

## **NIGERIAN MEDIA AND CORRUPT PRACTICES: THE NEED FOR PARADIGM SHIFT**

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### **Abstract**

Corruption is the bane of Nigerian socio-economic development, which threatens the existence of Nigeria as a political entity. It is therefore imperative that all and sundry should engage in anti-corruption struggle. This paper examines the state of the country's media from the perspective of media practitioners. The survey method was employed for the study. Regardless of the efforts being made by various stakeholders in the media industry, it was discovered that the media was largely corrupt. Even though over 64 % of those sampled believed that acceptance of any form of gratifications was unethical, over 75 % of the journalists engage in corrupt practices with impunity. More than half of the 18 media outfits covered by the study are indifferent to certain identified corrupt practices in their organizations. To curb corruption, journalism organizations should engage in sensitization programmes while conditions of service for journalists need to be considerably improved.

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**Keywords:** Corrupt practices, anti-corruption, journalistic ethics, Nigerian media practitioners, brown envelope, bribery

### **Introduction**

Corruption is a worldwide phenomenon and there is hardly any society without one form of corruption or the other. Corrupt practices did not begin today; history is as old as the human race. The menace called corruption is a big problem in Nigeria. M.Watts (2008:47) affirms that "effects of corruption in the Nigerian society can not be overemphasized". Corruption is indeed a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabric of Nigerian society. It is a monster that all and sundry blame for the economic woes facing the country. This is because corruption is seen as one of the major impediments to the economic development of the nation. It is perhaps, the only reason why nothing seems to be working. In fact, corruption

is threatening the existence of Nigeria as an entity. Nearly every sphere of human endeavour is affected by corruption. And no profession is spared either.

Interestingly, successive governments pursued policies against corruption and it was the main reason why the military made incursions into politics. Despite various policies adopted by governments, corruption is ever increasing in the country. Nigeria is said to have generated huge revenue during this current political dispensation than at other times of her history. This is so because of the rising price of crude oil in the international market since 1999.

Akpeninor (2007:116) confirms that state governments' revenue has been increasing geometrically from June 1999. Unfortunately, huge receipts from crude oil have neither positively impacted on the lives of Nigerians nor provided the much needed infrastructural development. Paradoxically, huge revenue in the case of Nigeria does not translate to better development. Akpeninor (2007:116) cited a survey carried out by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) which shows that "impoverishment of Nigeria has vastly increased proportionately as revenue collected by the governors also immensely increased.

Nigeria today is a nation at crossroads, struggling against all forms of vices. The country's media practitioners had at one time struggled for the political emancipation of the country, at another time, the media fought for the unity of the nation during a devastating 30-month civil war. One of the major issues that should engage the attention of the media today is the anti-corruption war. There is therefore no gain saying the fact that all hands need to be on deck so that the anti-corruption war could be won.

How much Nigeria would succeed in the current battle depends largely on how effective the media would be. The media profession is expected to be above board so that journalists could confidently champion the anti-corruption campaign. Though some media outfits realized this demand and some efforts have been channeled towards this in recent times, it is pertinent to know how the corruption issue is being handled in most media organizations in Nigeria. The focus of this paper is therefore the perception of practicing journalists on how media organizations view this unwholesome behaviour that could negatively impact on the pen profession.

### **Objectives Of The Study**

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To find out the attitude of the media organizations towards their corrupt-employees - the journalists.

2. To examine the perception of Nigerian journalists on the issue of media corruption.

3. To determine measures that could be taken in order to curb corrupt practices in the media.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions will be answered:

1. Do the media organizations in any way contribute to corruption in the media?

2. How do Nigerian journalists perceive corruption in the media?

3. What kinds of measure should be adopted in order to curb corruption in the Nigerian media?

### **Review Of Related Literature**

#### **The Monster Called Corruption**

In the international community, corruption is a bane for it impedes the growth and development of democratic institutions (Al Gore, 1998). Generally, corruption can be regarded as a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabric of many developing as well as developed countries. In whatsoever form, corruption is an anti-ethical behavior, which is detrimental to development in any society; this is evident because it pursues the selfish interest of the individuals in the society.

Klitgaard (1998) broadly viewed corruption as misuse of office for unofficial ends. According to him, a “catalogue of corrupt acts includes – but not limited to – bribery, extortion, influence peddling, nepotism, fraud, the use of “speed money” (money paid to government officials to speed up their consideration of a business matter falling within their jurisdiction), and embezzlement”.

Corruption is efforts to secure wealth or power through illegal means, private gain at public expense or a misuse of public power for private benefit (Lipset & Lenz, 2000). In addition, corruption is a behavior which deviates from the formal duties of a public role, because of private gains. This definition includes such behavior as bribery, nepotism and misappropriation (Banfield 1961). Dike (1999) adds that corruption is an anti-social behavior conferring improper benefits contrary to legal and moral norms, and which undermine the authorities’ efforts to improve the living conditions of the people. Corruption causes a reduction in quality of goods and services available to the public, as some companies could cut corners to increase profit margins. Corruption affects investment, economic growth, and government expenditure choices; it also reduces private investment (Pezullo, 1998).

## **Corruption in Nigeria**

Corruption is a major issue in the world and the problem is crucial in most developing countries such as Nigeria. However, most observers in Nigeria are getting worried because corruption is fast becoming a way of life. A retrospective look at Nigeria's political history from 1966 to date, according to Dike (1999), points to corruption as a reason put forward by the military for dabbling into Nigerian politics. For instance, the researcher further states, the Yakubu Gowon's regime and the Shehu Shagari's administration were overthrown by the military in 1975 and 1983 respectively, based on claims that these governments were corrupt (Dike, 1999). At present, according to the Transparency International Corruption Index (CPI), 2012, Nigeria is rated 35<sup>th</sup> most corrupt country in the world. In the international community, Nigerians are perceived to be fraudulent and dangerous.

Many scholars have argued that Nigeria has a long history of corruption which could be traced to independence. According to Dike, as far back as the 1970s, Nigerian officials were already stealing oil, loading same unto tankers with no bills of lading, selling the cargo abroad and pocketing the entire proceeds. He further adds that in the 1990s, petroleum export proceed account showed that 1.5 billion dollars had disappeared. In the same year, about 5 billion dollars in oil revenue recorded by the Central Bank of Nigeria did not go into the Federation Account as required by the revenue distribution mechanics.

The level of romance Nigerians have with corruption is so high that it is regarded as an indispensable factor of the Nigerian psyche. Today, the word 'Nigerian factor' has been registered in the vocabulary of Nigerians to connote corrupt practices. James et al (1999:453) cited the Economist and put the seriousness of corruption in Nigeria thus "the parasite... has almost eaten the host".

## **The Nigerian Media and Corruption**

In Nigeria just like in other society, the mass media transmit ideas and new information to a target audience. This implies that they are responsible for most of the adjustments in the behavioral pattern of people in the society. The influence of the mass media extends to almost every segment of the society that is exposed to their programmes. In other words, the press serves as an agent of change, and as the watchdog of the society is expected to play a part in ensuring transparency and accountability in government as well as contribute to the efforts of crime –fighting institutions to curb corruption in the country (Nwuneli, 1990; Nwosu, 1990). However, a corrupt press can not fight corrupt individuals.

Corruption in the media circle in Nigeria is prevalent because of the brown envelope syndrome in media practice. Generally, the brown envelope is a monetary bribe handed out to

a person to put pressure on him or her to do what the bribe giver wants (Okoye,2001). It is any form of gratification which a journalist may receive to cover an event or influence the judgment of a journalist. The event may be a press conference, an interview of any sort, a workshop, an impromptu or organized briefing. Basically, the coinage “brown envelope” evokes the idea of criminality in the mind of right thinking persons. This nomenclature is so regarded because it is derived from the underworld business of wrapping of wares in business envelopes.

From the above - stated definition, one fundamental ethical concept could be derived that is, bribery. A bribe according to Hornby (1974:104) is “something given, offered or promised to somebody in order to influence or persuade him (often to do something wrong) in favor of the giver.” A bribe therefore, is to induce a course of action, especially a wrong course by the gift, or offer of something valued. It is note worthy that journalist may give or accept bribes. He may be tempted to give bribe in order to obtain sought-after information or even facilitate access to scoop. He may also be tempted to receive bribe, the giver intending to influence his objective reportage or to “kill” the information out right.

It is believed in many quarters that media practitioners are guilty of allegations of bribery and corruption and that acceptance of monetary gratification affects in no small measure objective coverage of news events. Journalists are usually accused of biased reporting and prejudice by members of the public because of their ignoring one of the most important attributes of good journalism that is, objectivity.

There is also the need to focus the anti corruption searchlight on every sector of Nigerian society most especially now that it has been established that corruption is a serious problem in the nation. The media are at the vanguard of the struggle and for the struggle to be meaningful, impactful and effective the state of health of journalists as well as the media organizations they work for as regard their standing on anti corruption crusade should be determined.

### **Major Corrupt Practices in the Nigerian Media**

The most popular corrupt practice in the Nigerian media is the acceptance of monetary inducement popularly referred to as “ brown envelope”. It is perhaps the most popular source of corruption in the media. The brown envelope as a form of financial gratification is viewed by most people as a form of bribe paid by news sources to journalists to enable the former to get favourable news coverage. The practice is not alien to other parts of the world though practice differs from place to place. For example, it is normally called brown envelope in Nigeria, but there are as well a couple of other names that the practice is

called among Nigerian journalists such as “matter”, “load”, “eego”, “chopay or choppe”, “colanut”. According to Obianigwe (2009), the term “brown envelope” is also used in some African and Asian countries. The broad term that perfectly covers the practice is “envelope journalism” which referred to red envelope journalism, white envelope journalism, et cetera. More recently however, the term “ATM journalism” is becoming popular in the society and the term indicates the change to electronic transfer of bribe into journalists bank accounts (<http://www.enwikipededia.org/>).

Corruption in the media is multi-faceted. It may come through various ways some of which were mentioned above, or it may be through what is called “Media Executives Dinner”, through generous offer of expensive gift items or through various forms of either political/economic gratifications. At times, in a bid to get exclusive stories or scoop, journalists may be tempted to give bribe most especially if such stories are regarded as sought-after information.

### **Perception**

Ademoroti. A. G. (2006) citing (Berkowitz L. 1980:77-9), examines the concept of perception intensely. The researcher defines perception eternally as “the synthesis of present sensation and past experience and meaning which are determined by personal, social and cultural conditioning” The most relevant aspect of perception to this work is social perception which, according to Crider et al (1983:422), has to do with the study of the ways people influence each others’ judgments, actions, and decisions. The scholars believe that attitudes are fundamental to understanding social perception because according to them, they strongly influence peoples perceptions.

### **Ethics and Journalistic Profession**

Adeyemi and Okorie (2009:2) affirm that

*“Researchers are bound to analyze multifaceted nature of issues generated as a result of human interactions. These issues are primarily about what is bad, what is evil, what is wrong, as well as what is good or what is right. In summary, it is all about what is ethical and what is unethical. And so, ethical consideration of human interactions is of utmost importance. Lack of ethics in any society in whatsoever form, can create serious problem.”*

Corruption in the media is no doubt an ethical issue and it damages journalists’ as well as media outfits’ integrity and affect professionalism. The journalistic profession does not lag behind much in the practice of setting acceptable standards known as codes of conduct, but strict adherence to such codes of conduct by the practitioners is another issue

entirely. Most journalism organizations are somewhat reluctant to tackle the problem headlong by implementing some of the codes of conduct of the profession like their counterparts in other professions.

Igboanusi (2006:16) has this to say on the issue:

*“... Journalism organizations today avoid suggestions that subscription to the codes be a condition of employment as a journalist. No journalism group makes any effort to force its members to comply with the codes. That would be too much like a first step toward licensing and shackling of the free press...”*

Journalism is regarded as the fourth estate of the realm, it serves as the ear, eyes and mouth of the society. The profession is highly regarded in almost all societies. In Nigeria, the media have contributed immensely to the development of the society in all its ramifications. No wonder the Nigerian media are regarded as one of the most vibrant media in Africa. However, corrupt practices are negatively impacting on the profession. Corruption is a monster that should be eliminated by all and sundry. Corruption is probably the most important battle that well meaning citizens of Nigeria should fight. Nigerians need to fight the war against corruption with the same vigour the country fought for the attainment of independence and unity of the nation during the civil war.

Easterman (2003) cited in Obianigwe (2009) explains the influence of politician regarding the brown envelope syndrome:

*“In political processes, the journalists themselves are seen as barrier to free and fair reporting. In 2003, the PDP chairman, Alhaji Makama Rigachikum once regarded the Nigerian journalists as corrupt, but he demonstrated how politicians like himself make journalists corrupt. After a press conference, he offered a gift of N50,000 to journalists. Although very generous, yet unethical. In Nigeria, it is very routine as politicians pay what is called “dash” in brown envelopes to make sure they get favourable coverage”*

Brown envelope is unethical practice and Code of Ethics No. 7 for Nigerian journalists strongly condemns it.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Two major theories that are applicable to this study are the Social Responsibility theory and Deontological Theories of ethics.

#### **Social Responsibility Theory**

Social Responsibility Theory is considered the most relevant theory for this study for a number of reasons. The main principles of the theory as identified by McQuail (1993:117) are as follows:

The media should accept and fulfill certain obligations to society.

These obligations are mainly to be met by setting high standards of informativeness, truth, accuracy, objectivity and balance.

In accepting and applying these obligations, the media should be self regulating within the framework of law and established institution.

Journalists and media professionals should be accountable to the society as well as to employers and the market. An accountable media practitioner would not only be truthful, accurate, objective as well as balanced, he should also be corruption – free. Corruption would prevent journalists from performing their obligations to the society.

### **Deontological Theories of Ethics**

Deontological Theories of ethics is an approach to ethics which focuses on the rightness or wrongness of actions as opposed to rightness or wrongness of the consequences of the actions. The term Deontological Theories originated in a book *Five Types of Ethical Theory* published in 1930 authored by Charlie Dunbar Broad (1887 – 1971). The theory is usually referred to as a duty or obligation based theory. Protagonists of this theory are of several schools of thought. There are those of them that are called moral absolutists who believe whatever is wrong is wrong no matter the angle from which we look at it and regardless of the consequences of such an action. Immanuel Kant – the German philosopher for instance argued that it is always wrong to lie regardless of what necessitates the action. Deontologists believe that people are dutifully bound to act in a morally right manner. They must act out of respect for law and order and not just because of the consequences of their actions. (<http://www.en.wikipedia.org/>). Whatever the variances of Deontological Theories of ethics may be, one unified factor of them all is the fact that wrong doing should be abhorred. Corrupt practices are absolutely wrong and they should be totally resisted by media practitioners.

### **Research Method**

This study is limited to the perception of journalists practicing in the South-West geopolitical zone of Nigeria of the attitudes of both the media organizations as well as practicing journalists towards any form of corrupt practices in the media. The journalists surveyed are those working for both print and broadcast media.

The study was carried out using the survey method. The research instrument adopted for the study is a questionnaire containing 22 well-structured questions. The questionnaire was distributed by 12 trained research assistants in line with the research objectives and questions that were identified by the researcher.



The study population includes practicing journalists in the South West geopolitical zone of Nigeria. They were estimated to be well above 2,000 in number. Eighteen media houses that cut across five of the six states located in the region were covered. The media houses covered were both print and electronic media as well as the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN). *The Guardian, the Punch, the Nation and Tribune newspapers and Tell Magazine* represented the print media. NTA Akure, Ondo State Radio Vision Corporation, Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State, Osun State Broadcasting Service, Gateway Television, Murhi International Television, African Independent Television, Channel Television, NTA Channel 10 Lagos, Positive FM Akure, Lagos State Television and NTA Channel 5 Lagos represented the electronic media. Lagos State is usually referred to as the commercial nerve centre of the country and as expected it has the highest concentration of media outfits in Nigeria. That would explain why it dominated the survey in terms of number of media houses covered by the survey.

A sample size of 180 respondents was selected from 18 media organizations from across the zone. Respondents were randomly selected by the researcher. Questionnaires were appropriately administered on respondents. 48 questionnaires were administered on the journalists working in the print media outfits while 86 questionnaires were administered on the journalists working in 12 electronic media houses that is 66.7% of the media outfits. The remaining 6 questionnaires were administered on journalists working at the News Agency of Nigeria Lagos office. Though 180 questionnaires were distributed, 155 (86.1%) were retrieved.

This was so because journalists' schedules are usually tight and it was not easy to pin them down in order to complete the questionnaire. The topic of the research was not quite interesting to most journalists and they were reluctant to receive copies of the questionnaire.

### Presentation of Data

**Table 1: Respondents' Monthly Remuneration**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	below 10,000	16	10.3
	10,000-19,000	41	26.5
	20,000-29000	25	16.1
	30,000-39000	11	7.1
	40,000-49000	16	10.3
	50,000-59000	4	2.6
	60,000-69,000	9	5.8

	70,000 and above	12	7.7
	Total	134	86.5
Missing	System	21	13.5
Total		155	100.0

Monthly remuneration appears on Table 1. According to the data provided in the table 1 above, 10.3 percent of respondents earned below 10,000 Naira per month (that is, below \$64), 26.5 percent earned between 10,000 and 19,000 Naira (which is approximately \$64 and \$121) percent earned between 20,000 and 29,000 Naira per month, (that is, \$127 and \$185), 7.1 earned between 30,000 and 39,000 Naira (that is, \$191 and \$248). 10.3 percent of the respondents received between 40,000 and 49,000 Naira (\$255 and \$313) monthly, 7.7 percent of the respondents earned 70,000 Naira (that is, \$446) and above, 5.8 percent received between 60,000 and 69,000 Naira (that is, \$382 and \$439) while 2.6 percent of the total respondents collected between 50, 000 and 59,000 Naira, (that is, \$318 and \$376).

**Table 2 Respondents that agreed that they do accept Financial Gratification**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	strongly agree	30	19.4
	agree	87	56.1
	undecided	2	1.3
	strongly disagree	12	7.7
	disagree	18	11.6
	total	149	96.1
Missing	System	6	3.9
Total		155	100.0

Table 2. displays the data of respondents that do accept some form of gratifications. An overwhelming majority of those sampled, 117 respondents that is 75.5 percent indicated that they accepted financial gifts, 30 respondents i.e. 19.4 percent did not accept financial gifts, while 2 respondents that is 1.3 percent were undecided.

**Table 3: Respondents that agreed that financial gratification is right, if the news source is willing to offer it.**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	strongly agree	35	22.6
	agree	41	26.5
	undecided	7	4.5
	strongly disagree	42	27.1
	disagree	24	15.5
	total	149	96.1
	Missing System	6	3.9
Total		155	100.0

Table 3 shows the data of journalists that believed that there was nothing wrong in accepting financial gift or any form of gratification so far the source is willing to make an offer. Quite a number of those sampled (that is, 76 respondents or 49.1 percent) believed that it was right to accept financial gratification. However, 66 respondents or 42.6 percent of the study population either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the notion. 7 respondents representing 4.5 of the total sampled population were undecided.

**Table 4: Respondents that agreed that media corruption be condemned in its entirety**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	strongly agree	59	38.1
	agree	41	26.5
	undecided	30	19.4
	strongly disagree	9	5.8
	disagree	7	4.5
	Total	146	94.2
	Missing System	9	5.8
Total		155	100.0

Table 4 shows the data on journalists' reasoning regarding ethical consideration of corrupt practices. The majority of those sampled, that is, 64.6 percent the study population condemned corruption as being unethical. Only 10.3 thought otherwise and 19.4 were undecided.

**Table 5: Respondents' perception of whether or not their media organizations are indifferent to media corruption**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	strongly agree	17	11.0
	agree	45	29.0
	undecided	23	14.8
	strongly disagree	30	19.4
	disagree	31	20.0
	Total	146	94.2
Missing	System	9	5.8
Total		155	100.0

Table 5 provides statistical information on the attitude of media organizations towards the practice. 40 percent of the media organizations according to the respondents do not frown at the practice, while 39.4 percent of the media organizations appeared not to endorse the practice. 14.8 percent were undecided.

**Table 6: Respondents' opinion on whether or not erring journalists be sanctioned**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	strongly agree	29	18.7
	agree	37	23.9
	undecided	28	18.1
	strongly disagree	23	14.8
	disagree	20	12.9
	Total	137	88.4
Missing	System	18	11.6
Total		155	100.0

Table 6. above shows the attitude of journalists towards the adoption of punitive measures against those of them that err by engaging in corruption . 42.6 percent of those covered by the study believed that erring journalists should be punished, 27.7 disagreed with the notion of administering sanctions against erring journalists, while 18.1 percent were undecided on whether or not erring journalists should be sanctioned.

**Table7: Respondents that agreed media corruption could be linked to poor remuneration**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	strongly agree	37	23.9
	agree	58	37.4
	undecided	16	10.3
	strongly disagree	24	15.5
	disagree	14	9.0
	Total	149	96.1
	Missing System	6	3.9
Total		155	100.0

Table 7 links corruption in the media to poor remuneration of journalists. 61.3 percent of journalists covered by the study either strongly agreed or agreed with the notion that indeed the practice is rampant because of poor remuneration of the journalists, 24.5 percent disagreed, while 10.3 percent or 16 respondents were undecided.

**Table 8: Respondents that agreed that media corruption could be linked to irregular payment of salaries**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	strongly agree	7	4.5
	agree	62	40.0
	undecided	14	9.0
	strongly disagree	28	18.1
	disagree	38	24.5
	Total	149	96.1
	Missing System	6	3.9
Total		155	100.0

Table 8 shows that the sampled population admitted that irregular payment of journalists' monthly salaries could breed corruption. Quite a number of those sampled, 68 respondents, representing 44.5 percent either strongly agreed or agreed with the notion. 42.6 percent of respondents did not agree, while 9 percent of those covered were undecided.

## **Discussion**

### **Research Question 1: Do the media organizations in any way contribute to corruption in the media?**

Obviously media organizations in Nigeria can not be totally absorbed of blame regarding corruption in the media because some of them do not treat staff welfare with the seriousness it deserves. In a situation where staff are paid miserable salaries and for the fact that such miserable salaries do not come regularly, this sort of situation keeps journalists under constant financial pressure. Tables 1, 5, 7 and 8 provide information on this issue. Table 7 links corruption in the media to the poor remuneration of journalists. The majority of the sampled population, 61.3 percent agreed with the notion that indeed corrupt practices are rampant because of the poor remuneration of journalists, 24.5 percent disagreed though. Table 1 displays the monthly remuneration of journalists covered by the study. An overwhelming majority of journalists (73.3) earned below 50,000 Naira monthly (that is, below \$318). The lowest paid journalists constituting 10.3 percent of the respondents, earned below 10,000 Naira per month (that is, below \$64). According to table 5, quite a number of the respondents (that is, 40 percent) were of the opinion that their media organizations do not frown at various forms of corrupt practices in the media.

Table 8 created linkage between media corrupt practices and irregular payment of journalists' monthly salaries. Quite a number of those sampled, 68 respondents representing 44.5 percent believed that irregular payment of salaries aids corruption.

### **Research question 2: How do Nigerian journalists perceive corruption in the media?**

The Nigerian Union of Journalists code of Ethics No. 7 strongly condemns corruption.

So many journalists in Nigeria still disregard the code of ethics for practicing journalists. According to the findings of this study, most journalists said they abhorred corruption but at the same time they actively engage in it. Tables 2, 3 and 4 give an insight into how Nigerian journalists perceive corruption in the media.

Table 2 presents the data on respondents that engage in corrupt practices by accepting some form of gratification. An overwhelming majority of those sampled, 117 respondents that is, 75.5 percent, indicated that they accepted financial gifts.

Table 3 shows the data of journalists that believed that there was nothing wrong in accepting financial gifts or any form of gratification as long as the source is willing to make an offer. The majority of those sampled (that is, 76 respondents or 49.1 percent) believed that it was right to accept financial gratification. However, 66 respondents or 42.6 percent strongly disagreed with the notion. Even though the majority of those sampled

overwhelmingly believed that corruption was unethical (see table 4), they still get involved in one form of corrupt practices or the other.

### **Research question 3: What kinds of measure should be adopted in order to curb corruption in the Nigerian media?**

Most journalists sampled believed that there was the need to adopt punitive measures against journalists that err by violating certain aspects of the codes of conduct of the journalistic profession in Nigeria.

Table 6 presented above shows the attitude of journalists towards the adoption of punitive measures against those of them that err by engaging in corruption. 42.6 percent of those covered by the study believed that erring journalists should be sanctioned.

### **Conclusion**

Corruption is not only a major challenge in the Nigerian society, but also a serious challenge in the media (see tables 2 and 3). Going by the view expressed by several scholars, corruption is killing Nigeria. James et al (1999:453) quoted an editorial of a popular British magazine *The Economist* which concluded that “the parasite... has almost eaten the host”. Serious corruption does exist not only within the larger society as observed by (Dike (1999), Nwuneli (1990) and Nwosu (1990)) but also in the Nigerian media.

Most of the media practitioners covered by this study believed that media organizations did not frown at corrupt practices perpetrated by the journalists working for them. Quite a number of the people sampled (that is, 40 percent of the population) agreed that the media organizations they worked for are indifferent to corruption in the media. These organizations are culpable because the welfare of their employees as regards staff remuneration as well as other welfare packages is not properly taken care of. Even though there is no valid excuse for any corrupt practice, the inability of the media outfits to cater for the welfare of their staff aggravates corruption. Financial gratification is a common phenomenon that is wide-spread amongst journalists and some of the media houses are not just doing enough to curb the practice. This calls for the integrity of both the media practitioners as well as the media outfits to questioning. The media as a major tool for fighting against the menace of corruption can not afford to swim in the ocean of corruption.

As suggested by Adeyemi and Okorie (2009),

*“There is need for total war against any form of corrupt practices at all fronts if the country must survive. Journalistic profession is supposed to be at the vanguard of the struggle against corruption. For that to happen, the profession must rid itself of such practices. Journalism*

*organizations must vigorously pursue self cleansing agenda because a corrupt media can not fight a corrupt society”.*

Efforts by some media outfits towards maintaining a corruption free journalistic profession should be encouraged and emulated. Some Nigerian media organizations are known to be consistently publishing notices in their papers against any form of gift taking by their journalists. Ombudsman system set up by the Newspaper Proprietors’ Association of Nigeria (NPAN) is another good example. More still needs to be done in this and other directions so as to intensify the battle against corruption in Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

❖ Media organizations should take proper care of the welfare of their staff. They should be ready to offer proper transportation, feeding and accommodation allowances to their staff members whenever they are sent on assignments. The staff salaries must be made robust enough to make them comfortable. Meager salaries can only succeed in producing frustrated workers who will be ready to do just anything to survive.

❖ Since media practitioners believe that the culture of corruption in the media is unethical, journalism organizations should be encouraged to embark on massive campaigns against any form of corrupt practice in the media.

❖ Mechanisms put in place by the Ombudsman system, a brain-child of the Newspaper Proprietors’ Association of Nigeria (NPAN), should be strengthened. The system must be properly monitored to ensure compliance by all the members of the Association.

❖ Proper mechanisms for sanctioning erring journalists should be put in place and when ever a concrete case is established against any journalist, such a case must be widely publicized and it must be pursued to a logical conclusion.

❖ The Nigerian Union of Journalists should rid the profession of charlatans. The Union should work with Anti Corruption Agencies operating in the country to handle both internal and external corruption cases.

### **Limitations of the study include the following:**

The data used in the analysis were generated from the South-West geo-political zone the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Though the region has the highest concentration of media outfits in Nigeria, the views expressed may not totally represent the view of journalists from the other five geo-political zones.

It was not easy to get the cooperation of journalists in completing the questionnaire.



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