an unlimited private franchise. One of the members of the commission, William Hockings as cited by McQuail(2010) wrote: 'inseparable from the rights of the press to be free has been the right of the people to have a free press. But the public interest has advanced beyond the point; it is now the right of the public that now takes precedence'. This is one fundamental basis for the demand for responsibility. The other basis derives the fact that the ownership of modern mass communication was already highly concentrated, giving great power to a small number of people. This power carried with the responsibility to exercise it with great caution and respect for others. It has been an influential idea, not only in the press but also in the legitimating of the government regulations.

Socialization Theories

The "Socialization theories" developed by Kunczik (1988) and expounded by Folarin (1998) as cited by Alemoh are part of the working theories of mass communication. Socialization theories tend to examine the influences that prevail on an employee (in this case, a journalist) in an organization and which determine the changing roles that individuals assume in the course of their stay in the organization. In this article, two variants of the theories -Role theory and Identification theory.- apply to the study.

Alemoh (2011) Role theory emphasizes the fact that through interaction with one's colleagues and reference groups, an individual acquires not only the skill required but also the values, attitudes and norms associated with one's job. Alemoh (2011) identification theory has to do with the adaptations that take place as a role occupant emulate a particular role model in an organization. In the process, values and standards of performance are impacted while a sense of confidence is instilled in the role occupant. Also, Institutional sanctions could be applied by superiors in an organization to ensure compliance and conformity by subordinates. That is to say that the above theories indicate the process of occupational deformation or adjustment Alemoh (2011). To fit into an organization a journalist undergoes certain forms of processes in order to conform to the media organizational culture where they work. My interest in this study is that the aforementioned facts could have negative or positive impacts on the journalist's codes for professional practices.

Methodology

This study employed the survey research method to generate the required data needed to evaluate the Nigerian codes for professional journalism practice and adherence of journalists in Enugu State to the codes. This is because Osuala, (1982) and Nwadu (2008) submit that survey research method is a vital means of eliciting information from respondents. The population of the study comprises of 210 (Two hundred and Ten) journalists' registered under Nigeria Union of Journalist (NUJ), (*NUJ Fact Sheet, 2017*). Considering the manageable size of the population, a census was conducted on the population of two hundred and ten (210) journalists' registered under Nigeria Union of Journalist (NUJ). The measuring instrument used in gathering

information for this study was questionnaire. The questionnaire had close-ended questions. The close –ended questions were used to make study easier for the researcher by making the responses measurable. The items in the questionnaire were divided into two parts, consisting of 27 questions. The section A consisted of the demographic data of the respondents, while the section B was directly on the respondents’ exposition to the study and answers to the research questions earlier posed by the researchers. The researchers went further to conduct the validity of the instrument by using face validity where the researchers gave the instrument to experts in the field of journalism for corrections and removal of ambiguities. The instrument was reliable because the researchers employed pilot study reliability by administering the questionnaire to 20 practicing journalists. The result of the pilot study showed that the instrument was reliable. This study was analyzed using simple frequency table presentation, simple percentages and charts.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Out of which 210 distributed questionnaires, 201 were retrieved and used for the analysis.

The research questions are as follows:

1. To what extent are journalists in Enugu State aware of the codes for professional journalism practice in Nigeria?
2. What is the knowledge level of journalist on the Nigerian code for professional journalism practice?
3. What are the major Nigerian codes for professional journalism practice adhered to by Enugu state based journalist?
4. To what extent does the practice of Enugu based journalist corresponds with the code for professional journalism practice in Nigeria?

Question 1: To what extent are journalists in Enugu State aware of the codes for professional journalism practice in Nigeria?

Table 1: Showing Respondents Extent of Awareness of the Codes for Journalism Practice

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Very Large Extent	31	14.6	15.4	46.8
	Large Extent	94	44.3	46.8	67.7
	Moderate Extent	42	19.8	20.9	77.1
	Minimal Extent	19	9.0	9.5	92.5
	No Idea	15	7.1	7.5	100.0
	Total	201	94.8	100.0	
Total		212	100.0		

Field Survey (2017)

From the distribution of the respondents in table 1, 94 respondents representing 46.8% valid percentage said they were aware of the codes for professional journalism practice to a large extent, 42 respondents representing 20.9 % valid percentage said they are aware of the codes for professional journalism practice to a moderate extent, 19 respondents representing 9.5% valid percentage said they are aware of the codes for professional journalism practice to a minimal extent, 31 respondents representing 15.4 valid percentage said they are aware of the codes for professional journalism practice to a very large extent, 15 respondents representing 7.5% valid percentage said they are aware of the codes for professional journalism practice to a large extent. This implies that 62.2% (46.8% and 15.4) of the respondents were aware of the codes for professional journalism practice to a large extent.

Question 2: What is the knowledge level of journalist on the Nigerian code for professional journalism practice?

Table 2: Showing Respondents Level of knowledge of the Codes for Journalism Practice

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	40	19.9	19.9	19.9
	Agree	129	64.2	64.2	84.1
	Undecided	26	12.9	12.9	97.0
	Disagree	1	.5	.5	97.0
	Strongly Disagree	5	2.5	2.5	100.0
	Total	201	99.0	100.0	
Total		203	100.0		

Field survey (2017)

Table 2 indicated that 40 respondents representing 19.9% strongly agree that a threat on the Nigeria soil within the next 24 hours which has been proved beyond reasonable doubt to be true, the information should be made public by the media in public interest. Also, 129 respondents representing 64.2% also agree to that, whereas, 26 respondents representing 12.9% were undecided. It was also revealed that 1 and 5 respondents respectively representing 0.5% and 2.5% respectively disagree and strongly disagree that a threat on the Nigeria soil within the next 24 hours which has been proved beyond reasonable doubt to be true, the information should not be made public by the media in public interest.

This implies that 64.2% of the respondents agree that a threat on the Nigeria soil within the next 24 hours which has been proved beyond reasonable doubt to be true, the information should be made public by the media in public interest. This also implies that at above 60%, the level of knowledge of the respondents was high.

Question 3: What are the major Nigerian codes for professional journalism practice adhered to by Enugu State based journalists?

Table 3: Showing Respondents Refusal to succumb to Pressure from Media Owners over the Reportage of News

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Yes	115	57.2	57.2	57.2
	No	67	33.3	33.3	90.5
	Can't Say	19	9.5	9.5	100.0
	Total	201	99.5	100.0	
Total		215	100.0		

Field survey (2017)

The distribution in table 3 above indicated that 115 respondents representing 57.2% said they do refuse to succumb to pressure from media owners over the reportage of news story, 67 respondents representing 33.3% said they do succumb to pressure from media owners over the reportage of news story, while 19 respondents representing 9.5 % were undecided on the issue.

This implies that 57.2% of the respondents do refuse to succumb to pressure from media owners over the reportage of news story. The implication of this is that the refusal to succumb to pressure from media owners over the reportage of a given news story is one of the major ethical issues adhered to by Enugu based journalists.

Question 4: To what extent do the practice of Enugu based journalists corresponds with the code for professional journalism practice in Nigeria.

Table 4: Evaluation: Showing the Extent to which the Practice of Enugu based Journalists corresponds with the Code for Professional Journalism Practice in Nigeria

Ethical Codes	Results From Field				Questionnaire Items
	YES	NO	CANT SAY	TOTAL	
<p>Social Responsibility A journalist should promote universal principles of human rights, democracy, justice, equity, peace and international understanding.</p>	177	4	20	201	Do you adhere to the idea of social responsibility when you present your news stories?
<p>Editorial Independence Decisions concerning the content of news should be the responsibility of a professional journalists</p>	152	30	19	201	Do you refuse to succumb to pressure from media owners over the reportage of your news story?
<p>Accuracy and Fairness (i) The Public has a right to know. Factual accurate, balanced and fair reporting is the ultimate objective of good journalism and the basis of earning public trust and confidence (ii) A journalist should refrain from publishing inaccurate and misleading information. Where such information has been inadvertently published, prompt correction should be made. A journalist must hold the right of reply as a cardinal rule of practice (iii) In the course of his duties, a journalist should strive to separate facts from conjecture and comment</p>	193	6	2	201	In the discharge of your duties do you respect the idea of accuracy and fairness?
	173	14	14	201	In reporting your news stories, do you give equal opportunity for parties involved in the controversy to air their views?

<p>• Privacy As a general rule, a journalist should respect the privacy of individuals and their families unless it affects public interest. (a) Information on the private life of an individual or his family should only be published if it impinges on public interest. (b) Publishing of such information about an individual as mentioned above should be deemed justifiable only if it is directly at: (i) Exposing crime or serious misdemeanor; (ii) Exposing anti-social conduct; (iii) Protecting public health, morality and safety (iv) Preventing the public from being misled by some statement or action of the individual concerned.</p>	193	6	2	201	In the discharge of your duties do you respect the privacy of individuals and families?
<p>.Privilege/Non Disclosure i). A journalist should observe the universally accepted principle of Confidentiality and should not disclose the source of information Obtained in confidence. ii). A journalist should not bridge an agreement with a source of information obtained as “off the record” or as “back ground information”</p>	181	12	8	201	Do you conceal the identity of a source of a news story that pleaded anonymity?

<p>Discrimination A journalist should refrain from making pejorative reference to a person's Ethnic group, religion, sex, or to any physical or mental illness or handicap.</p>	173	24	4	201	In reporting your news stories, do you make reference to the ethnic group, sex or religious inclination of the parties involved in the news?
<p>Violence A journalist should not present or report acts of violence, armed robberies, terrorist activities or vulgar display of wealth in a manner that glorifies such act in the eyes of the public.</p> <p>Decency i). A journalist should dress and comport himself in a manner that conforms to public taste. ii). A journalist should refrain from using offensive, abusive, or vulgar language. iii). A journalist should not present lurid details, either in words or picture, of violence, sexual acts, abhorrent or horrid scenes. iv). In cases involved in personal grief or shock, enquiries should be carried out and approaches made with sympathy and discretion. v. Unless it is in the furtherance of the public's right to know, a journalist should generally avoid identifying relatives or friends of persons convicted or accused of crime.</p>	23	111	67	201	Do you portray acts of violence or vulgar display of wealth in a way that glorifies such acts in the eyes of the public?
<p>Access to Information A journalist should strive to employ open and honest means in the gathering of information. Exceptional methods may be employed only when the public interest is at stake.</p>	191	2	8	201	Do you strive to employ open and honest means in the gathering of information?
<p>Plagiarism</p>					

<p>A journalist should not copy, wholesale, or in part, other people's work without attribution and/or consent.</p> <p>• Copyright i) Where a journalist reproduces a work, be it in print, broadcast, art work or design, proper acknowledgement should be accorded to the author. ii) A journalist should abide by all rules of copyright, established by national responsibility and international laws and conventions.</p>	8	177	16	201	Do you under any circumstance; take the glory of a story that belongs to another without proper attribution?
<p>• Press Freedom and Responsibility A journalist should strive at all times to enhance press freedom and responsibility</p>	169	6	26	201	A threat on the Nigeria soil within the next 24 hours which has been proved beyond reasonable doubt to be true, do you support that such information should be made public by the media in public interest?
<p>.Reward and Gratification i. A journalist should neither solicit nor accept bribe, gratification or patronage to suppress or publish information. ii. To determine payment for publication of news is inimical to the notion of news as fair, accurate, unbiased and factual report of an event</p>	23	156	22	201	Do you collect money from news sources in order to slant their story?

Field survey (2017)

Table 4 above revealed that over 60% of the journalists in Enugu State adhere to the codes of journalism practice except for the code of ethics on discrimination. The implication of this finding is that journalists do make pejorative reference to the ethnic group, sex, religion or mental illness of a person when reporting their stories. This is unethical.

Discussion of Findings

The Extent of Awareness of Journalist in Enugu State to the Codes for Professional Journalism Practice

Finding from data analyzed revealed that 62.2% of the respondents were aware of the codes for professional journalism practice to a large extent. This finding is in conformity with the findings of Tsegyu and Ezekiel in their study entitled *An Investigation of Media Practitioners' adherence to Professional Ethics in Minnav* (2014), which showed that 94% of the media practitioners were conversant with media code of ethics. The implication of these findings is that most journalists are aware of the ethical codes for professional journalism practice that means awareness is not a problem.

The Knowledge Level of Journalists on the Codes for Professional Journalism Practice

From the result of the study, it was found that 60% of journalists in Enugu State have high level of knowledge of the codes for professional journalism practice in Nigeria. This finding was supported by Ekpe (2000) and Ngozi (2001) who stressed that journalism practice should be seen as a serious business and as such, journalists should arm themselves with the knowledge of the code of the profession. The implication of this finding is that, for journalists to discharge their duties effectively, they must be properly armed with the knowledge of the code for professional journalism practice.

The Major Codes for Professional Journalism Practice adhered to by Enugu State based Journalist

Findings revealed that many codes for journalism practice were adhered to. However, the code on access to information was the major code for journalism practice adhered to by journalists in Enugu State as over 80% of the journalists affirm to that. In supporting this finding, Balogun (2002) revealed that some of the codes for professional journalism practice are outdated and that it is difficult to measure their effectiveness. For that reason, some of these codes should be totally reappraised to create room for its efficiency in the system. This implies that journalists do not adhere to all the codes for journalism practice equally. They respect some codes more than the others.

The Extent to which Enugu State based Journalists Adhere to the Code for Professional Journalism Practice in Nigeria

Findings revealed that Enugu State based journalist comply to the Nigeria codes for professional journalism practice except for the Code on Discrimination which is a pejorative reference to the ethnic group, sex, religion or mental illness of a person when reporting a news story. Akinfeleye (2007) has classified some abuse of practice of journalism as “cocktail journalism”, “journalism of next-of-kin” and “journalism of the general order”. However, Egbon (2006) opined that professional journalists must maintain some decorum and keep to certain standards of integrity (codes for professional journalism practice) to earn the trust and respect of the masses. The implication of this finding is that, apart from journalists not giving equal regard to the codes of the profession, they inadvertently fail to adhere to some of the codes. In this case, they have failed to adhere to the code on discrimination which has to do with journalists making pejorative reference to the ethnic group, sex, religion or mental illness of a person when reporting news stories.

Conclusion

Given that the only 60% of journalists in Enugu State have high level of knowledge of the codes for professional journalism practice in Nigeria, it is safe to conclude that the knowledge of the code is not yet holistic. This might be as a result of the fact that some people who practice journalism are not well trained in the profession. They might have studied other courses and re now learning journalism in the field. Learning in the career is not enough to acquaint one with all the rudiments of the profession.

Also, findings revealed that Enugu State based journalist comply to the Nigeria codes for professional journalism practice except for the Code on Discrimination which is a pejorative reference to the ethnic group, sex, religion or mental illness of a person when reporting a news story. The researchers conclude that journalists inadvertently fail to adhere to some of the codes for professional journalism practice. As in the case of this study, they have failed to adhere to the code on discrimination.

Recommendations

The researchers proffer the following recommended:

1. The Nigerian Union of Journalists should endeavour to create more awareness on the code for professional journalism practice in Nigeria.
2. Journalists should strive to increase their knowledge of the code of conduct of the profession as it will give them enough room to practice within the ambit of the profession.
3. Regulatory bodies of the journalism profession should endeavor to see that the fundamental objectives and philosophies of the profession are brought to the practical stage and strictly adhered to by all to promote integrity for the profession.
4. The Nigeria Union of Journalist (NUJ) should set up a body that will ensure that journalism apply the codes of ethics in their day to day activities, publications, etc and not just know them, and review the codes of ethics as at when due, to ensure that the journalist work in a favorable settings for the effective applicability of the codes for professional journalism practice.

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