

## ASSESSMENT OF THE ADHERENCE TO JOURNALISM CODE OF ETHICS BY JOURNALISTS IN BAYELSA STATE

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### Abstract

*Journalism like other profession has ethical codes that guide its activities. The increasing rate at which journalists neglect these ethical guidelines calls for concern. Hence, this study examined the adherence to journalism code of ethics by journalists in Bayelsa State. The study was anchored on absolutist and social responsibility theories. Survey research design was adopted. The population comprised of the 320 registered journalists in Bayelsa State and the census principle was adopted. Questionnaire was used as the instrument of data collection. Findings of the study revealed that 45% of respondents have high level of knowledge on the code of ethics of journalism practice in Bayelsa State. It was also revealed that the degree to which journalists in Bayelsa State adhere to the code of ethics of journalism practice is low. The researchers therefore conclude that given the fact that just 45% of journalists have good knowledge of some journalistic ethical code, the issue of non adherence will keep being a problem therefore it was recommended that there is the need to constantly awaken the consciousness of journalists to these ethical codes and encourage them to adhere strictly to it. Considering the fact that the rate of adherence to journalistic ethical code by journalists in Bayelsa State is low journalists need to be encouraged to adhere to the journalistic codes so as to maintain the credibility of the profession before the general public.*

**Keywords:** Journalism, journalists, ethical codes, ethics, Bayelsa.

### Introduction

Like every other discipline, there are “dos” and “don’ts” in journalism practice, that is, codes of conduct that guide the practitioners of the discipline. Here, emphasis is given more on what should be avoided rather than what should be done. Ethics are rules or principles of behaviour that are purported to guide actions (Marcel, 2009). Going by Marcel, things that violate the guiding principles are unethical and hence, should be avoided entirely.

Challenges come mainly when issues revolve around individuals or group and, at that point, the media, in its entirety, is overwhelmingly castigated over the perceived offence or professional misconduct of few practitioners (Alete, 2013).

According to Tsegysu and Asemah (2014), one of the recurrent problems that have continued to plague media practice the world over is the observance of professional ethics by

journalists. Research findings attest to the fact that most media practitioners are found of breaching the canons of the profession. Even though this problem vary from one society to the other, as moral values and media regulations differ from one social setting to another, evidence abound that most journalists are not living up to the ideals of the profession. Alemoh (2011, p. 305) asserts that "in Nigeria today, as it is elsewhere in the world, a violation of ethics of journalism has almost become the rule, rather than the exception."

Sambe (2009, p. 60) equally confirms that "the most disturbing phenomenon in the practice of journalism in Nigeria today is non-observance of ethical practice by journalists." The consequences of this have led to dwindling performance and credibility crises among media organisations in Nigeria. Lamenting on this situation, Utor (2009, p. 129) notes that "Nigerian mass media organisations have lost to a great extent; a large readership, listenership, as well as, viewership, because so many Nigerians are sick and tired of its lack of credibility."

Also, the condemnation of journalists by those not favoured by news reports is always total. Few people are objective in their assessment of journalists' performance when they are directly involved in a report. They are stingy with praises when due but generous with condemnation (Sunday & Tommy, 2011; Okwurumara, 2013). However, the journalism profession occasionally experiences credibility problem, which seems to hinge on lack of adherence to its ethical demands by practitioners. This is undesirable, though, a good relationship between the media and its audience is an imperative if society must grow.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Just like every other profession, journalism has guiding principles and rules governing the profession to ensure journalists do not cross the line. It is therefore, expected of journalists to observe these ethical codes cum moral obligations as bestowed on it by society.

Unfortunately, media practitioners who are expected to be an example of integrity, honesty and truthfulness to the society seem to be fast losing their credibility among right thinking members of the public because of cases of unethical behaviour. Over the years, there have been reported cases of unethical and professional misconduct against media practitioners in Nigeria. Most of the unethical problems are associated with sensationalism, character assassination, bribery, corruption, sycophancy, conflict of interest, and lots of other ethical issues (Asemah, 2011).

Despite the ethical codes it is still disturbing that media practitioners' attitude in the conduct of their activities is problematic hence given rise to numerous regulatory bodies in order to checkmate the excesses of media practitioners. For example, the mass communication policy which was adopted in 1990 created two regulatory bodies to monitor the print media and the electronic media. These are the Nigerian Press Council (NPC) and the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC). Subsequently, a more comprehensive code of ethics for journalists was formulated in 1998 by the Nigeria Press Organisation (NPO), comprising the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), Newspapers Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN), Nigeria Guild of Editors (NGE) and the Nigeria Press Council (NPC) (Egbon, 2006, p. 10, as cited in Tsegysu & Asemah, 2014). Despite the emergence of professional code of ethics, media practitioners seem to continue flouting these professional codes with impunity.

It is based on this, that the study sought to examine the adherence to Journalism Code of Ethics by Journalists in Bayelsa State.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions were raised to guide the study

1. What is the level of knowledge of journalists in Bayelsa State on the code of ethics of journalism practice?
2. What is the degree to which journalists in Bayelsa State adhere to the code of ethics of journalism practice?
3. What are the factors that influence media practitioners in Bayelsa State to engage in unethical practices?

### **Ethics**

Ethics is based on the Greek word "ethos" meaning character or what a person is or does in order to have a good character; it deals with choosing among the good or bad opinions that individuals face (Tsegysu & Asemah, 2014). It may be seen as being concerned with that which holds society or a profession together or provides stability and security to social or professional cohesion (Kayode, 2011). Merrill (1982, as cited in Sunday & Tommy, 2011, p. 67) defines ethics as "a branch of philosophy which aids in determining what is right." This perhaps explains why Asemah (2011) avers that "ethics may be described as the systematic study of the principles and methods for distinguishing right from wrong and good from bad." Dominick (1996, as cited in Tsegysu and Asemah (2014) see ethics as rules of conduct, principles of morality that point us towards the right or best way to act in a situation. Hence, media ethics is a set of principles of conduct governing media profession. Media ethics regulate the conduct of media professionals and as such, provide standards for judging their actions (Okwurumara, 2013). To Ogunsiji (as cited in Agbanu, 2011, p. 305), ethics is not laws in application but is binding on all members of the profession once it has been officially adopted. A member may be disciplined or reprimanded for contravening the ethics of his profession. He may also be blacklisted or expelled from the profession. Ethics controls those individual behaviour not controlled by law, since law cannot take care of every aspect of human behaviour. Ethics serves as a guide to human conduct in a desirable way. Ethical principles serve as ideals which allow the individual to act according to the dictates of his conscience and judgment (Tsegysu & Asemah, 2014).

### **Journalism Code of Ethics**

Journalism like any other profession has ethical codes that guide them in their activities. This code of ethics consists of moral principles, guidelines, and rules that guide the behaviour of journalists in course of their practice as well as their relationship with the public (Pepple & Acholonu, 2018). Journalism code of ethics therefore is the set of moral principles guiding the journalism profession. According to the Nigerian Press Council [NPC] as cited in Pepple and Acholonu (2018), have this to say on some of the journalism ethical codes, according to them editorial independence entails that decision concerning the content of news and how it should be the responsibility of a professional journalist. Regarding accuracy and fairness

they noted that the public has a right to know factual, accurate, balanced, and fair reporting is the ultimate objective of good journalism and the basis of earning public trust and confidence.

Commenting on the journalism ethical code Alete (2013) aver that a journalist should not identify, either by name or picture or interview children under the age of 16 who are involved in cases concerning sexual offences, crimes and rituals or witchcraft either as victims, witnesses, or defendants as it will cause great damage as they grow old. A journalist should strive to employ open and honest means in the gathering of information. A journalist should strive to enhance national unity and public good. A journalist should promote universal principles of human rights, democracy, justice, equity, peace, and international understanding as his social responsibility. As matter of professionalism a journalist should not copy, whole or in part, other peoples work without attribution and/or consent. And in a situation where a journalist reproduces a work, in print, broadcast, art work or design, proper acknowledgment should be accorded the author. A journalist should strive at all times to enhance press freedom and responsibility.

According to Ukozor (2011), journalist should refrain from making pejorative reference to a person's ethnic group, religion, sex or to any physical or mental illness or handicap to suggest discrimination. Regarding violence, they maintained that a journalist should not present or report acts of violence, armed robberies, terrorist activities or vulgar display of wealth in a manner that glorifies such acts in the eyes of the public.

Akakwandu (2013) observed that as part of the ethical code journalists should respect the privacy of individuals and their families unless it affects public interest. In other words, information on the life of an individual or his family should only be published if it impinges on public interest. Also, in respect to privilege/non-disclosure he equally maintained that journalists should observe the universally accepted principle of confidentiality and should not disclose the source of information obtained in confidence.

Regarding decency as an ethical code of journalism Onyebuchi, Obayi and Anoruo (2018, p.135) noted that “a journalist should dress and comport himself in a manner that conforms to public taste”. A journalist should neither solicit not accept bribe, gratification, or patronage to suppress or publish information (Onyebuchi, Obayi & Anoruo, 2018).

### **Empirical Review**

Alete, (2013) conducted a study on ethical challenges in journalism practice and findings revealed that there are discrepancies in the internal and external factors affecting journalism practice in Nigeria. It also found that managerial incompetence poses a great challenge not just to the performance of journalists based on ethical principles but also on the image of the journalism profession. Alete's study is majorly based on journalists working in the electronic media unlike this current study that the population spanned across both electronic and print media journalists. Pepple and Acholonu (2018) did a study in the area of ethics and it was revealed that despite the importance of ethics to journalism practice, journalists' still indulge in some unethical practices. The study also revealed that journalists most times go against the ethics of the profession due to sycophancy, security reasons, desperation, greed, ethical dilemmas, and ignorance of the code of ethics. The study done by Pepple and Acholonu focuses on how ethics can be a guide to sound journalism practice and it was carried out in Rivers State unlike this present study that focuses on knowledge level of journalists on ethical codes and how that knowledge can translate to good ethical practice.

Oberiri (2016) carried out a study on media ethics using a qualitative approach and it was found that among other things that Afghanistanism is the practice of concentrating on problems in distant parts of the world while ignoring controversial local issues, character assassination is damaging the reputation of an individual, while junk journalism otherwise known as sensationalism is the tendency to publish information that causes any interest or emotional reaction. There is a methodology difference between this study and the current study.

Tsegyu and Asemah (2014) did a similar study on ethical issues in journalism and findings revealed that media practitioners were involved in several unethical practices and hardly adhere to some journalistic codes that have resulted in the dwindling standard of the noble profession in the public domain and the loss of credibility on the activities of media practitioners in the country. The study of Tsegyu and Asemah was conducted way back in 2014 and in the northern part of Nigeria hence this current study is being undertaking to confirm if similar ethical issues is still obtainable in the South-south.

Anyanwu (2019) carried out a study on ethical area in journalism, in his findings it was revealed that ethics and truth in journalism have assumed global concern as scholars recognize that their basic constituents of objectivity, accuracy, fairness and balance have merely assumed mythical qualities as journalists battle to assign credibility to their news. Anyanwu's study is different from the current study in the area of methodology and it focuses on how journalists treat objectivity, accuracy, fairness and balance as a result of news commercialization.

Tong (2015) did a research work on journalism ethics using the in-depth interview method it was revealed that although objectivity is central to journalistic ethos, the participants see it as ethical to organize reports within a framework arising from their personal judgments of news events. It was also revealed that journalists undermine ethical standard set in their profession. This study has methodological difference and the study is focuses on how journalists act regarding objectivity in news.

Nasidi, (2016) carried out a study on ethical issues in Nigeria, using a critical discourse analysis on Leadership newspapers. It was revealed that Nigerian journalist do not totally obey the ethics of the profession and the issues have however been a concern based on the ethics meant to be followed by journalists in Nigeria. It was also revealed that ethnicity and religion play a vital role in Nigerian press. As the research revealed, Nigerian journalists violate journalism ethics, especially on editorial independence because of the ownership pattern. So also, Nigerian journalist engaged in discrimination violation, because of the complex nature of the country in terms of religion and multi- ethnicity. This study methodological approach differs from that of Nasidi, (2016) study.

Abubaka (2019) did a study on the relationship between news media and violent extremism to explore the ethical issues emanating from it. Findings from the study revealed that journalists face dilemmas in content selection, source relationship, framing stories, and dealing with victims; and that terror reporting impacts on their personal safety and professional sustainability. And that element of newsworthiness push the media toward excessive reporting of extremism but journalism ethics plays restraining roles. The difference of this study lies in the methodological approach as Abukar made use of mixed method research design in his study.

Akowe, (2017) carried out a study in the area of ethics. Findings revealed that while attaining absolute objectivity in the media may be difficult, it is however achievable only if



the reporters shy away from prejudices, pre-conceptions, feelings and ambitions. He must be able to keep his biases in check. The researcher also revealed that even though absolute objectivity may not be possible, proper adherence to ethics and the gatekeeping functions of the media can go a long way to actualize the objective principle of journalism profession. The study of Akowe adopted mixed method research design meanwhile this current study adopted the survey method research design hence the difference between the two studies is in the methodology.

Ekeanyanwu and Obianigwe (2012) conducted a study on unethical practices among journalists, it was revealed that brown envelop syndrome has remained a controversial issue in any debate centred on the Nigerian press, media professionalism and media ethics. And it is one of the major setbacks of media growth in Nigeria and has continued to plague the Nigerian media industry over the years. This study focuses on one of the ethical problems of journalism while this current study assessing adherence to journalism ethical codes.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study was anchored on absolutist and social responsibility theories. The absolutist theory argues that there are moral universal values which should guide all human beings no matter the place, time, or age. It is also based on the fact that a good action should be right everywhere in the world, at all times and in all circumstances (Ukozor, 2015). It is the view of Merrill (1974) that the ethical absolutist believes that there is one universal and eternal code that basically applies to everyone in all ages, that changing opinions, traditions and conditions make no significant differences in this absolute moral code.

Fab-Ukozor (2015, p. 15) posits that “in the field of journalism, the professional who believes in this theory accepts in principle that there are absolute and universal journalistic ethics which should guide the practicing journalist everywhere in the world and which should equally form the basis for the articulation of a universal and eternal code in journalism.” The ethical moral universal codes are truthfulness, fair play, accuracy, balance, and objectivity.

A good practice of journalism demands high compliance with ethical dictates of the profession. Thus, this paper is hinged on the ethics of journalism profession.

In order to give the study a focus in the light of related concepts and principles, the study is based on a second framework of the social responsibility Theory. This theory, according to Tsegnyu and Asemah (2014, p. 11), has its beginnings from the Hutchins Commission of 1947 and has its basic postulation that freedom carries a concomitant obligation.

The press is responsible to the society by carrying out certain essential functions of mass communication. While the theory emphasizes the need for independent press that scrutinizes other social institutions and provides objective, accurate news reports (Pepple & Achulonu, 2018). The most innovative feature of Social Responsibility Theory was the call for media to be responsible for fostering productive and creative great communities (Baran & Davies as cited in Tsegnyu & Asemah, 2014, p. 11). Social Responsibility Theory asserts that media must remain free of government control, but in exchange media must serve the public (Baran, 2004, p. 477). According to Owolabi (2007, as cited in Pepple & Achulonu, 2018) there must be development of professionalism as a means of achieving higher standards of performance while the media maintain self-regulations.

These theories are relevant to this study because if the media is to be responsible to the society, it must adhere to the ethical codes of the profession as the absolutist theory recommends. On the other hand, journalists need be cautious and responsible while carrying out their function as the social responsibility theory stipulates. Therefore, absolutist theory helps us to understand why journalists need to adhere to the universal ethical codes while the social responsibility theory makes it clear that journalists need to be socially responsible all for the good of the profession and the society at large.

### **Methodology**

The researchers adopted the survey research design. This method was considered appropriate because it allow for the study of people's opinions and perceptions on a given issue of public interest (Anyanwu, Okoro, Iheanacho & Obi, 2017). The population of study comprised of 320 registered and practising journalists in Bayelsa State (NUJ Bayelsa fact sheet, 2019). As a result of the manageable size of the population, the census principle was adopted. Damico (2016) observes that when a population is small and well defined, the entire population is often studied. Therefore, the sample size for this study is 320. Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection.

### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

This section deals with presentation and analysis of data. Out of the 320 copies of questionnaire distributed, 303 (95%) was valid for analysis while 17(5%) was voided. The simple percentage method of data analysis was used to analyse the data.

#### **What is the level of knowledge of journalists in Bayelsa State on the code of ethics of journalism practice?**

**Table 1: Respondents response on journalism code of ethics are guide that direct all who engage in journalism to act responsibly as they carry out their duty**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	90	30%
Agree	120	40%
Disagree	55	18%
Strongly disagree	38	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field survey, 2019*

Analysis of data from table 1 revealed that at mean score of 2.50 which is above the benchmark score of 2.0 the respondents agreed that journalism code of ethics are guide that direct all who engage in journalism to act responsibly as they carry out their duty. This implies that journalists in Bayelsa have knowledge of the journalism ethical code.

**Table 2: Response of respondents on ascertaining the level of knowledge of journalists in Bayelsa State on the code of ethics of journalism practice**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	79	26%
High	150	49%
Moderate	51	17%
Low	23	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field survey, 2019*

Analysis of data presented in table 2 shows that 49% of respondents have high level of knowledge on the code of ethics of journalism practice in Bayelsa State. This implies that journalists in Bayelsa State have high knowledge concerning the code of ethics of journalism practice.

**What is the degree to which journalists in Bayelsa State adhere to the code of ethics of journalism practice?**

**Table 3: Response of respondents on do journalists in Bayelsa State adhere to the ethical code of reward/gratification and privacy**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	80	26%
No	160	53%
Can't say	65	21%
<b>Total</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field survey, 2019*

Analysis of data from table 3 shows that 53% of the respondents confirmed that journalists in Bayelsa State do not adhere to the ethical code of reward/gratification and privacy. This implies that journalists in Bayelsa state hardly adhere to the ethical code of reward/gratification and privacy.

**Table 4: Response of respondents on do journalists in Bayelsa State adhere to the ethical code of privilege/non-disclosure and editorial independence**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	175	58%
No	90	30%
Can't say	38	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field survey, 2019*

Analysis of data from table 4 shows that 58% of the respondents indicated that journalists in



Bayelsa State adhere to the ethical code of privilege/non-disclosure and editorial independence. This means that journalists in Bayelsa state hardly adhere to the ethical code of privilege/non-disclosure and editorial independence.

**Table 5: Response of respondents on do journalists in Bayelsa State adhere to the ethical code of accuracy/fairness; press freedom and responsibility**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	105	34%
No	160	53%
Can't say	38	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field survey, 2019*

Analysis of data from table 5 shows that 53% of the respondents confirmed that journalists in Bayelsa State do not adhere to the ethical code of accuracy/fairness; press freedom and responsibility. By implication journalists in Bayelsa state do not adhere to the ethical code of accuracy/fairness; press freedom and responsibility.

**Table 6: Response of respondents on do journalists in Bayelsa State adhere to the ethical code of discrimination and public interest**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	87	29%
No	170	56%
Can't say	46	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field survey, 2019*

Analysis of data from table 6 shows that 56% of the respondents confirmed that journalists in Bayelsa State do not adhere to the ethical code of discrimination and public interest. This means that journalists in Bayelsa state rarely adhere to the ethical code of discrimination and public interest.

**What are the factors that influence media practitioners in Bayelsa State to engage in unethical practices?**

**Table 7: Response of respondents on the factors that influence media practitioners in Bayelsa State to engage in unethical practices**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Poor remuneration	73	24%
Pressure from colleagues	30	10%
Personal interest	32	11%
Delay payment of salary	62	20%
All of the above	106	35%
<b>Total</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field survey, 2019*

Analysis of data from the above table 3 shows that 35% of respondents confirmed that poor remuneration, pressure from colleagues, personal interest, nonpayment and delay in payment of salaries are some of the factors influencing media practitioners in Bayelsa State to engage in unethical practices. This means that among other factors influencing media practitioners in Bayelsa State to engage in unethical practices, poor remuneration, pressure from colleagues, personal interest, delay and nonpayment of salary are the major challenging factors.

**Discussion of Findings**

**The level of knowledge of journalists in Bayelsa State on the code of ethics of journalism practice**

Analysis of findings revealed that at an average of 45% of respondents has high level of knowledge on the code of ethics of journalism practice in Bayelsa State. From the analysis it is quite revealing that the 45% of journalists have a good knowledge of some of the ethical precepts guiding their profession. However the case, it is important to note also that the percentage of journalists who have high knowledge on some of these ethical codes is worrisome. The problem is that in a case like this, journalists who lack knowledge of these ethical codes are bound to act contrary to the laid down principles of the profession. This point of view is supported by Pepple and Acholonu (2018) who noted that ignorance of the code of ethics by journalists can lead to actions totally against the prescribed guidelines. Corroborating this also, Tsegysu and Asemah (2014) maintained that most media practitioners are found of breaching the canons of the profession. Even though this problem varies from one society to the other, as moral values and media regulations differ from one social setting to another and in a situation like this the image of the profession suffers greatly. Journalists who lack adequate knowledge of the ethical code of journalism are certainly bound to act in a way contrary to the theoretical principles of social responsibility and absolutist theories which this work was anchored.

**The degree to which journalists in Bayelsa State adhere to the applicable code of**

### **ethics of journalism practice**

Analysis of findings revealed that among the journalistic ethical codes used in this study only privilege/non-disclosure and editorial independence that journalist in Bayelsa State adhere to strictly among other ethical codes like privacy, accuracy/fairness, reward and gratification, public interest, press freedom and responsibility. From this finding it is clear that the degree of adherence to some of the journalistic ethical codes by journalists in Bayelsa State is low. This finding is in line with Tsegysu and Asemah (2014) findings where they asserted that media practitioners were involved in several unethical practices and hardly adhere to some journalistic code that has resulted in loss of credibility on the activities of media practitioners in the public domain. By implication, it means that over the years the issue of non-adherence to the journalistic ethical code by journalists is still very disturbing. In view of this finding, Oberiri (2016) noted in a finding that the non-adherence to the ethical precepts has led to journalists engaging in some unethical practices such as Afghanistanism, character assassination, junk journalism otherwise known as sensationalism among others. From the theoretical perspective, a journalist as matter of duty is expected to act in a way that is universally accepted as the absolutist theory recommends. Also, in carrying out his responsibility he should bear in mind the importance of public interest so as to be socially responsible.

### **The factors that influence media practitioners in Bayelsa State to engage in unethical practices**

Analysis of findings revealed that several factors such as poor remuneration, pressure from colleagues, personal interest, nonpayment and delay in payment of salaries are some of the factors influencing media practitioners in Bayelsa State to engage in unethical practices as confirmed by 35% of respondents studied. This means that some of these challenges identified contribute greatly in compelling journalists to succumb to unacceptable practices in the profession. Supporting this finding Alete (2013) in a finding observed that some of these ethical challenges in journalism practice are as a result of discrepancies in the internal and external factors affecting journalism practice in Nigeria. He went further in noting that managerial incompetence poses a great challenge not just to the performance of journalists based on ethical principles but also on the image of the journalism profession. In essence, managerial problem such as delay in payment of salaries and/or poor remuneration to journalists have the propensity to influence journalists in indulging in unethical practices as Ekeanyanwu and Obianigwe (2012) noted that, delay in payment of salaries and/or poor remuneration will lead to brown envelop syndrome that has continued to plague the Nigerian media industry over the years. Apart from that, journalists can also be pressurized by colleagues to see nothing wrong in some of the unacceptable practices. Again, going by the sacred principle of universal rightness of the absolutist theory, journalists are bound by their profession to do what is always right no matter what and as the theory recommends, personal interest should be sacrificed for public interest.

### **Conclusion**

Like every other profession, journalism has its ethical codes guiding the profession. These ethical codes are set in order to guide the professionals as they carry out their duty. However, over the years, some of these ethical codes that are supposed to guide practitioners are being

disregarded. Based on the findings of this study, the level of adherence by journalists in Bayelsa State is low and in a situation as this, a lot of unethical practices are bound to happen and when such practices take place the profession will be at the receiving end. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that if this non-adherence to ethical precepts continues unabated then the image of journalism profession will be affected negatively and then the public will lose their trust on the profession.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings the recommendations are hereby made

1. Given the fact that just 45% of journalists have good knowledge of some journalistic ethical code, the issue of non-adherence will continue to be a problem. Therefore, there is need to constantly awaken their consciousness to these ethical codes and encourage them to adhere strictly to it through seminars and workshop on Media ethics.
2. Considering the fact that the rate of adherence to journalistic ethical code by journalists in Bayelsa is low journalists need to be encouraged to adhere to the journalistic codes so as to maintain the credibility of the profession before the general public.
3. A good salary package should be designed for journalists in Bayelsa State. There welfare package should be looked into and journalists should be encouraged to place public interest above personal interest.

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