

Effects of Non-Professionalism in Nigeria Journalism

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Abstract

For a very long time, Nigerian scholars in various fields of endeavours, professionals and practitioners have argued on the trade journalism. This issue bothers on the fact that every dicks and harry dabbles into this profession either to make ends meet, practice it for political ambition or easily pick it up at the time of “employment recession”. Journalism as a profession especially in Nigeria has been hijacked by quacks or subtly put, people from other professional careers such as Philosophy, English, Psychology and obnoxiously from natural sciences at the detriment of this noble profession. It is in view of this that this research seeks to elucidate the implications and activities of non-professionalism in news reportage. The Nigerian press today is being accused of conducting or engaging in non-professional activities and this has been the bane of journalism in Nigeria. At the inception of the return of power to democratic rule, professionals in all fields stormed Abuja (FCT) to demand for special salary scale but when it was the turn of journalists the then Minister of Information Jerry Gana declared loud and clear that Nigeria journalists were not professionals. Subsequent attempts to redeem the image of Nigerian journalists have hit the rock. In light of this, it has been the concern of academia in the field of mass communication as well as the professionals in the field of journalism to finding a lasting solution to this lingering issue. So, relevant suggestions are needed to help journalists develop a sense of professionalism. This is a situation set to be resolved in this work. The paper recommends among other things that the regulatory bodies; (NUJ), (NGE), (NPAN) and other regulatory bodies should enforce the code of ethical conduct and get rid of quacks in the profession. It pushes further that proper marriage between formal education and years of experience along necessary training should form basis for entrance into the profession.

Keywords: Effect; Non-professionalism; Journalism; Professionalism

Introduction

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

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

The former Abuja Bureau Chief of the *Tide Newspaper*, Alloys Nweke, during the January 2008 Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) Submit in Port-Harcourt frowned at the numerous untrained people bestriding the streets with pen and paper claiming to be journalists. Nweke speech revealed that the number of fake journalists in Nigeria

society is higher than the real practitioners, this is really painful and embarrassing because it depicts journalist as beggars and irresponsible whereas, true Nigerian journalists have remained in the forefront of democratic change and social re-ordering through its doggedness and abrasive posture.

Akinfeleye, 1990 quoted an American critic, Dean Rosco Pound who once wrote that every profession is governed by certain rules, and the absence of such rules makes it a vocation [1]. For a very long time Nigerian scholars, professionals and practitioners have argued as to whether journalism is a profession or not in Nigeria. Some scholars and practitioners of journalism in Nigeria say journalism is a trade, others say it is a craft or an occupation while the rest simply say it is a vocation. According to Akinfeleye [1] the confusing state of affairs as whether journalism is a profession or not in Nigeria has been partially brought about by the colonial rulers, particularly Britain where until recently journalism was regarded as “an unqualified profession” [1].

Nigeria Perspective

Every profession is being governed by its ethics and code of conduct. The early and the nationalist press were not governed by any formal ethics and code of conduct. For example, editorial policies didn't exist, from the four paged bilingual *Iwe Iroyin* to many paged *Daily Times*. On ethical and code of conduct in early Nigeria journalism

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practice, Udoakah & Nnadi [2] position that there was no regulation in the profession and anything went through. This accounts for one of the reasons why up till today journalism in Nigeria is still not being seen as a profession since it is all-comers affair.

Responsible regulation came with the ethical code of the Nigeria Union of Journalists in 1962. This was after the press have established themselves as trade unionists on March 15, 1955. It started with 12-point functions and 12-point code for members. Following this on May 21, 1961, the Nigerian Guild of Editors was inaugurated. Both NUJ and NGE in 1962 proclaimed 16-point code of ethics for journalism practice in Nigeria with all forming organizations in January 15, 1979 and signed the ethics and code of conduct which was in operation before a modification in 1998. The 1998 adopted code of ethics emphasizes: the publication of truth, the question of corruption, the question of free access to news, the question of confidentiality, the publication of plagiarism and errors of facts. Colonial rulers in Nigeria and their succeeding "Nigerian-Europeans" regarded journalism education as an unnecessary undertaking. This view partly accounts for the reason why for many years all Nigerian universities did not offer any formal journalism training. Until recent times, Nigerian journalists were being viewed as a bunch of dropouts who had been rejected by other professions. This uncomplimentary view of journalism and journalists in Nigeria has made the profession, trade, craft, or vocation, very unprestigious.

It has now become a truism that low literacy rate contributes to a low degree of journalism training and also to a low standard of journalistic performance. Journalism profession has suffered serious setbacks in its developmental processes in Nigeria because; Nigeria nation has not given priority to degree programmes in journalism. Instead graduates from other disciplines such as Political science, Economics, Sociology, English etc are being given on-the-job training in journalism and these non-professionals do cause serious damage to this noble profession. Just of recent, the immediate ex-NUJ President, Akwu in Port Harcourt, after a deliberation on the profession submitted that journalists should ensure strict adherence to the ethics of the profession in order to change the perception of the world about them. Making comment on the issue of non-professionalism in Nigerian journalism, [3] frowned at the inability of the very many press barons in Nigeria to make deliberate efforts to transform journalism in the country to an enviable profession that can compete favourably in its organizational structure, effectiveness, thoroughness and virility as in other professions like Legal, Medical, Engineering and Banking professions. In view of all these, this research seminar will critically examine some issues and aim at providing solutions to them.

Theoretical Frame Work

Professionalism is attained when a profession has functional, clearly defined or prescribed educational standards, licensing and enforcement of performance of standard by the profession itself. In view of the practice of non-professionalism in Nigeria the researcher tends to use gatekeeping theory to make the research work arrive at a logical conclusion. Kurt Lewin originated this theory in 1947 while Westley-Maclean model visualized the concept of the gatekeeper in the mass communication process. McQuail [4] says the core idea of the theory is that "the news media indicate to the public what the main issues of the day are and this is reflected in what the public perceives as the main issues." The research paper broadly explores gatekeeping process in relation to the regulatory bodies of journalism on what they consider as the criteria for those practicing journalism. The regulatory

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

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

Research Questions

The following research questions are formulated to guide the study.

Q1 Who is a professional journalist?

Q2 Does government influence in any way encourage non-professionalism?

Q3 How does non-professionalism affect the practice of journalism in Nigeria?

Objective of the Study

1 To know who is a professional journalist

2 To know if government influence in any way encourage non-professionalism

3 To determine how non-professionalism affect the practice of journalism in Nigeria

Literature Review

This chapter on literature review will attempt to review the available literature on the practice of professionalism in journalism. It reviews the word profession, journalism as a profession and the attributes that make a journalist qualify as professional vis-à-vis his approved functions in the society. When does an occupation become a profession? Alfred E. Opubor as quoted in Akinfeleye says an occupation must possess the following criteria:

1. Systematic body of theory
2. Professional authority
3. Community sanction
4. Ethical codes
5. Professional culture.

Opubor explains that while some insist that people who practice an occupation themselves should be the determinant of when they have become professionals. Others argue that, to become a professional in any field, a person must undergo a certain minimum period of training or introduction during which the skills and values of the profession are imparted in him. Professionalism is associated with competence, training, relevant education body of knowledge, standards of evolution and improvement.

What is a Profession?

From historical foundation a profession means the act of professing. According to Webster's New Word Dictionary, a profession is ...

“a vacation or occupation that requires advanced education and training and involves intellectual skills”.

Professionalism

This is the high standard which is expected of a person who is well trained in a profession/job.

Who is a Professional?

One of the American reputable social scientists, William J. Goode states that professionals constitute a homogeneous community whose members share values, identity, definition of roles and interest. He added that members of a profession are bound by sense of identity and they share common values.

According to [5], sociologists hold that, in order for a job to qualify as a profession; it must possess the following attributes. First, it must emphasize a unique and essential service. Second, it must perform a unique and essential service. Third, it must have a long period of specialized training to acquire a systematic body of knowledge, based on research. Fourth, it must be given a broad personal responsibility for their judgments and actions. Sixth, it must place greater emphasis on service than on private economic gain. Seventh, it must develop a comprehensive, self-governing organization. Eight, it must have a code of ethics which has been clarified and interpreted by concrete cases.

Needless to say, no single profession or occupation passes all these tests. A profession, then, is nothing but an ideal type in the sense which does not describe any actual profession, but which is fruitful in the analysis and investigation of actual professions. What we have in reality therefore is a continuum, with zero professionalism at one end, maximum professionalism at the other. Various professions may be plotted at various points along this continuum. It may well be that, on such a continuum, journalism is further from maximum professionalism like law or medicine or even closer to zero professionalism than in law or medicine.

Astor [6] expresses the thought of the United States of America's Bureau of Labour Statistics which summarizes the qualifications of professions thus, prescribes educational standards, licensing and enforcement of performance of standard by the profession itself. By and large, research conducted by Akinfeleye explains the features of professional as follows.

Solidarity: A member of a profession believes closely in solidarity with other members and thinks that, it is a good thing to present a solid front to those outside the profession. How far can we say this about the Nigerian journalists? It is a common feature of journalists to scoff their colleagues when in ataxia (topsy-turvy).

Trust: A member of a profession assumes that he can be trusted since he professes to have certain expertise that is not common. To what extent can a Nigerian journalist claim this point and be believed? It is viewed that everybody is a journalist in this country (even if he only features via letter to the editor). The impression created by print media that everybody should become journalist by creating his own news is not helping matters. Though it is acknowledged that there should be democratisation of news via citizen journalism notwithstanding, expertise should still be upheld to make the profession one of the best.

Objectivity: Members of a profession are expected to think objectively and inquiring about matters subject to orthodoxy and sentiment which limit intellectual exploration. This feature of professionalism is dead in Nigeria journalism where emphasis on

materialism is placed about intellectual exploration. Majority of journalists are not interested in story that will not enrich their pocket- so, pocket first others follow.

Certification: Certification and licensing are sacrosanct to the practice of a profession while a member can also expect to be put out of the profession if he does not live up to professional code of ethics. How many times have the Nigerian journalists practised this without any amount of success? Is it not possible for reporter “A” to be punished for a professional misconduct, or professional malpractice and after a few days he is being employed by another media organization who is also a member of the profession that instituted the punishment in the first instance?

Training: A member of a profession is expected to meet the various minimum entrance standards for the profession such as a diploma, degree, or degrees in the professional area. Just what is the minimum entry standard for Nigerian journalists? There is certainly none and as such, everybody moves in and out of the profession. Though the Press Council in its Ilorin Declaration of 1998 specified the minimum entry requirement for journalism in Nigeria but there is no known back-up legal force, rather, it is only being backed-up by professional ethics and codes which are often violated by all.

Okunna stated that:

...the merits of higher education for journalists have become widely recognized in all parts of the world. A review of studies in professionalism conducted in both developed and developing countries show that journalists with higher formal education exhibit more professional orientation in the performance of their duties, and are generally classified as high and medium professionals in contrast to their low professional colleagues most of whom have not had formal higher education.

A high status could ultimately make the journalist become more ethical and professional inclined because the visibility arising from this attribute could engender the journalist the conviction that he or she has a name to protect.

Reward: Astor [6] says that members of a profession share in a discrete end substantive body of knowledge available to those in the profession. Following this, a member of a profession participates in a system of rewards monetary and or honorary for those who conduct themselves most notably within their code of ethics. Nigeria journalists truly jostle for both monetary and honorary reward but on the platter of laziness. It is on record that there was no winner for the 2011 TV presenter in the just concluded Nigeria National Media Merit Award (NNMMA) held in Akure Ondo State.

Code of ethics: Code of ethics governing the entrance and practice of members of a profession is a must. This governs their practice to a high degree of group control. There only exist on paper numerous codes of ethics for various Nigerian journalism associations, yet, the actual practice and submission to peer control has not been brought to fruition. The journalists' creed of 1908, media council law of 1988, Ilorin Declaration of 1998 and other code of ethics governing the conduct of journalism in Nigeria only exist on paper.

Professionalism and Media Ethics

McQuail [4] points out that lack of political independence has been identified as one of the effects of professionalism in journalism. This takes various forms, including organization into associations, the formation of press councils and the drawing up of principles of good practice in the form of codes of practice and ethics. The press

councils are typically voluntary or at least non-governmental bodies that mediate between the public and the mass media. The function implies the need to have some codes of standard principles to which reference can be made; and in general press councils are instruments of self-regulations for the press that acknowledge a responsibility to the public. There are codes of ethics in Nigeria but it is often flawed — selling conscience at the altar of money.

Why codes of ethics?

Codes of ethics exist virtually in all professions in order to ensure standard practice and since journalism is not an exception thus, it bends along with dictates of the standard. The phenomenon reflects the general process of professionalism of journalism especially from the threat of external intervention and reduced autonomy. It reveals the values that the media publicly proclaim as guidelines for their work. Common features of the codes includes: the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion; respect for privacy; and prohibition of bribes or any other benefits. As a matter of fact, truth and objectivity are central to the values of journalism.

Identity of a professional journalists

Astor [6] explains that journalist is not a man who can write good, sound, logical English which he has learned at school or which divine providence has put into his head without effort on his part, unless he knows something of the fundamental of the things which he assumes to be calling. Such people are special writers, a contribution to the press.

Surlin [7] after his study of values of journalism practitioners before and after undergoing course in media ethics opines that the media ethics course had a noticeable and ethically positive effect upon the student value system. Consequently, one might assure that this shift in values will lead to more ethical and responsible decision making by these soon-to-be media professionals.

Ogunsiji [8] agrees with social “communicologist” that no doubt, professionalism will certainly restrict the ranks of those who practise journalism in Nigeria and that; it will also eliminate quacks from practicing. This will make Nigerian press in general appear more responsible and respectable. In the same vein, Akinfeleye [1] opines that journalists and pseudo-journalists will find the lure of professionalism very strong because, it would give them the aura of social responsibility and dignity. Astor also ascertains that professional journalist is the foundation stone of the structure without which the seeker for news and the writer thereof, all the vast and intricate mass of machinery of melting post, of dynamos, picture of fleets of motor cars and special trains – all will be useless.

Research Design

This study employed the use of both secondary data and survey method of research to carryout and elucidates the bane of non-professionalism in Nigerian journalism. The issue of non-professionals bastardizing journalism may not easily yield objective answers and solutions so, the choice of survey method was considered an option to obtain necessary data in order to proffer solutions to the problem.

Osuala and Nwadu submit that survey research method is a vital means of eliciting information from respondents; it facilitates the computation, analyses and interpretation of the findings. *The Hope Newspaper* was chosen for critical examination. The population of the study included practicing journalists and since the evaluation did not intend to take the survey of all practising journalists, a representative sample close enough to satisfy whatever heterogeneity that existed was

adopted. Included in the survey were editors, sub-editors, reporters and freelancers from *The Hope Newspaper*. The reason why this medium was chosen by the researcher bothered on the fact that Nigerian Government emphases qualified personnel with appropriate certificate in any appointment in all government owned establishments. *The Hope* is a state owned government newspaper which is supposed to operate at the highest level of professionalism above the private owned newspapers. In this media house there are twenty (20) journalists and all of them were used as sample size while questionnaire was design to elicit information from the respondents.

Each questionnaire has a set of thirteen questions, twenty copies of questionnaires were administered to twenty journalists in which fifteen representing 75% were recovered while the researcher was unable to cover the remaining five as at the time of collating the data. The fifteen recovered questionnaires stand the chance of hundred percent (15/15 x 100) that is, the fifteen questionnaires represents hundred percent. Due to limited space provided some of the demographic questions have been excluded while only pertinent questions are critically analyzed (Table 1-6).

Discussion of Findings

From the result of this research work it reveals that a large percentage of 80% of the practicing journalists of *The Hope Newspaper* does not have the minimum requirement to practise which is Higher

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage %
SSCE	1	6.7%
ND	5	33.3%
NCE	-	-
HND/B.SC/Above	9	60%
Total	15	100%

Source: field survey 2011

This question seeks to know the academic background of the respondents. One respondent (6.7%) has SSCE; five respondents (33.3%) have ND while HND/B.SC holders constitute 60%.

Table 1: Question: Education Qualification.

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage %
Mass Comm./Journalism	9	60%
Others	6	40%
Total	15	100%

Source: field survey 2011

Nine respondents which represent 60% studied mass communication/journalism via formal education while other practitioners who represent 40% of the sample are from other fields: yet they practice journalism.

Table 2: Question: Field of study.

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage%
Yes	4	26.7%
No	10	66.6%
Don't know	1	6.7%
Total	15	100%

Source: field survey 2011

This question tries to probe into the relationship between in-house training and formal education in relation to professionalism. From the responses, 26.7% says journalism experience without formal education makes one a professional while 66.6% disagrees with that and 6.7% could not really say which is which.

Table 3: Question: Does experience without formal education make one a professional?

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage %
A graduate of Mass Comm. /Journalism	6	40%
One without University education but with journalistic experience	4	26.7%
A member of NUJ	5	33.3%
Total	15	100%

Source: field survey 2011

The research question one wants to know from the practicing journalists' perspective what they use as yardstick for the word "professional journalist" probably if there is different from those in academia. Interestingly, 40% says a graduate of Mass Communication/Journalism qualifies as professional journalist. From this, 33.3% submits that whoever is a member of Nigerian Union of Journalist qualifies as professional while 26.7% says that whoever has journalistic experience even without formal education qualifies as professional journalist.

Table 4: Question: Who is a professional?

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage %
Yes	6	40%
No	9	60%
Total	15	100%

Source: field survey 2011

Research question two shows that 60% of the respondents said government influence has nothing to do with non-professionalism while 40% say it does.

Table 5: Questions: Does government influence in anyway encourage non-professionalism?

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage %
Very Cordial	-	-
Cordial	9	60%
Not cordial	6	40%
Total	15	100%

Source: field survey 2011

Since journalism profession is a mixture of both quacks and professionals this question seeks to know the view of the respondents on activities of non-professionals in this trade and to know if quacks are welcome. From the result, 60% says that the relationship is cordial while 40% disagrees.

Research question three is an open-ended question on the effects of non-professionalism on journalism. Various and even virtually all responses attest that quacks in the profession are the reason while journalism is being relegated among other professions.

Table 6: Question: Relationship between professional and non-professional journalist?

National Diploma (HND) in Journalism/Mass Communication. So, what is the importance or the effect of Ilorin Declaration of 1998 and other regulatory bodies clamouring for professionalism in journalism? The United States Bureau of Labour Statistics as quoted in Akinfeleye says that to qualify as a professional in a particular field the professional must meet the prescribed educational standard but this is found wanting in Nigerian journalism profession.

Okunna [9] reviews that journalists with higher formal education exhibit more professional oriented in the performance of their duties thus, those with lower formal education will only offer little because even at National Diploma level, a lot of professional courses are not part of the curriculum as such, they are not being taught; such are reserved for the last two years of a four-year programme. The fact that 40% of the respondents studied non-journalism course is a threat to the profession of journalism. Among this great percentage are editors, sub-editors and reporters who probably learn the profession through on-the-job training. This is the position of Jerry Gana in 2001 when he rejected the call for special salary scale for those in the field of journalism calling them non-professionals.

Goode as quoted in Aston says that a professional must have

attained a specified academic standard in the field or course of the profession before he can be certified. In view of Goode, compared with this research a large percentage of Nigeria journalists are non-professionals. Practitioners themselves according to this research agree that journalism practice without formal education does not make one a professional journalist. Though 26.7% of them say accumulated experience makes one a professional but, such percentage cannot be justified compared to other professions such as Law, Engineering, Medicine and others.

This research wants to know the yardstick being used from practitioners' perspective who a journalist is. Interestingly, 40% said he must be a graduate of Mass Communication/Journalism. From the findings, 33.3% argued that a member of a union for instance NUJ is qualified to be described as professional. Though this is one of the requirements but this should be after obtaining the minimum education standard. The remaining 26% submits that journalism experience is the yardstick but these respondents have the lowest followers. It has been established that government influence and policies do not favour professionalism. Most of the editors and managing directors of media houses are there based on political appointment just to compensate the helmsmen who supported them during electioneering campaign.

The relationship between professional and non-professional journalists is sixty percent cordial – an element of solidarity, sense of identity and common values are shared in line with Akinfeleye. But, going by the large percentage of 40% who said the relationship is not cordial, we cannot say Nigeria journalists are professionals because professionals should share a professional culture, believe in close solidarity and share professional ideology Aston, Opubor. Hence, all the relevant requirements to qualify as professional are conspicuously absent among Nigeria journalists. Findings from research question three show that, bad headlines, poor production, brown-envelop and other professional misconducts are the effects of non-professionalism in Nigeria journalism.

Summary

The result of this research work shows that Nigeria journalists are yet to attain the standard of professionalism. In this 21st century where every profession requires special skill, minimum education standard, code of ethics, professional authority, community sectional and professional culture, journalism practitioners in Nigeria are still arguing and insisting that someone with journalistic experience should qualify as member of their profession while this issue has been settled long ago in other professions. Respondents from this research confirm that the result of non-professionalism has made the profession to be all comers' job and this relegates journalism to the background in the committee of professions.

Research question three probes into the consequences of non-professionalism in the profession and respondents furthermore identify excessive lost for brown envelopes, unprofessional and badly written news, reports; badly produced journals and newspapers downgrade the profession in the estimate of other professions. A faulty machine cannot give correct output so is true of half-baked professional; he will certainly malfunction and package irrelevance for public consumption. Often, non-professionals in this trade do produce junk newspapers and magazines which usually have adverse effects on the action and reaction of readers to issues; therefore, objectivity and balance are foreign to their reportage.

From the field survey it is obvious that non-professionalism in

journalism has slowed down the pace at which journalism would have moved in this country then, journalists are being deprived of benefits and rights which other professionals enjoy. Responses from this research work show that non-professionals often breach the code of ethics which makes the public to look down on journalists.

Conclusion

Though press has been viewed as the training ground for future leaders, notwithstanding, whoever is going to practice the profession should equip himself/herself with the minimum standard. Peter Enahoro's statement in Duyile [10] that the press is the nation's training grand is not an exaggeration, neither is it a boast. The fact still remains that many young people gain their knowledge and experience by writing for the press from where they later discover the great fortunes in life. Obafemi Awolowo reported for *Daily Times*, Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe learnt his political traits by working in Ghana newspaper; Onabanjo was a journalist and columnist and later ruled Ogun State. Segun Osoba who became Ogun State Governor in 1999 joined *Daily Times* as a reporter while Tony Momoh former Nigeria Information Minister worked in *Daily Times* so is Anthony Enahoro. All of them, (though subject to what was required in their time) went through formal journalism education. There is no doubt that being a journalist prepares one for the greater future, but the right thing must be done.

The death of vibrant and radical journalism is worrisome in Nigeria even those who have attained formal education engage in an unprofessional conduct, turning journalism to "money journalism". Front page which was once an exclusive news page is now being devoted to advertisement because proprietors of media houses are business tycoons who place wealth creation or revenue generation above professionalism. *Tell Magazine* a Nigeria print medium which was once voted the most courageous news magazine during the dark days of Gen. Sanni Abacha (former Nigeria Head of State) is now a shadow of itself — so are other newspapers. It is common this day to employ Industrial Training (IT) students in media houses as reporters so that the establishment will only pay token for the services of these students — this is a typical example as shown in table I. *The Hope Newspaper* (though government owned) refused to report the impeachment story of former Speaker of Ondo State house of Assembly due to directive from the state government. The same thing goes to other government owned newspapers that will never carry any story viewed as unfavourable to the government — this is purely unprofessional.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the followings are recommended in other to attain professionalism in Nigeria journalism.

1. There should be special salary for the professional journalists in order to discourage brown envelop syndrome while the minimum entrance requirement which is Higher National Diploma should be strictly adhere to.
2. For journalism practitioners to qualify as professionals, the regulatory bodies; Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Nigeria Guild of Editors (NGE), Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN) and other regulatory bodies should enforce the code of ethical conduct and rid of quacks in the profession.
3. Media houses should constantly organize training programmes for their staff so they will keep pace with the time-changes.
4. Government should lose their grip off the media and let them function as liberal societal structure.
5. Freedom of expression in reality not in theory should be guaranteed while the new Freedom of Information Bill (FOI) should be allowed to function accordingly.
6. Proper marriage between formal education and years of experience along

necessary training should form basis for entrance into the profession.

7. The existing faculties that offer journalism in Nigeria tertiary institutions should improve on their curriculum and also equip Mass Communication Department with modern training facilities in order to redeem the dented image of Nigeria universities that turn out half-baked graduates.
8. Government as a matter of seriousness should provide adequate security for journalists during their major assignment.
9. There should be stiffer punishment for any member of the profession that breaches the rule or engages in professional misconduct.
10. Finally, more research should be carried out in this area in order to urgently solve this perennial problem.

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