

**JOURNALISM TRAINING, WORKPLACE INFLUENCE,
AND THE QUEST FOR PROFESSIONALISM IN NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The primate aim of this study is to explore the influence that the workplace has on the professional conduct of journalists. Survey method was adopted with questionnaire as primary instrument to generate data. The study evidently showed that the major cause of unethical behaviour among journalists transcends lack of training but inclusive of the operational happenings in the environment of the journalist. To restore credibility to the profession, the paper recommends that, a revisit to the existing code of conduct to explicitly state those who can practice journalism in Nigeria is necessary; the various media professional and controlling bodies should strive for enhanced remuneration for journalists and other media practitioners; training institutions should intensify efforts in the teaching of ethics to form a philosophical base for the new entrants into the profession while violation of ethics must be treated with all sense of seriousness it deserves. Evidently from all indications, the need for a national ethical philosophy in Nigeria becomes inevitable.

Keywords: *journalism, journalism training, workplace influence, professionalism*

Introduction

Journalism is a widely practiced profession in the modern world. It is a field of human endeavor where both the trained and untrained hands mingle at the task of reporting events in the society. For this reason, many doubt the authenticity of the claim that journalism is a profession. Nolan (2008,p.3) notes that,

While questions of ‘professionalism’ have long been central to debates around journalism, both within and outside the academy, such debates may initially appear rather bewildering. Not only is there widespread disagreement about any solution to the problem of journalistic professionalism; the field of debate itself appears to rest on number of contradictory problems, embodying different assumptions that present incommensurable starting points for research.

Regardless of the controversy on whether journalism as a practice qualifies to be a profession, one cannot dispute the fact that the world over, journalism has gained a pride of place among occupations. Journalism serves as a lubricant of the social process by facilitating the flow of information in the society. It is hard to imagine the world without communication. Perhaps, no other activity is as ubiquitous in its verbal, visual and non-verbal dimensions. Of course, no society can survive in the absence of information or communication flow, hence the maxim “no communication, no society”.

From time immemorial, humans have often devised means of preserving their heritage and experience through the transmission of information from one generation to another. In essence, human communication needs transcend immediate desire to interact with fellow humans

to recording and passing on knowledge for the benefit of posterity. This is what Lasswell (1977) refers to as the transmission of socio-cultural heritage function which both the traditional and modern media still play even in the contemporary African society. For this reason therefore, journalism could be looked at as history written in a hurry for as the journalism practitioners capture and report events of the moment, consciously or otherwise, history is being recorded for future generations.

Suffice to say that, journalism practice becomes a *sin-qua-non* to the orderly workings of the modern society which has been aptly described as information society. The emergence of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has revolutionized the world and almost reduced the entire human existence to information processing in such a way that many social acts of human at present can be conducted just by the touch of a button. The phenomenon has also created what is now known as the bifurcation between the old and new media, unlike the previous categorization of the media into traditional and modern mass media. At present information is readily available to whoever needs it so long as the means of assessing such information is also available. And so, the Marshal McLuhan prediction of a global village has become a reality, although arguably so.

Individuals, organizations and even governments need information for their daily activities. Where adequate and accurate information is not obtainable, the possibility of problems cropping up is high which might lead to avoidable unpleasant situations. It is even 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 the society need to be trained and be more careful in the way they go about their businesses. In other words, there is need on the part of the journalists to live up to

professional integrity, a knowledge of which he supposedly acquired through training both in school and on the job, thus bridging the gap between the gown and the town. This brings up 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.

An assessment of the professional conduct of journalists can best be done against the backdrop of the ethics of journalism guiding principles to the behaviour of journalists. According to Agbanu (2008a, p.332) ethics is, “a set of guiding rules for people in a profession regarding how the profession should be practiced”. He points out further that, “Ethics are not laws in application but are binding on all members of the profession once they have been officially adopted”. The yardstick for measuring the level of professionalism among journalists is how far they conform or deviate from the ethics of the profession in their day-to-day activities. Where professional ethics is taken for granted, the profession, its practitioners and the entire society suffer more negative consequences as a result of such a costly neglect.

In Nigeria today as it is in several parts of the world, a violation of ethics of journalism has almost become the rule rather than the exception. For instance, *Cheque book* journalism through blackmailing unsuspecting victims with false investigative reports is common among journalists these days. The practice is that the so-called journalists would cook up a story (of course, a damaging one) about an influential personality and threaten to publish it unless the individual concerned pays a certain amount of money. Shamefully enough, sometimes ago, some journalists were caught by the photo lens of one of their colleagues fighting in public glare in Abuja over ‘brown envelope’ – a term that has come to mean money given to journalist to elicit favourable report of an event or story - which was said to have been given to them at the end of

an event. The truth is, journalists now flout ethics with impunity and such derogatory term as *brown envelope* seems to have become a trademark of the profession. However, Oso (2012) quoting Agbanu (2008b, p.346) commenting on the non-exclusivity of unethical practices to journalism notes that,

Media reports of physicians prescribing substandard drugs or issue undeserved medical certificate of fitness to patients abound. Lawyers act as counsel to both the plaintiff and the defendant, and often times obstruct judicial process with unwarranted motions and pleas; journalists slant stories to suit personal interest. Public Relations practitioners think only of the interest of their clients without a recourse to the adverse effect of the cause they are promoting to the society; Insurance agents swindle clients of large sums of money without giving full details or information about the policy the client is about to take up; bankers often encourage harlotry in the name of scouting for customers to meet unrealistic targets or engage in money laundering to make bogus profit or meet recapitalization requirements of the Central Bank.

However, this is not an alibi for the unbecoming attitude of journalists to their ethical responsibilities. Other ‘sins’ that are easily attributed to journalists with regard to professional ideals include deliberate false reporting, invasion of individuals’ privacy, sensationalism, sycophancy, partisanship, among others. All these are lapses which are often reported in the press while some of such unfortunate incidents have led to litigations in the court of law. Unfortunately also, the media organization involved may have to part with a large sum of money

(which they rarely have) in the form of damages paid to their unsuspecting victims and where the offence is less severe, a retraction or more mildly, an apology is tendered by the media organization for the wrong done. It needs be emphasized that, of all the adverse consequences of unethical practice in journalism, the worst is the mud that such an ugly experience stamps on the integrity of the profession itself which makes members of the society cast aspersions on practitioners and what they profess.

It is in bid to curb these unsavory situations in journalism practice that led to the emergence of codes of ethics for the profession which are supposed to guide the conduct of the journalists. We cannot easily forget the fact that it was this same observation about how the media abused the freedom guaranteed by the libertarian paradigm that led to the idea of social responsibility of the media upon which platform media ethics and regulatory bodies are formed (Folarin, 1998). It is expected that knowledge of such ethics must have been thoroughly inculcated in the journalist during training both at the colleges and on the job. Interestingly in Nigeria today, there are numerous training centres for journalism practitioners. At the moment many Universities and Polytechnics offer programmes in Mass Communication or Journalism. This presupposes that the new entrants and old practitioners are blessed with the opportunity of acquiring formal journalistic training, of which the teaching of “ethics” is a part. What this development seems to have answered, is the question of lack of training which most times is often blamed as a cause of unprofessional conduct of practitioners as some studies have revealed. However, other causes of unethical practices among journalists include societal influence, poor remuneration, government/proprietary control and work place influence; the last point being the thrust of this study.

It must be noted that though there are several training institutions for journalism practitioners in the country and across the globe, another bane and dimension to the unethical practices is the quality of training obtainable in these centres. It is however not within the purview of this study to argue the quality of training received by the Nigerian journalists but it is assumed that in the process of undergoing training, knowledge of the ethics of the profession must have been imparted into them. the point made here is that if journalists in the course of their training are taught of the ethics of the profession which they vow to uphold in their practice, why do they renege by going into unethical conduct while in practice? This question, very critical as well, tends to point in one direction which is: there is a need to examine the influence of the work environment of journalists vis-à-vis how this enhances or hinders them from attaining a high level of upholding the ethics of the profession. Fab Ukozor (2008, p. 307) has noted that, “although the socio-political/economic environment in Nigeria does not quite encourage qualitative journalistic practice that can impact positively on national growth and development, the expectations on journalists have continued to rise by the day, especially as the country has attained democracy.

In this study therefore, effort is made to ascertain the extent the work place contributes to unethical conduct of journalists. In essence, do journalists find the work place ideal to keep a reasonable sense of ethical conduct? Do journalists find it difficult to keep the ethics of their profession because there is a significant difference between journalistic ethics and organizational imperatives?

Review of Literature

The subject of professionalism in journalism has attracted much scholarly attention over the years. However, what are of interest here are studies which have a bearing on the organizational

influence on the ability of journalists to keep to the ethics of their profession. A few of such studies are reviewed here.

Ajia (1994) while bemoaning the spate of public criticism of the Nigerian press observes that the crux of such criticisms is on the quality of those who work in the media in terms of their skills, training, values, attitudes and degree of social responsibility. He submits that the Nigerian journalist has been found wanting both in expertise and credibility.

Interestingly, Ajia points to organizational influence as a serious bane to the ethical practice of journalists, noting that there are technical methods of enforcing a publisher's policy in the newsroom, even when such a policy is not documented. The strategies used in this regards include socializing the newcomers into newsroom norms, culture and expectations of the editors. What this connotes is that the journalist is bound to conform to the organization's policies whether these are antithetical to the ethics and ideals of the profession or not.

This position is further corroborated by Oso (2012) where he notes that the liberalization and commercialization policy of the federal government of Nigeria of the 1980s and 1990s which allow for strengthened ownership 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 dead of serious journalism in Nigerian Broadcasting.

In a similar development, Okunna (1995) relates unethical practice in mass communication to those obtained in the entire society which means that whatever deterioration seen in the media circle today is a reflection of the corruption that is going on in the larger society – a society characterized by ‘dealers’ who parade themselves as leaders, and whose major strategy is to lobby the media owners, editors and reporters to allow their media space and platform to be used as propaganda instrument of the government. Of course, the media as part of the social system influence and are in turn influenced by other components of the system in accordance with the tenets of the normative press theories. This presupposes that a demonstration of unethical conduct by Nigerian journalists is a spill-over effect of the moral decadence of the larger Nigerian society.

While classifying Nigerian journalists into types namely: a) *Cocktail journalists* who are pleasure seekers at the expense of professionalism, b) *Next-of-kin journalists* who are praise singers of those in power; c) *General Order Journalists* who are errand boys in the ministries and government parastatals and d) *Journalist of Conscience* who uphold professionalism even at a risk to their lives, Akinfeleye (1987) ironically opines that all of these referred to above are trained journalists but have chosen to practice journalism in an unethical way with the exception of those in the last category. Explicitly put, what this suggests is that lack of training may not necessarily be the cause of unethical conduct among journalists compared with journalists’ drive for egoistic considerations demonstrated in the unbridled quests for material acquisition.

In his own view, Pate (2004) observes that the unholy romance between journalists and those in the corridors of power is another way of muzzling professionalism in journalism practice. Where journalists go almost cap in hand begging for assistance in both cash and kind from those they are supposed to watch over as watchdogs, how professional could such journalists be in the discharge of their civic duties? This instance as observed by Pate was further buttressed in a study by Tejuoso (2010) where he notes that the proliferation of journalists on the pay-roll of the government both at the state and federal levels have greatly eroded professionalism in journalistic practice.

In credence to the above, Barger and Elliot (2000) also asserts that, “entry level journalists are often blinded by the routine of news gathering and the heavy socialization that takes place when they enter into the field”. Robinson and Leary-Kelly (1998) add that entry level journalists may adopt the attitudes and standards of the workplace, whether those standards are ethical or not”. Hanson (2002) supports this.

A critical analysis of the literature reviewed shows that the issue of unethical conduct in journalistic trade is a sacred fact, whose causes however, transcends lack of training or poor attitudes of journalists to their job, but rather extends to, and deeply rooted in negative organizational influence on the journalists which is the focus of this paper.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on the socialization theories developed by Kunczik (1988) and expounded by Folarin (1998) as part of the working theories of mass communication. Socialization theories examine the influence that prevails on an employee (in this context, a journalist) in an organization and which determines the changing roles such individual assume in the course of their stay in the organization. Here, two variants of the theories – Role theory and

identification theory – are applicable to this study. Role theory emphasizes the fact that through interactions with one's colleagues and reference groups, an individual acquires not only the skills required but also the values, attitudes and norms associated with one's job.

Identification theory on its part relates with the adaptations that take place as a role occupant emulates a particular role model in an organization. In the process, values and standards of performance are impacted while a sense of confidence is instilled on the role occupant. Also, institutional sanctions could be applied by superiors in an organization to ensure compliance and conformity by subordinates.

In essence, the two paradigms above indicate the process of 'occupational deformation' or adjustment to fit into the organization that entry-level journalists undergo in order to conform to the media organization's culture of where they work. Our interest in this study therefore has to do with the fact that this could have negative or positive impact on the journalist's professional conduct.

Methodology

The survey research method was used to draw up a sample of journalists for this study which was based on journalists working in Abeokuta, the Ogun State capital in Nigeria. Abeokuta was chosen for the study because aside of its being the cradle of journalism in Nigeria, most reporters cum correspondents covering some South-West States especially Lagos and Ogun are based there.

A sample size of 80 out of a total population of about 132 registered journalists was selected for the study. The number was drawn from five units (subgroups) of the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) Council, Ogun State namely; Correspondents unit, Nigeria Television

Authority (NTA) unit, National Orientation Agency (NOA) unit, and Ministries of Information (Federal/State) units.

With a written structured questionnaire with both open-ended and close-ended questions as research instrument, the questions spanned through the bio-data of respondent: gender, age, years of experience, qualification among others to issues relating to keeping ethics of the journalistic trade. Such issues include possession of a code of ethics, exposure to in-house induction course, perception of journalism ethics, influence of colleagues, among others.

Sixteen (16) copies of the questionnaire were administered to each of the chapels with the assistance of some of the journalists for ease of identification and location of respondents. Follow up was done in the form of periodic visits to the various chapels. However, a total of 75 copies of the questionnaires were returned. Responses from the questionnaires formed the primary source of data while more inputs were obtained from relevant publications such as the NUJ code of Ethics. Data analysis was done using statistical tests.

Five of the returned questionnaires were invalid due to wrong entries which compelled the researcher to work with seventy (70) copies representing 87% of the number that was initially administered.

Research Hypotheses

The study was predicated on the following hypotheses:

1. There is a significant difference in the way journalists perceive ethics of journalism before and after joining the profession
2. The policies of organizations where journalists work significantly influence journalists' ethical conduct.

3. The behaviour of professional colleagues and reference groups influence journalists' ethical conduct.
4. The knowledge of ethics learnt at school has more influence on the professional conduct of a journalist than the realities at the workplace of the journalist.

Findings and Discussions

Findings from the study shows that 45% of the respondents have upward of eleven years professional experience while the least experienced (1-5yrs) constituted 31%. Only 16% of the respondents have a degree/HND in mass communication. 6% Diplomas and Certificates in mass communication/journalism and 32% in other social sciences field. 3% of the respondents did not indicate their qualification. This shows that 52% of the respondents were not trained journalists as at the point of joining the profession.

Nevertheless, the presence of institutions - Moshood Abiola Polytechnic, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Crescent University, Babcock University and National Open University, all in Ogun State, running courses in mass communication, has provided opportunity for the journalists to acquire formal training in journalism so much that 56% of the respondents have obtained or are expecting a higher qualification in journalism. On the possession of the code of ethics, only 57% have while 90% were afforded in-house orientation on assumption of duty. Equally, the same percentage of respondents often discusses ethics with their colleagues while 44% have been tempted to receive gratification in the course of duty. 52% have had their stories restructured to fit into the in-house style in order to gratify certain interests whereas 42% have been rewarded by their organizations for outstanding performance. 57% indicated that they would choose journalism again as a profession.

Test of Hypotheses

Research Hypothesis 1

There is a significant difference in the way journalists perceive ethics of journalism before and after joining the profession.

The questions below were used to generate data to test the above hypothesis:

- a.) What do you think of ethics of journalism before joining the profession?
- b.) Have you changed your opinion now about the ethics of the profession?

The contingency table below presents data in testing the above hypothesis.

Table 1: Journalists’ response on their perception of journalism ethics before and after joining the profession

| Perception of ethics | Strongly believe in it | Just a formality | Quite unnecessary | Total |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------|
| Before joining the Profession | 33(34) | 30(31) | 04(04) | 67 |
| After joining the Profession | 30(30) | 28(28) | 02(03) | 60 |
| Total | 63 | 58 | 06 | 127 |

Using the Chi-Square formula:

$$X^2 = \frac{(O_f - E_f)^2}{E_f}$$

$$E_f$$

$$X^2 = 0.38$$

$$Df = 1, \text{ level of significance} = .05$$

$X^2 @ df (1) @ .05 = 3.84$. Since x^2 value (0.38) is $<$ Critical or table value (3.84), we accept the null hypotheses that there is no significant difference in the way journalists perceive ethics of journalism before and after joining the profession. From the data gathered, about 57% only of journalists sampled have journalism code of ethics. It is not surprising therefore, that most journalists have a poor perception of the ethics of journalism.

Research Hypothesis 2

The policies of organizations where journalists work significantly affect their ethical conduct.

The following questions were used to generate data to test the above hypotheses:

- a.) Has there been any time your news story was restructured to suit the interest of any person, group or client of your organization?
- b.) Are you satisfied with your present remuneration?
- c.) What would you do if the Chief Executive Officer of your organization wants the name of the source of your information obtained under confidentiality?
- d.) Have you ever been rewarded by your organization for a brave act in the course of duty?
- e.) Suppose the story you wish to run is contrary to the policy of your organization but you are convinced that it is of public interest, what would you do?
- f.) Suppose your office is underfunded and a generous donor offers to pay your telephone bills, would you accept or not?

Table 2: Respondents' opinions on organizational influence on their jobs.

| Issue | Yes | No | Total |
|--------------------------------|---------|---------|-------|
| Alteration of news story | 37 (34) | 24 (28) | 61 |
| Satisfaction with remuneration | 17 (36) | 45 (28) | 62 |
| Rewards by organization | 30 (36) | 33 (28) | 63 |
| Disclosure of news sources | 32 (34) | 29 (28) | 61 |
| Public interest news sources | 42 (34) | 18 (27) | 60 |
| Acceptance of donation | 47 (34) | 14 (28) | 61 |
| Total | 205 | 163 | 368 |

Using the Chi-Square formula

$X^2 = 40.28$; $df = 5$; level of significance = 0.5

$X^2 @ df(5) @ .05 = 11.07$. Since x^2 value (40.28) is > critical value (11.07), we accept the hypothesis that the policies of organizations significantly affect the professional conduct of journalists.

Research Hypothesis 3

The behaviour of professional colleagues significantly affects journalists' ethical conduct.

In testing the above research hypothesis, data were obtained from responses to the following questions:

- a.) Do you have a role model who is a journalist in your organization?
- b.) Do you often discuss ethics of journalism with your colleagues?
- c.) Do you sometimes feel tempted by the behaviour of your colleagues to receive gratification?

Table 3 : Attitude to social issues in journalists’ interactions at the workplace

| Issue | Yes | No | Total |
|-----------------------------------|---------|---------|-------|
| Having a role model | 48 (45) | 15 (17) | 63 |
| Discussing ethics with colleagues | 63 (30) | 6 (18) | 69 |
| Tempted to receive gratification | 31 (45) | 32 (17) | 63 |
| Total | 142 | 53 | 195 |

$\chi^2 = 29.35$; $df = 2$; level of significance = .05

Since χ^2 value (29.35) is > critical value (5.99), we accept the hypotheses that the behaviour of professional colleagues significantly affect the ethical conduct of journalists.

Research Hypothesis 4

The knowledge of ethics learnt at school has more influence on the professional conduct of a journalist than the realities at the workplace

In testing the above hypotheses data were obtained from the following questions:

- a.) Between ethics learnt at school and the realities at the workplace, which do you think has a greater influence on journalists?
- b.) From your experience, do you think training institutions should intensify the teaching of ethics?

Table 4: Attitude on teaching of ethics and organizational influence on the conduct of journalists.

| Issues | Yes | No | Total |
|------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|
| Workplace influence | 49(51) | 10(08) | 59 |
| Intensifying ethics teaching | 62(59) | 05(07) | 67 |
| Total | 111 | 15 | 126 |

$X^2 = 1.3$; $df = 1$; level of significance = .05

Since x^2 value (1.3) is < to critical value, we accept the null hypothesis that the knowledge of ethics acquires at school does not significantly affect the ethical conduct of journalists as much as the influence of the workplace on the journalist.

Conclusion /Recommendations

The prime aim of this study is to explore the influence that the workplace has on the professional conduct of journalists. The findings so far, have revealed that the organization influence weighs far more on the journalists compared the ethical knowledge acquired at school. Explicitly put, the study have evidently showed that the major cause of unethical behaviour among journalists goes beyond lack of training rather, we should examine the operational happenings in the environment of the journalist. In this respect, Pate's (2004, p. 7) view that in dealing with the issue of professionalism in journalism," ...one should be able to understand the contextual environment in which the journalist practices" is being upheld. This according to Alemoh (2011, p. 308) is predicated on the fact that some of these journalists, even when they appear competent are often subdued by the attitudes and policies of their individual media houses to the detriment of their professional honour. The submission of Fab-Ukozor's (2008) submission is germane here:

The situation is such that the few rich ones who own the media are either business friends of government or professional journalists who appreciate the position of the 'fourth power', but are reluctant to go headlong in search of truth due to government's stance of intimidation and oppression. As a result, practitioners in the

country are often faced with a conflict emanating from the need to protect their proprietors' interests and the need to serve public interest. Thus, the press in Nigeria has not been consistent in their application of ethical precepts to societal issues

The study has also supported Schultz's (2002) submission that, "much research... suggests that organizational and societal factors are more important influences in shaping mass media content". It also upholds Centre for Research and Development's (CRD) (2007) submission as reported in Yau (2008) and cited in Batta (2009, p.172) that, "there is a wide gap between what is taught in school and what practitioners meet and do on the field". This connotes that there is a wide gap between what journalists learn in school and the actual skills and knowledge they need to practice". This is what Khan (2006) as cited in Alemoh (2011) calls journalism deficits.

This study therefore recommends that the various media professional and controlling bodies should strive for enhanced remuneration to journalists through rigorous support for the signing into law of media practitioners' salary package by the federal government. This evidently will make it practically impossible for media organizations to enslave the journalists thereby predisposing them to unethical practices. A hungry journalist may not know when he throws away professional integrity to obtain gratification. Coupled with this is the urgent operationalization to the latter, the recently passed Freedom of Information (FOI) Act by the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan in 2011. Journalists need an enabling atmosphere to professionally practice their trade.

Training institutions should intensify efforts in the teaching of ethics to form a philosophical base for the new entrants into the profession and while in training, efforts should be made by the trainers to venerate journalism ethics. A training journalist that is cultured in this way may not likely fall an easy prey to negative organizational influence at the workplace. The orientation on ethical integrity should start from the classroom.

Violation of ethics must be treated with all sense of seriousness it deserves. This is a clarion call to action on the part of the regulatory bodies especially the Nigeria Media Council (NMC) as the existing structures of the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) cannot effectively regulate the professional aspect of journalism today in Nigeria. What journalists should work towards is an “irrevocable trend toward ‘professionalization’ in journalism that will most likely have long-term impacts upon the identity and forms of practice of future generations of practitioners’ (Aldridge and Evetts, 2003). Professionalizing journalism practice in Nigeria, for instance requires that all entry level practitioners must be those who had been trained for the job. We are quite aware of the seemingly protracted conflict between insistence on journalism qualification for recruitment and organizational (media house) requirements, the latter believing that journalism is best practiced through a blend of multi-disciplinary training as reflects in a paradigm that; ‘journalism teaches something about everything, and everything about something’. In Nigeria today, anyone who has a degree elsewhere other than in journalism could simply acquire a post graduate diploma in journalism to qualify as a journalist. However, if journalism is truly set for professionalization, such degree holder should go for a first degree in journalism, which offers the basic training.

It seems that the profession of journalism in Nigeria has got to the point where professional examinations would be set for degree/HND holders as an entry point. This, of course, challenges the suitability of a diploma certificate as the entry point for journalism practice at the moment in a country where journalism is taught in many universities and polytechnics. Journalists who are already in the field should individually strive to live above board and set a good standard for new entrants in the profession. Veteran journalists would always would always assert that the professional stance of a journalist goes a long way to determining the resistance capacity of that journalist to unethical conduct whether induced by colleagues or from outside the organization. If journalists know the ethics of their profession and stand by it, they are not likely to be pushed around by just anybody. Folarin (1998:33) opines, “in order to safeguard the ideals of press freedom, journalists and other media workers should at all times faithfully fulfill their obligations and stoutly defend their rights in the course of their information gathering and dissemination tasks”.

From all indications, the need for a national ethical philosophy in Nigeria becomes inevitable. Such national ethical philosophy includes patriotism, hard work, reverence for one’s culture and personal integrity among others. Although, given the Nigerian context, bringing up such an ethical way of life here may be a herculean task, but nothing stops journalists, who are regarded as watchdogs of the society and those of other ‘dogs’ from starting it, for others to take a clue.

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