

**AN EVALUATIVE STUDY OF THE NIGERIAN MEDIA, CITIZEN JOURNALISM
AND ETHICAL ISSUES IN INFORMATION DISSEMINATION IN THE
21ST CENTURY**

BY

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DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION, AUCHI POLYTECHNIC, AUCHI

NOVEMBER, 2022

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MASS
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this project entitled “**An Evaluative Study of the Nigerian Media, Citizen Journalism and Ethical Issues in Information Dissemination in the 21st Century**” was written by me and it is the record of my research. To the best of my knowledge, it has not been presented in any previous application for an academic award. All sources of information have been acknowledged using references.

Nnanwude Chinenye Eucharía

Date

APPROVAL

This project is approved based on the student's declaration and its compliance with the requirement of the Department of Mass Communication, Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi; in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of Higher National Diploma (HND) in Mass Communication.

Mr. Iwegbue, Godwin
(Project Supervisor)

Date

Mr. Joseph Ikerodah
(Ag. Head of Department)

Date

DEDICATION

To God Almighty for His divine wisdom, protection and provision shown to me during the course of my academic pursuit in this ivory tower.

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My ultimate gratitude goes to God Almighty who made this project a reality, and my supervisor, who has contributed immensely for advancement of this project and also not relenting in his effort of making this project successful.

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the Nigerian media, citizen journalism and ethical issues in information dissemination. One of the ethical issues facing the practice of journalism today is brown envelope syndrome which poses a threat to the image of journalism profession and the ability of media practitioners to perform their duties objectively. The researcher adopted the survey research design and data collected were presented and analysed using tables, charts and percentages for easy interpretation. The study found among other things that citizen journalism impacts positively on the daily routine of journalists in Nigeria. The findings further revealed that citizen journalism is curbing the unethical practice of brown envelope syndrome in Nigeria. Most journalists surveyed gave the reason that citizen journalism exposes the other side of stories. The study argued that citizen journalism has done more good than harm in the media sector and has impacted positively on the mainstream media. This impact has gone beyond news gathering and dissemination to solving the unethical issue of brown envelope journalism in Nigeria. The study recommends that traditional journalists should not view citizen journalists as a threat to the profession rather, they should partner with them to improve the profession. It also recommends that media regulatory bodies should accelerate efforts towards ensuring strict adherence to ethics in pursuit of professionalism.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Study

Various professions all over the world have identity carved for themselves in which they depend on for pride. Some are known for routine, some are famous for their unity of purpose salutation while some are known for their esprit de corps. The Nigerian press has taken a new turn in this 21st century though a large percentage of print media ownership is still in the private hands while government clung to monopoly of the broadcast media is gradually giving way. Notwithstanding, concern from the scholars' perspective is more on the issue of non-professionalism which is more rampant in journalism. It is not uncommon for politicians who have no knowledge of journalism to establish one, two, three and even numerous media houses purposely to prosecute their political ambition and sometimes establishing such for financial gains (Uche, 2015).

According to Fabiyi (2014), the constitution of Nigeria does not guarantee specific press freedom, it only guarantees freedom of expression including the freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information. Several professions today enjoy a high sense of respect because they are clearly identified and defined by the Nigerian constitution, adhered to ethical values and governing rules. Ironically, journalism, which is widely seen as the conscience of society is yet to be certified a profession, judging by the yardstick on what a profession should be. The practice of journalism in Nigeria has courted great controversies especially in relation to ethical regulation and adherence to professional precepts. Journalism is an esteemed profession that has a lot to offer in the reformation of society; unfortunately in Nigeria, it has become an all comers affair (Amadi, 2008).

The role of the Nigerian press in decolonization cannot be over-emphasized; neither can their role in the struggle against neo-colonial dictatorship, military rule and imperialism go unnoticed. Indeed, the role of the Nigerian press in the struggle for democracy since the 1980s is also well recorded and important. Out of this arose the tradition of what is euphemistically referred to as "guerrilla journalism". As the aphorism goes, every society gets the kind of leadership it deserves, but the media all over the world have tended to violate this rule. If you want to know or gauge the level of freedom or lack of it in any society, all you needed to know is the health of the press, how much freedom the press have. However, it should be noted that there is no society in the world where press freedom ever came cheap. All through the ages, press freedom had come at a price and struggles had been waged to ensure and sustain press freedom (Oladele, 2009).

In Nigeria too, since the colonial era, there has been repression of the press, resulting in the shutting of media houses and assault on journalists. For instance, during the colonial era, the press became a viable tool that was used to fight colonialism. The colonialist saw the power of the press and decided to tame the press by introducing the Newspaper Ordinance Act in 1903 and in 1909, the Newspaper Sedition Ordinance was proclaimed. These two press laws after journalists like Sapara Williams, Herbert Macaulay etc (Obaze, Ogbiti and Omosotomhe, 2018). This tradition continued into the military era.

However, all this did not halt the campaign for press freedom. The media in Nigeria has been highly battered and highly compromised. It is now meant for the “highest bidder”. Many journalists have become so compromised that their reports are based on what butters their bread; news has now become what serves their patron’s interests.

Increasingly, the proliferation of media houses, the weak supervisory role of the Guild of Editors and the Nigerian Union of Journalists, the lack of interests in building career in journalism as such and the greed and materialism of journalists have made it difficult for many journalists to maintain the standards and ethics of the profession. Worse still, some journalists do not know what constitutes minimum conduct and expectation of a professional journalist. This raises two other questions, first, the caliber and nature of those who call themselves journalists, second the induction and training offered them at recruitment by various media houses (Akinola, 2016)

To be sure, journalism is an all-comer profession in Nigeria. People of diverse backgrounds and disciplines with mere “interest” in journalism or who are merely seeking job opportunities, automatically become journalists when such offers are made. Many essayists or writers can easily claim to be journalists, there are no rules of entry, or to restate the same thing, there are no rules for regulating conduct and practice of journalists or better still, enforcement mechanisms are weak. Most prominent people, who are editors and news editors in many media houses today, never studied journalism or mass communication. But that do not accounts for why they are morally wanting. Not studying Mass Communication is not and cannot be an excuse, because all subjects, all disciplines teach ethics and good conduct; so it is with and in all professions-there are best practices. But why are these not respected by journalists or enforced by media owners or professional unions? (Oladele, 2009)

According to Okoye (2016), the cheapening of professional and ethical standards in journalism has affected the quality of news and reports; and has introduced excessive biases, fabrications and partisanship in the conduct of many journalists. What happens is that many journalists are on the payroll of key established businesses, governmental and political

interests. From time to time, these patrons get news syndicated and planted in the media. They also pay heavily to get news killed, the public interest, notwithstanding. Many people occupying the office of “Press Secretary” whether at federal state or Local government level, or legislative arm or even to former political office holders, are meant to achieve that purpose. Hence those positions in many ways have become means of compromising the press and quality of news. The implication is that Nigerians no longer trust in what they read, they no longer believe what they hear, and rumor seems more authentic than what the media tells them. The result of the inaccuracies and falsehood of Nigeria media have resulted in a lot of litigations in law courts over libel and so on.

The concept of citizen journalism has been called various names by scholars, such as “participatory journalism”, “democratic journalism” or “guerrilla journalism” (Okunna and Abiodun, 2013). But whatever the name it is called, this new form of journalism has demystified and simplified journalism practice thereby empowering non-professionals to undertake professional task of mass communication. Salawu (2011) defines citizen journalism “as journalism of the people, by the people and for the people”. Similarly, Bowman and Willis (2003) see it as “the act of a citizen or group of citizens playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analysing and disseminating information”, pointing to the fact that “the intention of this participation is to provide independent, reliable, accurate, wide-ranging and relevant information that democracy requires”. This view by Bowman and Willis (2003) is very significant because it captures the very essence of citizen journalism in our contemporary society. What this means is that citizens have taken up the camera to perform just exactly the roles performed by professional journalists but with a stronger purpose. This purpose is to provide the people with information which could not be contained in the pages of newspapers or news bulletins but are necessary for democracy to thrive.

This development has challenged the hegemonic control of journalism practitioners as the only source of relevant information. In essence, the idea of what journalism is and how it is done has changed into a new landscape because with the advent of modern technologies, everyone is considered a citizen journalist. This change has addressed a syndrome affecting the credibility, ethics and the day to day practice of journalism in Nigeria. The emergence of citizen journalists in the information space came as a result of the need to fill a vacuum of investigative journalism which was gradually eluding the mainstream media content. As Dare (2011) puts it, “the absence of investigative journalism made the audience query the

effectiveness of the media, the neutrality and objectivity of the traditional media was being called to question by an audience increasingly isolated from them”.

Journalism previously was an exclusive preserve of professionals, who as gatekeepers decided what comes in and goes out to the people with insufficient feedback and participatory mechanism (Onifade, 2016). This made them lose focus of the very essence of their position in the society thereby indulging in unethical practices such as brown envelope journalism which gradually became a syndrome. 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.

It is against this backdrop that this study evaluates the Nigerian media, citizen journalism and ethical issues in information dissemination.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Journalism practice in Nigeria is increasingly becoming difficult to situate within the mainstream of what journalism ought to be in the real sense of its professional practice as guided by its ethics. The concept of citizen journalism has further compounded the problem of properly defining the profession based on its ethical principles because majority of citizen journalists today are not trained in the field of journalism and they do not know the ethics that guides the profession of journalism.

Today, there are internal and external factors that pose a great challenge to the practice of journalism as a profession. Ekharefo, Ferdinand and Olley (2016) noted that some these internal and external challenges include ownership problem, logistics, threat to life, threat to media houses, security/police brutality, hostile sources etc. Arguably, studies have shown that the absence of a prescribed qualifying test has made it difficult to moderate the standard of journalism practice in Nigeria (Adaja, 2012). The self-censorship syndrome, inducement through brown envelope, pressure from individuals, groups and organizations, laws and administrative decisions, poor remuneration for journalists, absence of technical know-how amongst others, have all combined to make the journalism profession a mockery of its standard of practice. Certain inadequacies among the regulating bodies and non-professional filtration of yellow journalism practice and other unprofessional approaches to

the profession have reduced and threatened the code of ethics upon which the journalism profession is expected to thrive.

However, it should be noted here that citizen journalism has not come to challenge the power of mainstream journalists as professionals in the field but has come to partner with them to perform better and ensure they serve the interest of the society they are protecting. It is the reverse of an exclusive style triggered by factors such as technological advancement and the absence of an uncompromised active watchdog media system in the country since its return to democratic rule in 1999. The traditional media has increasingly become inflexible and profit driven, its ability to offer to its audience a variety of perspective in affairs of national interest continues to be on the decrease. Since that is the case, citizen journalism has emerged to keep an eye on the people's watchdog.

It is on this premise that this study sought to evaluate the Nigerian media, citizen journalism and ethical issues in information dissemination in Nigeria.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are as follows;

- i. To examine the influence of citizen journalism on the Nigerian press.
- ii. To find out the ethical challenges faced by the Nigerian press.
- iii. To find out how ethical challenges and non-professionalism affects the practice of journalism in Nigeria.
- iv. To determine the level of adherence by journalists to the journalistic codes of conducts.

1.4. Research Questions

Based on the objectives of this study, the following research questions were formulated;

- i. What is the influence of citizen journalism on the Nigerian press?
- ii. What are the ethical challenges faced by the Nigerian press?
- iii. How do ethical challenges and non-professionalism affects the practice of journalism in Nigeria?
- iv. What is the level of adherence by journalists to the journalistic codes and conducts?

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study evaluate the Nigerian media, citizen journalism and ethical issues in information dissemination in Nigeria. Although it would have been better, if possible to study every print media organization in Nigeria but, doing that would not only be too expensive, but would make the research to be complicated, because of the inability to measure the large number of people. The scope of this study is therefore limited to Vanguard newspaper.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is timely and it is imperative in the sense that ethical journalism practice must be observed to boost the strength of professionalism in Nigeria. It is also significant in the following ways;

This study is good for administrators, government functionaries, legislators, House of Representative members and State Assemblies, State governors, Counselors, Local Government Chairmen and public servants as it provides a prescribed qualifying test that helps to moderate the relationship between journalists and representatives of these bodies.

It is significant to the news and media house owners, journalists, firms and business executives, organisations and corporate business, individuals and the general public. This is because it provides the needed impetus to boost professional standards in journalism practice based on its ethical principles.

Finally, this study will help capture the experience of developing nations in the face of a new media landscape.

1.7 Definition of Terms

For a proper understanding of this work, the key terms used are defined based on their conceptual relevance to this study.

- **Ethics:** Set of concepts and principles that guide behaviors and conducts of a particular group of people (i.e. Journalists). They are also seen as motivation based on ideas of right and wrong.
- **Journalism:** The process of gathering, processing, and disseminating of information to mass heterogeneous audience through the mass media. It also entails reporting or photographing or editing news stories for the media.

- **Practice:** A way of operation that is customary. It is the exercise of a profession (i.e. Journalism Profession).
- **Challenges:** Demanding situations that hinder the operations of journalists based on their principles of behavior and conduct of operation.
- **Citizen Journalism:** This is a type of journalism where members of the public play an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating news and information.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Review of Relevant Literature

Quite importantly, every academic discourse requires an input from what is already in existence. This is usually in the form of citations, where particular emphasis has been on how relevant this is with what is currently being studied. Therefore, it becomes imperative to say that human knowledge is undoubtedly an elevation of the construction of previous findings in which case the later acts as a foundational framework of the former.

This study, therefore, beams its focus on available works with bearings on the following issues:

- The Concept of Citizen Journalism
- Citizen Journalism in Nigeria: Challenges and Possibilities\
- Brown Envelop Syndrome and the Future of Journalism in Nigeria
- The Nigerian Media, Brown Envelop, Journalistic Ethics and Professionalism
- Ethical Issues in Journalism
- Mechanism for Maintaining Ethical Standards in Journalism

The Concept of Citizen Journalism

Citizen journalism (also known as public, participatory, democratic, guerrilla or street journalism) is a type of journalism where members of the public play an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating news and information. The intent of this participation is to provide independent, reliable, accurate, wide-ranging and relevant information that a democracy requires.

The term citizen journalism is an attempt to conceptualize the freedom given to ordinary individuals by network technology to become news producers and publishers. Bowman and Willis (2003) define this brand of journalism as “the act of a citizen or group of citizens or group of citizens, playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analysing and disseminating news and information”. The notion of citizen journalism has highlighted how information and communication technologies have offered significant opportunity for media production and information dissemination outside the confines of established journalism and thus for bypassing the gatekeepers of the traditional news business (Nwofe 2012). Radsch (2013) captures the essence of citizen journalism in his definition of it as “an alternative and activist form of newsgathering and reporting that functions outside the

mainstream media institutions often as repose to the shortcoming in the professional journalistic field”.

Citizen journalism therefore is the ability of someone who is not trained professionally as a journalist to actively take part in the process of gathering, investigating, reporting and sharing news and information. The intention of this participation according to Bowman and Wills (2002) “is to provide an independent, accurate, wide ranging and relevant information that a democracy requires”. The remarkable thing about citizen journalism is that its contents are different from those produced by professionals because they are produced by amateurs but stunningly enough, they still carry enough effect and influence on its audience just like the professional ones.

From a global perspective, citizen journalism through the help of social media networks has empowered people who ordinarily may not have a voice in public discourse or no socio-economic power to actively make an impact on trending debates in the society in the form of bloggers and so on. Citizen Journalism has introduced a global public sphere which has awakened the roles and responsibilities of individuals in the process of decision making. As internet usage increases, so does the level of citizen participation in political governance and decision making in the society. According to Nwofe (2012), “In May 2012, footage of Israeli settlers opening fire on protesting Palestinian civilians allegedly resulting in the death of a Palestinian man was recorded by a citizen journalist on a hand held phone camera, a footage which garnered international attention such that warranted the Israeli defence force to issue a statement saying that they were investigating the matter”.

One of the main concepts behind citizen journalism is that mainstream media reporter and producers are not the exclusive center of knowledge on a subject- the audience knows more collectively than the reporter alone. Now, many of these big media outlets are trying to harness the knowledge of their audience, either through comments at the end of stories they post online or by creating citizen journalist databases of contributors or sources for stories. The term ‘citizen journalism’ refers to a wide range of activities in which everyday people contribute information or commentary about news events.

With the birth of digital technologies, people now have unprecedented access to the tools of production and dissemination of information. Citizen journalism encompasses content, ranging from user-submitted reviews on a website about movies to wiki-based news. Some sites only run stories written by users, while many traditional news outlets now accept comments and even news stories from readers.

According to Asemah (2011), citizen journalism has been responsible for pictures and footage of things like celebrities or police officers behaving badly and crimes in progress. The term citizen journalism did not exist before the advent of the internet; it grew in tandem with the growth of the interactive function of the internet. Although, it encompasses many aspects and comes in different forms, including blogs, uploading photographs or videos to the media.

Citizen Journalism in Nigeria: Challenges and Possibilities

Citizen journalism is now a popular brand of journalism in Nigeria (Okoro, Diri and Odii 2013), a development which is attributed to the overwhelming use of the social media in the country. Many Nigerians have signed up for social networking sites and numerous audience driven online citizen journalism sites and discussion forums. According to Dare (2011), “as in most parts of the world, the promise of participatory journalism is being delivered faster than envisaged since the global democratization spirit took hold”. Contrary to what is expected of a developing nation, Nigerians have been caught up by this change in the media system which has led to an increase in media participation and social media usage.

Before the advent of the internet and its full utilization by ordinary people in Nigeria, the mainstream media of television, newspapers, radio and so on piloted and dominated the information space in Nigeria as the major source of news and information. During that time, the traditional media gave little avenue for audience interactivity and contribution. This came in form of letters to the editors as for newspapers (which most of the time were not published), phone in programs for the broadcast (which often screens out callers before linking them on air) and so on. This formed the triggers for citizen journalism in Nigeria as the mainstream media provided little or no avenues for audience participation, interactivity and undemocratic nature of the local press. Gradually, as people started embracing the internet and other networking tools, there arose a silent change and revolution in the information market place especially towards to late 90’s.

According to Dare (2011), the ability of the media to employ new media tools is predicated on the level of internet access or penetration in any country. Presumably, he further argues that a country with low internet access or penetration will be saddled with a weak participation in the media while the reverse is the case with a country with high internet usage and penetration. The major driving force of internet penetration in Nigeria has been due to high use of internet enabled mobile phones and gadgets. The internet has become an important part of mobile communication because most people have embraced cell phones as

a means of communication following the failure of fixed landlines in the country during the early 2000's. Even politicians in Nigeria have also embraced multimedia technologies to engage their supporters. Such is seen in the immediate past president's Facebook account. Remarkably, this changing landscape has resulted to remarkable changes in the communication process in Nigeria making Nigeria the 8th in the global ranking of internet usage and penetration. From being the 19th position in the global ranking in 2007 with about nine million users, Nigeria became the number eight in 2014 within a period of period of seven years with about sixty-seven million users.

The political triggers for citizen journalism in Nigeria was as a result of a vacuum for investigative content and citizens engagement left by the mainstream media in Nigeria that led to a massive rise in citizen journalism. In a country with issues of political misappropriation of state funds and other internal challenges, citizens expected more from its press. The media became increasingly commercialised thereby compromising their hegemonic power over the media space, making citizens to take up the responsibility themselves. Although the media was very vibrant and daring during the military regimes, which gave rise to what we know today as 'Guerrilla journalism', they were also credited for setting the agenda for return to democratic rule in 1999. That period however short-lived, making people doubt their status in the society. According to Dare (2011), "with the return to democratic rule, the media went to sleep, believing their work was done". The audience soon wandered off to explore other option which led to the origin of participatory journalism in Nigeria.

Online citizen journalism sites have contributed remarkably in setting agenda for various issues not adequately given prominence in the mainstream media. One of such cases is the April 2014 Kidnap of 216 Chibok girls by the Boko Haram terrorist sect in Nigeria. The tragedy got over one million hash-tags on twitter in less than three weeks with everyone from the first lady of the United states, Michelle Obama adding their selfies to the social media noise (Shearlaw 14th April 2015). Several protests and marches organised through the social media platforms in various cities in the country and other cases of social media mobilisation.

However, citizen journalism faces some challenges in Nigeria just like any other African country. The number one problem is power/electricity; which affects almost everyone and every sector in the society. Disruptions in power makes citizen journalists not to go online to report a story or join in a discussion when they want or even cover an incident they stumble on owing to the fact that there phone or gadget batteries might be low for this.

Second amongst them is the high cost of internet network in the country. Internet access is relatively expensive to use in the country and it is bought according to Megabytes which most of the time doesn't allow citizen journalism to thrive well; this leads us to the next point of poverty. In a country where wealth is unevenly distributed, some regions in the country live below 1USD a day which makes them unable to purchase an internet enabled phone, talk more of an internet data. According to Nwofe (2012), the gap between the rich and the poor is essentially wide as those who can afford the basic essentials of food, cloth and shelter are the majority in the society with figures as high as 60.9 per cent. This is a big hindrance to the success of citizen journalism in Nigeria.

Citizen journalism epitomizes the belief that the experiences of people personally involved with an issue present a different and often, more complete picture of events that can be derived from the perspective of an outsider. Due to limitations of access and time and in some cases, ulterior motives to present just one side of a story, traditional reporting risks at least, the perception of being skewed. By granting access to anyone to cover the news, citizen journalism presents a more personal, nuanced view of events and has the potential to cultivate communities of people with a common interest. Through blogs, citizen journalists have broken stories about political corruption, police brutality and other issues of concern to local and national communities.

Brown Envelop Syndrome and the Future of Journalism in Nigeria

African journalism is faced with a number of challenges which includes the issue of Brown Envelope Syndrome which compromises and impedes the independence in news gathering and coverage. It is an issue that affects journalism practice globally, not just in Africa and can be related to the wider issues of journalism ethics particularly in the wake of Leveson Enquiry. Brown envelope journalism is a major setback to media growth in Nigeria and has remains a controversial and disturbing issue in debates centred on the Nigerian press, professionalism and ethics of journalism (Ekeanyanwu and Obianigwe, 2012; Williams, 2014). The syndrome is as a result of a gap in human ethical reasoning and a reflection of moral decadence which must be stamped out from every sector in the society, not just in the media. The Nigerian media has been credited with bringing Nigeria thus far through its vibrancy and resilience during the guerrilla journalism days in the military regimes of the 90's but was caught up with a syndrome that ate deep into the global reputation they earned back in the days.

Stripped of all forms of technicalities, brown envelope is simply the “money given to reporters or editors to persuade them to write positive stories or kill a negative story” (Nkwocha 2004). Okunna (1999), elucidates that brown envelope syndrome is the commonest type of bribe in journalism. To her, it is “a monetary bribe given to an unethical journalist to pressurize him/her into doing what the bribe givers wants”. She went further to say that such money “once accepted, it ties the hands of journalists who then become incapable of being objective in reporting events and issues”. Kasoma (2007) defines it as “a practice that involves news sources granting monetary incentive to journalists or media outlets in order to get an ample coverage”. The money most of the time is enclosed in a brown envelope, the reason being that the envelope is opaque and as such is secret as it does not reveal the content inside.

However, on the basis of this study, it is pertinent to point out that these gratifications at times do not come in the form of money. Sometimes it comes in other forms such as gift items or unsolicited and unmerited favour. Akabogu (2005) stated that brown envelope refers to any form of gift, drinks, food or even a lift from work in order to influence the journalist sense of judgment. The essence of this point is that most of the time, this gratification is not demanded by the journalist because it comes in various forms. The term brown envelope should not only convey the mental image of monetary bribe. Onyisi (1996) captures the essence of this concept in his definition of brown envelope as “demanding and /or receiving gratifications to perform one’s official duties or using ones position of authority to extort gifts or other forms of gratification either directly or indirectly in any society”. The simplified aim of this act is knowingly or unknowingly, just like any bribe is to influence the journalists’ objectivity and value judgment.

Another important point to note from this study is that brown envelope is mostly mistaken for Public Relations (PR) by those who offer the gratification. In their wrong perception and understanding of PR, they indulge in this even without a cause just to keep their reputation in tact with the journalists in case of an eventuality that will lead to them being investigated. Critically looking at this, one will realise how much of an impact the press has on the society and on maintaining accountability in the society. Journalists through this have favorable relationships with politicians (monetarily and otherwise), including others who have things as stake so as to cover up their deeds incase the need arises. Adewale (2008) explains that we now have journalists who cover ministers for years, only to report nothing but glowing attributes of the minister and his ministry while insulating the real picture of things happening in the ministry from the public. Without drifting from the line of discussion,

this very act/ practice forms the basis for the emergence of citizen journalism in Nigeria as the press soon forgot their investigative journalism role and pursued other agenda's.

Unarguably, according to Ekeanyanwu and Obianigwe (2012) Nigeria media, to put it more succinctly has done well in pursuing the noble goals of watching over the safety and welfare of the people and the society who trust them. They argue further that "it is therefore no longer debatable that the media is largely responsible for the actualization of Nigeria's independence, curbing of neo-colonial excesses and the propagation of the ideals of a modern nation-state". The media in Nigeria has a track record of exposing corrupt and inept leaders, with their pen and paper. They have fought wars for their noble country, Nigeria. However, this syndrome which enveloped them needs to be curbed and thanks to the timely entry of technologies which brought in citizen journalism and social media platforms.

The point of the matter lies on the fact that journalism is an industry, which just like any industry, is a player in profit seeking market economy. Journalists themselves are members of the society with needs and challenges faced like any human with the problem of right and wrong, good or evil. This brings us to the arguments for and against brown envelope journalism in Nigeria. Before then, it is important to be armed with some facts about the root cause. It is to note that man is a rational being and certainly does not exist in isolation with his society. Therefore, he is faced with challenges that the particular society pose for him. Due to the fact that he does not exist in isolation, must interact with people. This interaction according to Akabogu (2005) makes him find fulfillment and solidarity with his fellow men, which make a person act morally and ethically only when he relates himself in principle of all mankind. In essence, a Brown envelope journalist, if taken to a country where such practice is not in existence, will operate in a similar way with what is obtainable in the country and environment; as such will not demand or accept gratifications from a news source.

However, in a study conducted among 50 journalists in Nigeria by Okoro and Onuoha (2013) to ascertain journalists perception of the brown envelope syndrome found that 14 percent of the journalists agreed that brown envelope means soliciting or accepting bribe. What this means is that a good number of journalists do not perceive the practice as a form of bribery. Rather it is seen as a prerogative of their profession as journalists; 16 percent understands it to be money or gratification received in order not to publish a story (put more succinctly; gratification received in order to kill a story/news. While a surprising 22 percent perceive it to be a payment for news publication. In essence, it means paying journalists to do their own official duty assigned to them.

The unethical practice of brown envelope is expressed informally among journalists in catchy phrases such as “Last question”, “family support”, “the boys are going”, “press release”, “hospitality”, “welfare” and “freebies” (Oshunkeye, 2011; Nwabueze, 2010). In Cameroon, it is known as “Gombo” while South Africa knows it as “Check book” and many developed countries in Europe call it “Hospitality” (Okoro and Onuoha, 2013; Skjerdal, 2010; Oshunkeye, 2011). But whichever name it goes by or where, the fact remains that this unethical practice affects professionalism and credibility of the press in any society.

The Nigerian Media, Brown Envelop, Journalistic Ethics and Professionalism

Brown envelope syndrome violates Issue 7(1&2) of the Nigeria’s code of ethics and conducts for Journalists (as revised in 1998) which states that:

A journalist should neither solicit nor accept bribes, gratification or patronage to suppress or publish information. To determine payment for the publication of news is inimical to the notion of news as a fair, accurate, unbiased and factual report of an event.

Ethics is an integral part of human existence that is primarily concerned with the personal duties of an individual to himself and to others (Ekeanyanwu and Obianigwe 2012). According to Nwabueze (2010), “professionalism cannot be divorced from ethical standards. Ethics ensures that people practicing a particular profession are led to decipher what is morally right from what is morally wrong without being policed to do so”. What this means is that we cannot talk about media professionalism without talking about the ethical codes guiding the media. Nwabueze (2010) points out that ethics are not laws; they are set of guiding principles which are binding on people who adopt it as a moral boundary for the practice of their profession. The purpose of ethics in media practice is to regulate the conduct and behaviour of journalists as they go about their daily business of news gathering and reporting.

Okunna (2003) argues that only a disciplined media can make meaningful contribution to national development. Ekeanyanwu and Obianigwe (2012) adds that “the implication of a non-disciplined media may not be immediate, but the end would always justify the means”. What this means is that brown envelope syndrome imposes a lot of ethical burdens on media professionalism in Nigeria which may take time to manifest. Such negative impact lowers the credibility of the media as news of the day remains nothing but constructed opinions of the Brown envelope giver. It deprives the people their right to be accurately informed about the goings on in their society which is the responsibility imposed on journalists by virtue of their profession.

The code of ethics for journalist in Nigeria was first established and adopted in 1979 and was reviewed in 1998. However, the level of adherence to these codes of practice by Nigerian journalists, according to Ekeanyanwu and Obianigwe (2012) is limited especially with regards to the issue of rewards and gratification. Many factors can be responsible for this lack of conformity to the codes but principal among them is the fact that in Nigeria according to Okunna (2005), there is an erroneous belief that ethics cannot be enforced. Since ethics are not laws as earlier pointed out by Nwabueze (2010), it means that adherence to it depends on the individuals personal decision to obey the code or not to. This makes journalists who are not morally sound to indulge in Brown envelope journalism not minding the ethical implication of it.

This however, brings us to another issue which is the inability of the Nigerian Press Council and other media regulatory bodies to curb the menace of brown envelope syndrome. Eke (2014) stresses the need for media regulatory bodies to wake up and ensure the strict enforcement of their otherwise elaborate codes which merely exist just for the want of codes, but are not applied for efficient self-regulation. This means that media professional bodies should be serious in maintaining ethical standards, if possible, sanction defaulting journalists.

It is important to note that media regulation as used here does not mean that the media should be delivered into the hands of the state. It only purports that freedom of the press should come with responsibilities; responsibilities built on ethics and morality which should be enforceable through its regulatory bodies. The clamour for effective regulation calls on media regulatory bodies to go beyond establishing codes of conduct to ensuring that journalists operate in accordance to those codes. A fall out of this is what led to the brown envelope syndrome not just in the Nigerian media but Africa as a whole. According to Nwabueze (2010), “the failure of the media institutions to identify, shame and punish journalists that accept brown envelopes could be described as part of the larger journalism culture that affects the profession negatively”. Baren (2004) also posits that media professionals are reluctant to identify and censure colleagues who transgress ethical obligations. The reason for this is because most of the professionals in the field are also guilty of the offence. According to a journalist who works in a government owned media (station’s name purposely withheld) interviewed and cited by Nwabueze (2010, p.515), “when a reporter files in a story, some editors expect the reporter who submitted the story to bring part of the gratification; otherwise the story may not be published”. This reason makes it difficult for professionals in the field to sanction journalists who indulge in this practice. Worthy of note is the fact that most of these editors all constitute the executives of the media regulatory

bodies and as such cannot wage a fight against what they know they (or some of them) are also guilty of.

This regulatory vacuum has made journalists in Nigeria to operate outside the ethical codes guiding them, leading to a range of arguments as opinions are divided as to the moral and ethical rightness or wrongness of brown envelope journalism in Nigeria. To the school of thought which supports the practice, it is cultural and altruistic to be nice to visitors and invitees, arguing that it is simply a display of hospitality which they claim are in line with African culture (Onyisi 1999). Nwabueze (2010) expands the argument by saying that “the origin of the brown envelope syndrome could be rooted in the culture of presenting ‘kolanuts’ to visitors, a hospitality practice common in African societies. Well-meaning as the originators of that custom might be, the practice deteriorated with other values in the society”. It deteriorated and is now understood as ‘just’ gift giving, reason being that the ‘gift givers’ understands what the economy is like and the low income they receive when compared to other professionals in the country.

Oshunkey (2011) argues differently. She stated that:

poverty is the root cause of the brown envelope journalism. There is a nexus between poverty and corruption. Journalists in Africa are poorly remunerated and many journalist today earn less than USD3 per day, with a graduate journalist receiving about N30,000/USD200/GBP103 monthly.

Oshunkey (2011) goes further to argue that “how do you tell a hungry, weather-beaten reporter whose salary is most of the time not paid for months not to accept brown envelope?. A reporter cited in Nwabueze (2010) plainly suggests that “journalists are treated as if journalism is a charity work; people are owed for months, even when they are paid, it is peanuts”. According to Ekeanyanwu and Obianigwe (2012), “media owners in Nigeria, rather than pay attractive wages to the journalists, refer to their identity cards as meal tickets”. In other words, most journalists argue that since their employers expect them to generate their salaries from their identity cards; therefore they are morally justified if they use it to make money.

Another group blames the ethical codes inherent in most African countries as being responsible for brown envelope journalism. As seen in Omanga (2015), “such arguments have been made that we need a code of ethics that is African (‘Afriethics’) to guide journalism and nurture journalistic practice that is specific and complimentary to core Africa values”. To this group, the codes having been mostly appropriated from foreign media codes does not take into cognizance the practical experiences of an African journalist and the social,

economic and political differences between the two continents. This makes Omanga (2015) to rhetorically ask if codes of ethics are context-specific or universal in nature.

However, those against the notion are of the view that brown envelope syndrome is synonymous with bribe and regardless of the circumstance and it is anachronistic to the ethics of journalism as it perverts justice, media credibility and creates disequilibrium in the society (Onyisi 1999). What this means is that when the people begin to see the media as biased, it will affect the credibility of the noble profession and will also make journalists fail in their responsibility to ensure that justice prevails in the society. This group argues that brown envelope syndrome in its entirety should be expunged from the Nigerian media because it robs it of accuracy, balance and truth which are the pillars upon which they are meant to stand.

Others argue that the reason behind the acceptance of Brown envelope is beyond poor and epileptic remuneration. A reporter from Punch interviewed in Nwabueze (2010) argues that:

“Journalists use poor remuneration as an excuse, but that is not the issue. Many people are poor but they don’t steal. What of editors that are paid very well, yet they accept Brown envelopes? In fact, the bigger the income, the more money a reporter demands as Brown envelopes. Such reporter says ‘I am bigger than the amount you are giving me’. So it is basically a moral problem in the society, not just poor pay”.

The last group argues that brown envelope does not stop a journalist from reporting objectively. To them, the nature of the news story is what decides whether brown envelope will affect the objectivity of the report. If it is a sensitive issue like murder, rape and matters of public interest, the reporter even after collecting brown envelope must be objective because other media will report it (Nwabueze 2010). But whichever way you look at it, demanding and/or receiving gratification to perform your duty as a journalist should be condemned because it is not just a problem to the society but also to media professionalism; that is why the ethical code of conduct for journalists abhors it in all its ramifications.

Ethical Issues in Journalism

In a bid to perform his social responsibility effectively, journalists (including citizen journalists) most times encountered certain ethical challenges. Ethical issues arise in the journalist’s manner and methods of carrying out his responsibilities. According to Okunna

(1995), media stories can ruin lives just as they can make celebrities. This is why Obaze and Fashanu (2006) noted some of the ethical issues in journalism as follows;

- **Sycophancy:** This is a situation whereby a medium continues to praise a person or government despite the ills or incompetence in office. This is common where such media are owned by government or an individual who derives favor from such a government. An example was during the Abacha era. It was common to read in some newspapers about the good achievement of his government not to mention various campaigns adverts on television for his political ambition, “who the cap fit”. Sycophancy in journalism is unethical as it deprives the society of accurate reports or monitoring the government. Their motive is to win favor.
- **Character Assassination:** This is the act of portraying someone in false light either by calling him names or ridicules him. Although the aggrieved can sue for defamation but the damage would have been done. This is common during election campaigns.
- **Pressure:** Journalists, in the performance of their duty face pressure both within and outside their profession. Within their organization, the media proprietor may force them to do certain things that are unethical. Likewise outside, their friends, relations and power that be can pressure them by threats or pleas to do what is unethical.
- **Confidentiality of Source:** A journalist is not expected to reveal his source of information except where it concerns national security. But many journalists now capitalize on this by ascribing false information to secret sources. It is common to read in newspapers and magazines of ‘undisclosed source’ which keeps the readers in the dark as to the authenticity of such information.
- **Afganistanism:** the term is used in criticizing the media to describe the tendency of local media to give much critical attention to far away issues and ignore conflicts close to home. This is a situation where a medium focuses attention on issues outside its environment, neglecting its own home vital issues.
- **Sensationalism:** A report that highlights incidents out of context either in headlines or the body is said to have been engaged in sensationalism. It is common sight to see many newspapers with such headlines only to read the story and find nothing; it is also the tendency of journalists reporting stories out of proportion by adding other facts or rumors to make it more interesting for the readers, that is, does not convey much as carried by the headline.

- **Plagiarism:** This is literary theft. It refers to the use of an author's work (as in copyright) without his consent or acknowledgement. The profession of journalism frowns at this habit.
- **Sexism:** This is the use of words which ascribed to a particular sex. Many are against such term and prefer the neutral. Journalists are expected to use neutral nouns in their reports. Chairman/chairlady should be written as chairperson. Other similar ones are:
 - Manmade – Manufactured
 - Cameraman –Camera operator
 - Sales man – Sales representative

Many similar words exist that the journalist should take note of when writing.
- **Invasion of Privacy:** In spite of the constitutional guarantee of privacy protection, journalists still engage in the invasion of privacy of individuals even where such information are not in the interest of the public as stipulated in the NUJ Code of Journalism Practice which stipulates that journalists should respect the privacy of individuals and their families unless it affects public interest. Many of our media programmes features invasion of privacy.
- **Inaccuracy:** This is the haphazard report of news stories which has the tendency of misleading the public. This can reduce readership credibility of the medium. Such a problem can arise where the reporter fails to verify the information available to him before rushing to publish.
- **Lack of Fairness:** This is a problem in journalism practice where the news is one-sided, that is, not balances. Many get carried away by their own emotions.

Mechanism for Maintaining Ethical Standards in Journalism

To be unethical in journalism is to abuse powers of the mass media as the most potent tools of information dissemination in the modern world. As gate-keepers in the process of mass communication, journalists have a lot of control over information and information sources. A concern for good conducts among journalists is one way of regulating their behavior and guarding against the abuse of the power of mass communication and breeding responsible journalists.

Various mechanisms have been designed by both the media itself (self-regulation) and other bodies for ensuring ethical behavior among journalists. Obaze and Fashanu (2006) mentioned some of them as follows;

- **Self-Regulatory Mechanisms:** These are rules or body of rules that journalists have compiled themselves to guide them in the performance of their duties, it is enforced by them.
- **The Ombudsperson:** These are individuals within a media organization assigned the duty of hearing complaints about the media performance in areas of breaches of professional ethics by the medium in terms of accuracy, fairness to source and its audience.
- **The Media Council:** They are set up by the government to monitor and regulate the activities of media organizations and journalists. The council hears complaints from the media organizations; on hearing these complaints, they engage in investigation and reports its findings and recommendations. A good example of such council is the Nigerian Press Council.
- **Better Training for Journalists:** This will enhance responsibility in the profession. A review of studies in professionalism conducted by both developed and developing societies shows that journalists with higher formal education exhibit more professional orientation in the performance of their duties and is generally classified as high and medium profession as in contrast to their low professional colleagues' most of whom have not had formal journalism training.
- **Attractive Remuneration:** A good wage of course will enhance dedication to work and eventually curb unethical activities like brown envelop. Media organizations who offer higher wages are likely to have more credible staff.
- **Legal Regulation:** These are external laws formulated by government that exist to check unethical performance in journalism. These laws are copyright, law of defamation, law of privacy, sedition etc.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the gate-keeping theory.

. The gate-keeping theory was propounded by Kurt Lewin in 1947 while Westley-Maclean model visualized the concept of the gatekeeper in the mass communication process. McQuail (2005) says the core idea of the theory is that “the news media indicate to the public what the main issues of the day are and this is reflected in what the public perceives as the main issues.” The research paper broadly explores gate-keeping process in relation to the regulatory bodies of journalism on what they consider as the criteria for those practicing

journalism. The regulatory bodies in this way are the gatekeepers because whatever they objectively lay down will be followed. Secondly, this theory appraises the media content that is, what the media practitioners dished out to the public, how they mediate, select news content, and suppress facts in exchange for materialism.

According to Ekeli as quoted in Folarin (2005) “gate keeping is nothing but voluntary self-censorship performed by the media themselves”. Hence, the media practitioners should strictly adhere to the minimum standard because they are gatekeepers in that sense while journalists themselves should be socially responsible to their readers in whatever materials they package and elevate the virtues of the profession.

Opubor (2001) explains that while some insist that people who practice an occupation themselves should be the determinant of when they have become professionals, others argue that, to become a professional in any field, a person must undergo a certain minimum period of training or introduction during which the skills and values of the profession are imparted in him. Professionalism is associated with competence, training, relevant education body of knowledge, standards of evolution and improvement. Professionalism is attained when a profession has functional clearly defined or prescribed educational standards, licensing and enforcement of performance of standard by the profession itself.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

The research design of this study was survey. A descriptive survey was a desideratum because as Wimmer and Dominick, (2000) explain that "a survey design attempts to picture or document conditions or attitudes that exists at the moment". The survey method in research has equally been known to be an effective tool in the description and explanation of relationships between and among phenomena. Although the survey method in its individual capacity is not devoid of weakness, it is believed that its deficiency is subsumed in its efficient and potent approach in concretizing and validating research findings and conclusions.

3.2. Population of the Study

Population, according to Nworgu (1991) is the limits within which the research findings are applicable. It is defined in such a way that the results of the investigations are generalized". Obaze and Onosu (2009), defines population as a theoretically specified aggregation of survey elements.

The population for this study comprised of all the journalists and media professionals in Edo state. The numerical strength of this population is estimated to be about 250 (Aneru, 2018).

3.3. Sample Size

Given the nature and size of the population, a sample of 200 respondents from the population under survey was selected as respondents. The limitation of the respondents was to ensure that the sample is manageable size bearing in mind factors such as total population, time and the financial resources at the researcher's disposal. Again Wimmer and Dominick (2005) concur to the above reason stating that the size of the sample required for a study depends on at least one or more of the following seven factors; project type, project purpose, project complexity, amount of errors tolerated and time constraints. Others are financial constraints and previous research in the area.

3.4. Sampling Procedure

The random sampling was used in this study. The random sampling is a scientific technique whereby every element within a population has an equal chance of being selected.

3.5. Validity of the Instrument

An instrument is valid if it measured what it was intended to measure and accurately achieved the purpose for which it was designed. The research instrument was content validated

3.6. Reliability of the Instrument

The questionnaire is reliable because it is seen as a valid instrument that can be used to elicit response from the respondents.

3.7. Method of Data Collection

Data was collected by use of structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to ask respondents to tick only the options that best agreed with the survey questions asked as well as indicating their opinions in writing where necessary. The questionnaire for the study consisted of both closed and open ended questions.

3.8. Method of Data Analysis and Discussion

The data collected were analyzed using the simple percentage analysis and were presented with the aid of tables. The simple percentage data analysis was adopted to enable the researcher fully explore and plain the data that were collected and collated from the questionnaire without the use of complex mathematical models which are generally not easy to grasp.

Below, is the formula for calculating simple percentage which was used;

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{actual response}}{\text{total sample size}} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1. Preamble

This chapter is concerned with the presentation and analysis of data collected through the use of questionnaire.

During the course of this research, 200 copies of questionnaires were printed and distributed to the respondents. Out of the 200 copies of questionnaires that were administered to the respondents, 20 copies were wrongly filled and 180 copies were returned. Therefore, the data collected is shown in the tables below;

4.2. Analysis of Respondents' Bio-Data

Table 1: Gender of the Respondents

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	103	57
Female	77	43
TOTAL	180	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2022)

On Table 1 above, 103 respondents (57%) are males while 77 respondents (43%) are females.

Table 2: Age Range

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
25-30	8	4
31-35	48	27
36-45	87	48
46 and above	37	21
TOTAL	180	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2022)

On Table 2, it is shown that 8 respondents (4%) are between the ages of 25-30 while 48 respondents (27%) are between the ages of 30-35 and 87 respondents (48%) are between the ages of 36-45 and 37 respondents (21%) are between the ages of 46 and above.

Table 3: Marital Status

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Married	92	51
Single	88	49
TOTAL	180	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2022)

On Table 3, it is shown that 92 respondents (51%) are married while 88 respondents (49%) are single.

Table 4: Educational Qualification

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
HND/BSC	114	63
M.A/MSC	59	33
Others	7	4
TOTAL	180	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2022)

On Table 4, it is shown that 114 respondents (63%) possess HND/BSC while 59 respondents (33%) possess M.A/MSC and only 7 respondents (4%) hold other degrees.

Table 5: Years of Service of Respondents

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1-5	16	9
6-10	155	86
10 and above	9	5
TOTAL	180	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2022)

The data on Table 5 shows that 16 respondents (9%) have spent 1-5 years at Vanguard while 155 respondents (86%) have spent 6-10 years and 9 respondents (5%) have spent 10 years and above.

4.3. Presentation and Analysis of Psychographic Data Collected

Research Question 1: What is the influence of citizen journalism on the Nigerian media?

Item 6, 7 and 8 were used to answer this question.

Table 6: Does citizen journalism impact on the daily work of Journalists in Nigeria?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	177	98
No	3	2
TOTAL	180	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2022)

The data on Table 6 shows that 177 respondents (98%) which constitute majority of the respondents said yes that citizen journalism impact on the daily work of Journalists in Nigeria while only 3 respondents (2%) said no.

Table 7: How does citizen journalism impact on the daily work of journalists?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Data mining	8	4
News reporting	49	27
Sourcing of news stories	98	54
Speed of reporting	25	13
TOTAL	180	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2022)

The data on Table 7 shows that 8 respondents (4%) said citizen journalism impact on the daily work of journalist in the area of data mining, 49 respondents (27%) said it's the area of news reporting while 98 respondents said it's the area of sourcing of news stories and 25 respondents said it's the area of the speed of reporting.

Table 8: Do you agree that citizen journalism has positively influenced the practice of journalism in Nigeria?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	117	65
Disagreed	48	27
Neutral	15	8
TOTAL	180	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2022)

The data on Table 8 shows that 117 respondents (65%) agreed that citizen journalism has positively influenced the practice of journalism in Nigeria while 48 respondents (27%) disagreed and 15 respondents (8%) were neutral.

Research Question 2: What are the ethical challenges faced by the Nigerian media professionals? Item 9, 10 and 11 were used to answer this research question.

Table 9: Do Nigerian journalists face ethical challenges?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	180	100
No	0	0
TOTAL	180	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2022)

The data on Table 9 shows that all the respondents agreed that Nigerian journalists face ethical challenges.

Table 10: Which of these ethical challenges do journalists face the most?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Moonlighting	8	4
Sycophancy	10	6
Brown envelop syndrome	162	90
TOTAL	180	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2022)

The data on Table 10 shows that 8 respondents (4%) said moonlighting is the ethical challenge journalist faced the most while 10 respondents (6%) said it's sycophancy and 162 respondents (90%) said it's Brown envelop syndrome.

Table 11: Are there media codes that encourage journalists to be of good ethical behavior?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	180	100
No	0	0
TOTAL	180	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2022)

The data on Table 11 shows that all the respondents agreed that Nigerian journalists face ethical challenges.

Research Question 3: How do ethical challenges and non-professionalism affects the practice of journalism in Nigeria? Item 12, 13 and 14 were used to answer this question.

Table 12: Does citizen journalism impact on the practice of Brown envelop journalism in Nigeria?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	98	85
No	82	45
TOTAL	180	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2022)

The data on Table 12 shows that 98 respondents (85%) said yes that citizen journalism impact on the practice of Brown envelop journalism in Nigeria while 82 respondents said no.

Table 13: In what way does citizen journalism impact on the practice of journalism?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Free flow of information	100	56
Story telling	12	8
Exposes the other side of a story	68	38
TOTAL	180	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2022)

The data on Table 13 shows that 100 respondents (56%) said that citizen journalism impact on the practice of journalism in the area of free information flow while 12 respondents (8%) said it's the area of story-telling and 68 respondents (38%) said it's the area of exposing the other side of a story.

Table 14: Have you ever been offered a brown envelop to kill/publish a story?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	111	62
No	69	38
TOTAL	180	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2022)

The data on Table 14 shows that 111 respondents (62%) said yes that they have been offered a brown envelop to kill/publish a story while 69 respondents said no.

Research Question 4: What is the level of adherence of journalists to the journalistic codes of conducts? Item 15, 16 and 17 were used to answer this question.

Table 15: Do journalists have codes of conducts?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	180	100
No	0	0
TOTAL	60	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2022)

The data on Table 15 shows that all the respondents agreed that journalists have codes of conducts.

Table 16: Do journalists adhere to the code of conducts of journalism?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	180	100
No	0	0
TOTAL	180	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2022)

The data on Table 16 shows that all the respondents agreed that journalists adhere to the code of conducts of journalism.

Table 17: How would you rate the level of adherence by journalists to the journalistic codes of conducts?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very high	56	31
High	89	49
Fair	11	6
Low	9	5
Very low	15	8
TOTAL	180	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2022)

The data on Table 17 shows that 76 respondents (31%) rated the level of adherence by journalists to the journalistic codes of conducts as very high, 89 respondents (49%) rated it as high, 11 respondents (6%) rated it as fair while 9 respondents (5%) rated it as low and 15 respondents (8%) rated it as very low.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

Here, all the data that were collated will be discussed here;

Research Question 1: What is the influence of citizen journalism on the Nigerian media?

The aim of this research question is to examine the influence of citizen journalism on the Nigerian media. The data on Table 6, 7 and 8 were used to answer this research question. The data on Table 6 shows that 98% which constitute majority of the respondents said yes that citizen journalism impact on the daily work of Journalists in Nigeria while only 2% said no. The data on Table 7 shows that 27% said citizen journalism impact on the daily work of journalist in the area of data mining, 27% said it's the area of news reporting while said it's

the area of sourcing of news stories and 25 respondents said it's the area of the speed of reporting. The data on Table 8 shows that 65% agreed that citizen journalism has positively influenced the practice of journalism in Nigeria while 27% disagreed and 8% were neutral.

Based on the above, it can be inferred that citizen journalism wields great influence on the Nigerian media. Sometimes, citizen journalists get information faster than the mainstream journalists. This is why some media houses have incorporated citizen journalism into their operations.

Research Question 2: What are the ethical challenges faced by the Nigerian media professionals?

The aim of this research question is to find out the ethical challenges faced by the Nigerian media professionals. The data on Table 9, 10 and 11 were used to answer this research question. The data on Table 9 shows that all the respondents agreed that Nigerian journalists face ethical challenges. The data on Table 10 shows that 4% said moonlighting is the ethical challenge journalist faced the most while 6% said it's sycophancy and 90% said it's Brown envelop syndrome. The data on Table 11 shows that all the respondents agreed that Nigerian journalists face ethical challenges.

Based on the findings above, some of the ethical challenges faced by Nigerian media professionals include moonlighting, sycophancy, sexism and brown envelop syndrome just to mention a few.

Research Question 3: How do ethical challenges and non-professionalism affects the practice of journalism in Nigeria?

The aim of this research question is to find out how ethical challenges and non-professionalism affects the practice of journalism in Nigeria. The data on Table 12, 13 and 14 were used to answer this research question. The data on Table 12 shows that 85% said yes that citizen journalism impact on the practice of Brown envelop journalism in Nigeria while 82 respondents said no. The data on Table 13 shows that 56% said that citizen journalism impact on the practice of journalism in the area of free information flow while 8% said it's the area of story-telling and 38% said it's the area of exposing the other side of a story. The data on Table 14 shows that 63% said yes that they have been offered a brown envelop to kill/publish a story while 22 respondents said no.

Ethical challenges and non-professionalism affects the practice of journalism in Nigeria in the sense that some journalists do not abide by the codes of conduct of the

Nigerian Press Council and other media regulatory agencies in Nigeria. This on its own hinders professionalism in media practices.

Research Question 4: What is the level of adherence by journalists to the journalistic codes and conducts?

The aim of this research question is to determine the level of adherence by journalists to the journalistic codes of conducts. The data on Table 15, 16 and 17 were used to answer this research question. The data on Table 15 shows that all the respondents agreed that journalists have codes of conducts. The data on Table 16 shows that all the respondents agreed that journalists adhere to the code of conducts of journalism. The data on Table 17 shows that 31% rated the level of adherence by journalists to the journalistic codes of conducts as very high, 49% rated it as high, 6% rated it as fair while 5% rated it as low and 8% rated it as very low.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Summary

The results from this study provide confirmatory evidence that citizen journalism impacts positively on mainstream journalism in Nigeria. This impact has curbed the unethical practice of brown envelope journalism which poses a threat to the image of the profession and ability of journalists to perform their duties objectively. The consensus view among the journalists surveyed reveals that the entry of citizen journalists into the information scene has blocked the avenues through which brown envelope journalists request or accepts gratifications to perform their duty. The major factor responsible for this rests on the fact that citizen journalism has provided alternative platforms for people to know what is happening in the society. What this means is that citizen journalism has created multitude of exits through which news worthy events are disseminated to the people unlike the single exit which existed before. The single gate exit enabled the mainstream media to gate-keep what comes out of the gate. Since this was the case, information coming out of that gate was no longer based on truth but on gratification. But with the multiple exits provided by citizen journalism, brown envelope journalists can no longer hide certain information from the people because it is already out there in Blogs and other citizen journalism sites.

5.2. Conclusion

It is clear from the findings that citizen journalism and user generated is increasingly improving the practice of journalism in Nigeria and has helped to curb the unethical practice of brown envelope journalism. Its impact in the journalism process is reflected on the speed of reporting stories. The findings further reveal that the presences of online citizen journalism sites are fast taking over the audience of mainstream media and also their revenue. This challenge is a positive one because it will make the traditional journalists to expunge all unethical practice that is fast decreasing their image and credibility in the society. The study recommends that professional journalists should see the emergence of citizen journalism as an opportunity to expand and improve journalism sector just like other sectors have done. The banking sector, medical sector and so have all utilised the opportunity technology has offered them. The Automated Teller Machine (ATM/cash machine) has not replaced the role of cashiers in the bank, neither has computer and medical apps replaced the role of doctors in the hospitals.

5.3. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made;

- Journalists should take advantage of citizen journalism in order to get news as they happen.
- Editors, News managers and older generation of journalists should open up the news production process for citizen journalists to help them improve the profession.
- Citizen journalism should be encouraged because the mainstream journalists recognise the fact that the emergence of citizen journalism in the media sector has blocked the avenues through which this unethical practice can thrive.
- There should be training and re-training of journalists so as to be up-to-date in an ever technological changing society.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

Department of Mass Communication,
School of Information and Communication Technology,
Auchi Polytechnic,
PMB 13,
Auchi

Dear Respondent,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

I am a final year student of Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi and I am currently carrying out a research on “**An Evaluative Study of the Nigerian Media, Citizen Journalism and Ethical Issues in Information Dissemination in the 21st Century**”.

This study is in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of Higher National Diploma in Mass Communication. Therefore, to accomplish this research work, you are expected to kindly help the researcher by responding to these questions. This is purely an academic exercise and the confidentiality of information you give is assured.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Yours Faithfully

Nnanwude Chinenye Eucharía
(Researcher)

APPENDIX B

INSTRUCTION

Please tick appropriately in the space provided. The questionnaire is divided into two parts namely: Section A which consist of your personal data and Section B.

SECTION A: PERSONAL DATA

1. Gender of Respondents

- a) Male ()
- b) Female ()

2. Age Range

- a) 25-30 ()
- b) 31-35 ()
- c) 36-45 ()
- d) 46 and above ()

3. Marital Status

- a) Married ()
- b) Single ()

4. Educational Qualification

- a) FLSC/SSCE ()
- b) OND ()
- c) HND/BSC ()
- d) OTHERS ()

5. Respondents Years of Service

- a) 1-5 ()
- b) 6-10 ()
- c) 11 and above ()

SECTION B

6. Does Citizen Journalism impact on the daily work of Journalists in Nigeria?

- a) Yes ()
- b) No ()

7. How does citizen journalism impact on the daily work of journalists?

- a) Data mining ()
- b) News reporting ()
- c) Sourcing of news stories ()
- d) Speed of reporting ()

8. Do you agree that citizen journalism has positively influenced the practice of journalism in Nigeria?

- a) Agreed ()
- b) Disagreed ()
- c) Neutral ()

9. Do Nigerian journalists face ethical challenges?

- a) Yes ()
- b) No ()

10. Which of these ethical challenges do journalists face the most?

- a) Moonlighting ()
- b) Sycophancy ()
- c) Brown envelope syndrome ()

11. Are there media codes that encourage journalists to be of good ethical behavior?

- a) Yes ()
- b) No ()

12. Does citizen journalism impact on the practice of Brown envelope journalism in Nigeria?

- a) Yes ()
- b) No ()

13. In what way does brown envelop impact on the practice of journalism?

- a) Free flow of information ()
- b) Story telling ()
- c) Exposes the other side of a story ()

14. Have you ever been offered a brown envelop to kill/publish a story?

- a) Yes ()
- b) No ()

15. Do journalists have codes of conducts?

- a) Yes ()
- b) No ()

16. Do journalists adhere to the code of conducts of journalism?

- a) Yes ()
- b) No ()

17. How would you rate the level of adherence by journalists to the journalistic codes and conducts?

- a) Very High ()
- b) High ()
- c) Fair ()
- d) Low ()
- e) Very low ()