



PERCEPTION OF JOURNALISTS ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MEDIA REGULATORY BODIES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Media generally is known as members of the fourth estate of the realm which puts them next in line to the executive, judiciary and legislature. However, the need to manage information dissemination remains the main task of journalists to foster a responsible society. Media can only thrive by not only disseminating truthful information to the society, but, by also abiding by the the rules and regulations guiding the profession. The concern of this study was to establish the extent to which Nigerian journalists perceive the effeviveness of media regulatory bodies on the practice of journalism in Nigeria. The research was a descriptive survey with the population comprising of journalists from different newspaper and broadcast organizations in Ogun state. Using purposive sampling, one hundred (100) members of the population were selected to represent the sample size of the study with a structured questionnaire administered to journalists whom are registered members of NUJ in Abeokuta Ogun State. The results of the study indicates that, some journalists perceived the regulatory bodies to be doing well while others perceived them to be lagging behind in their duties and there is a need for the regulatory bodies to improve on their performance especially, towards the print media.

Keywords: Media, perception, journalists, regulatory bodies.

Introduction

The media has assumed an indispensable role in the society as a profession or institution on whose shoulder hinged the responsibility of managing information dissemination through the agenda setting ideology. Daramola (2003) opines that journalists play an important role of fostering a free and responsible society.

According to Oberiri (2016:64), the mass media ought to play the roles of gathering, analyzing and disseminating news and information about people, event , and issues in the society which could be in form of news, commentaries, editorials, advertorials, news analysis, profiles, columns, cartoons, pictures or magazine features through mass communication medium such as radio, television, newspapers, magazine, digital TV and Internet-based media. McQuail (2005) describes mass media as “means of communication that operates on a large scale, reaching and involving virtually everyone in a society to a greater or lesser degree”. It is the quest to reach a large population in this modern time that makes the development of mass media to thrive. The capacity of mass media is so great that the structure of society is fundamentally altered by their existence. According to Adenle (2019), the mass media because of their size and reach have tremendous impact on society.

Since, journalism practice wields such enormous powers and calls for the highest standards of ethics and commitment to truth. In this regard, 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 relevance. Because journalism is about the process of mass communication (consumption of information by the public and how they react to it), that power is too sensitive to be left unguarded or uncontrolled; that is why various governments from the colonial, to the military and to democracy- have always sought to have the press (journalism) at their favour either by military force or by civilian diplomacy-(Raufu, 2011)

According to Amos (2015), journalism should be socially responsible and accountable to the public (Amos, 2015). Journalists have both ethical and professional responsibilities, and the two at times go hand in hand. Accountability is one such responsibility. (Babcock, 2012). It is impossible for the media to be accountable to every competing interest all the time (Hirst and Patching, 2005). Consequently, when interests compete, the ethical obligation is to serve the interest of the public. Lawal (2016) observes that it is strangely paradoxical that journalists have to tell the



truth and yet have to make some money. Balancing the ethical and professional dilemma was the major reason for the establishment of certain journalism regulatory bodies to check, control, correct, regulate and sometimes chastise journalists and media channels when they go off professional and ethical guide.

In the account of Plaisance, Skewes and Hanitzsch (2012), people who work in professional occupations are often called upon to explain and defend their behaviour. A doctor who misbehaves may lose his license, a lawyer who faulted may be debarred, while a soldier may be demoted for misuse of rifle. This fact applies to almost all true professions. But this accustomed method of regulating professional conduct (by licensing) is not in journalism; hence there is a debate as whether journalism is a profession or a craft (Plaisance, Skewes and Hanitzsch, 2012).

The essence of regulatory bodies is to strengthen compliance to professional ethics. Some of such regulatory bodies are: Nigerian Press Council, National Broadcasting Commission, Broadcasting Organization of Nigeria, Nigeria Union of Journalists, Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria, and Nigerian Guild of Editors. All these are statutorily established for certain regulatory functions in journalism. The Nigerian Press Council was established through the Nigerian Press Council Act No. 85 of 1992 (as amended in Act 60 of 1999) to ensure the maintenance of high professional standards for the Nigerian Press. Like most other Press Councils around the world, the functions of the Nigeria Press council revolve around ethical standards. Its mission is to proactively respond to the needs of the Nigeria mass media and the public by facilitating through complaints, resolution, research training and workshops the sustainable development of journalism institutions in Nigeria (Nwaze, 2003).

The Press council of India (2010:1) states that, “The press must scrupulously adhere to accepted norms of journalistic ethics and maintain high standards of professional conduct”. It further says “Where the norms are breached and the freedom is defiled by unprofessional conduct, a way must exist to check and control it. But, control by Government or official authorities may prove destructive of this freedom. Therefore, the best way is to let the peers of the profession assisted by a few discerning laymen, to regulate it through a properly structured representative impartial machinery”.

From the explanation above by Indian Press Council (2010), the function of press council in Nigeria is clearer as the same position is similarly replicated in the Nigeria Union of Journalists Code of Ethics. This gives insight into the functions of other regulatory bodies such as Nigerian Broadcasting Commission, Broadcast Organization of Nigeria, Nigerian Guild of Editors etc.

Experts have applauded the number of regulatory bodies in Nigeria who are saddled with the responsibility of upholding the code of conduct and ensure that the press fulfills its obligations effectively and efficiently. Unfortunately, Newspapers/magazines, television/radio often derail from acceptable standard of the profession. Sensationalism, news selling, pack journalism, fowl languages, misuse of grammar, unbalance reports, etc. are commonly observed in the media today (Lawal, 2016).

The concern of this study is to establish the extent to which media regulatory bodies have contributed (or otherwise) to adherence of Nigerian journalists to the ethics of the profession. Specifically, it is imperative to investigate the extent to which the regulatory bodies, most especially the Nigeria Union of journalists and Nigeria Press Council have performed their functions and if they have been effective in discharging their duties.

Statement of Research Problem

Journalism helps democracy to thrive. (Daramola, 2003). Journalists play an important role of fostering a free and responsible society. It means that any associated problem with journalism is a problem with the society. Unethical practices in the profession may have negative effect on the society which may lead to misinformation and disinformation, fakery as well as corruption.

The problem that has prompted this study is that- the researcher observed there is a fall in the standard of journalistic activities today. There is also influx of quacks into journalism, especially because of the popularity of internet and smart phones. Another area is the activities of independent broadcasters and masters of ceremonies who have taken over radio and television programme presentations.



Another problem is that of misuse of language, abuse of grammar and air authority. These are bad because the media function as agent of socialization, and people learn what the media promote; they also attach importance to it. Considering this, the responsibility directly shifts to the regulatory bodies to curb unprofessionalism in the print and broadcast media. These regulatory bodies include: Nigerian Press Council, National Broadcast Commission, Broadcast Organization of Nigeria, Nigerian Union of Journalists, Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria, and Nigerian Guild of Editors. These regulatory bodies were primarily established to ensure that the media/journalism meet the purpose of establishment and fulfills the objective of National Communication Policy.

Looking at the level of misconducts and bad reportage/programme presentation, one will doubt the effectiveness of the regulatory bodies at this time. And if they have failed to meet their obligations, it means journalistic standard will continue to fall until it is no worth than a burning paper.

It is based on this observed problem that this research is conducted to investigate how journalists perceive the effectiveness of media regulatory bodies in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to establish whether journalists see the regulatory bodies as effective or otherwise. Specifically, the following objectives are the focus of this study:

- i. To compare the similarities and dissimilarities in the functions of journalism regulatory bodies in Nigeria.
- ii. To find out the extent the regulatory bodies effectively perform their duties.
- iii. To ascertain the perception of journalists on the effectiveness of the regulatory bodies in enforcing ethical regulations.

Research Questions

The following questions will guide the study:

- i. What are similarities and dissimilarities in the functions of journalism regulatory bodies in Nigeria?
- ii. To what extent do the regulatory bodies performed their duties?
- iii. How do journalists perceive the effectiveness of the regulatory bodies in enforcing ethical obligations?

Concepts and Contexts

Law and Ethical Principles in Journalism

The ethical principles in journalism are the fundamental codes that guide journalism practice the world over. They are the pillars on which the profession of journalism is built; without their application to the news gathering and production process, the profession will lose its integrity.

There are numerous ethical principles but the following are some of the core universally acknowledged ethical principles of media practice:

- i. Truth
- ii. Objectivity



- iii. Fairness
- iv. Accuracy

Truth: Truth is fact, the reality told as it is. It is the avoidance of deception, dishonesty and lying in any or every form. The commitment to truth is perhaps the most ancient and revered ethical principle of human civilization. Despite our constant temptation to lie and use deception in our self-interest, the idea of truth as a positive value is well entrenched in moral and legal philosophy (Day, 2006).

This is a threshold requirement, because inaccurate, unsubstantiated, or uncorroborated information can undermine the credibility of any journalistic enterprise. A second requirement for journalistic truth is that, in addition to being accurate, a truthful story should promote understanding.

Another issue about truth in journalistic practice is the use of deception in news gathering and reporting. Some moralists argue that it is wrong to use deception in news gathering and reporting but some media practitioners have argued that they may sometimes have to use deception to unravel a greater truth for the benefits of the society. They therefore use hidden cameras and recorders, act as undercover participants in criminal situations and other forms of deception to gather information for publication.

According to Kovach & Rosenstiel (2011), a three-step test should be applied for employing deceptive news-gathering techniques. They are:

- i. The information must be sufficiently vital to the public interest to justify deception.
- ii. Journalists should not engage in masquerade unless there is no other way to get the story.
- iii. Journalists should reveal to their audience whenever they mislead sources to get information, and explain their reasons for doing so, including why the story justifies the deception and why this was the only way to get the facts.

Objectivity: Objectivity means the absence of subjectivity, bias, prejudice or partisanship. Media audiences expect utmost objectivity while some media analysts have asserted that absolute objectivity is not possible. Frost (2007) defines the antonyms of objectivity or related terms thus: “Bias: Means the deliberate slanting of a story to favour one side of the argument rather than another on the grounds of the personal choice of the writer. Balance is the idea that the journalist can and should present equally two sides of an argument. Comment is an explanatory remark or criticism. ‘Comment’ in journalistic terms can range from an expert opinion of a correspondent to the unwarranted insertion of unsupported views.

Objectivity is the most contentious description. That which is objective cannot and should not contain that which is subjective. This is often taken to mean that a journalist should not allow his or her feelings and beliefs intrude into the article.

Fairness: The idea that the journalist gives all sides of the argument a fair hearing.” Individuals see events through their viewpoints like the lens of a camera. And their background, orientation, religion, race, nationality, philosophies and personality shape these viewpoints. So, even when they try to objectively gather information and report such information as accurately as possible, their viewpoints are (indirectly) subjectively influencing the news gathering and news reporting process. It has been argued that there cannot be complete objectivity but media practitioners must strive to be as objective as possible (Okoye, 2008).

Accuracy: This means the truthfulness, correctness, exactness or precision in the information that media practitioners provide for their audience. Media audiences must be able to trust whatever information they are getting from the media and for the media not to lose the trust of its audience, they must go the extra-mile in checking the correctness of information derived from sources and interviewees. Crediting information to sources is one way of ensuring accuracy. Care should also be taken to ensure that names, addresses, positions, locations, age and other related information are accurate and correctly spelt. It is better to drop a story when in doubt than to publish and later issue a retraction or apology.



Social Importance of Law and Ethics in Journalism

Every society needs a system of ethics or morals for peace, stability and cohesion. Without ethics, morality and law, society, according to the common saying will be brutish and short.

Day (2006) explains the social relevance of ethics in journalism thus:

The need for social stability: First, a system of ethics is necessary for social intercourse. Law and ethics is the foundation of our advanced civilization, a cornerstone that provides some stability to society's moral expectations. If we are to enter into agreements with others, a necessity in a complex, interdependent society, we must be able to trust one another to keep those agreements, even if it is not in our self-interest to do so (Olen, 1998).

The need for a social hierarchy: A system of law and ethics serves as a moral gatekeeper in apprising society of the relative importance of certain customs. All cultures have many customs, but most do not concern ethical morals. A system of ethics identifies those customs and practices of which there is enough social disapproval to render them immoral.

The need to promote a dynamic social ecology: An ethical framework serves as a social conscience, challenging members of a community to examine ethical dimensions of both public issues and private concerns and to aspire to elevate the quality of the moral ecology

The need to resolve conflicts: A system of law and ethics is an important social institution for resolving cases involving conflict claims based on individual self-interest.

The need to clarify values: A system of law and ethics also functions to clarify for society the competing values and principles inherent in emerging and novel moral dilemmas. Some of the issues confronting civilization today would challenge the imagination of even the most ardent philosopher (Day, 2006).

Theoretical Framework

Social Responsibility Theory

The social responsibility theory according to Ndolo (2005:35), "owes its origin to an American initiative- the 1947 Hutchins Commission on the freedom of the press". The emergence of this theory was an attempt to provide restraint to the excessive press freedom advocated by the libertarian theory. The idea here is to ensure the press does not abuse the freedom at its disposal.

The social responsibility theory posits that the power and near monopoly position of the media impose on them an obligation to be socially responsible in discharging their duties.

Assumptions and Statements

As listed in Amos (2015), the assumptions of the theory include:

1. Media should accept and fulfill certain obligations to the society. These obligations are mainly to be met by setting high professional standard of information, truth, accuracy, objectivity and balance.
2. In accepting and applying these obligations, the media should avoid whatever might lead to crime, violence or civil disorder or to give offence to minority groups.

3. The media should be self-regulating within the framework of law and establishment institutions. The media as a whole should be pluralist and reflect the diversity of their society, giving access to various points of view and to right of reply.
4. Society and the public have a right to expect high standards of performance and intervention can be justified to secure the, or a public good.

The theory explains how the media owe the society a duty to discharge their responsibility responsibly. Obot (2004:104), citing McQuail (1987), while highlighting the main principles of the social responsibility theory, asserts among others, “that the media should accept and fulfill certain obligations to the society”. Eze (2012:15) confirms these obligations to include the effective discharge of the surveillance function. Soola (2003:133) corroborates this argument thus:

West Africa magazine has noted that it will be failing in its obligations to the readers if it did not report crimes and reflect community anxieties about them. At one level, such reports send unequivocal messages to people to take measures to protect themselves and their properties.

Soola (2003:133) in Sandman, Rubin and Sachsman (1976) warns that, “A news blackout sets a dangerous precedent. Word-of-mouth rumours are likely to be even less accurate than the mass media. And if serious grievances have festered to the point of a riot, the public has a right to know.”

From the above, it is clear that the media operations and practices have to be socially responsible, but the social responsibility function is made possible by the regulatory functions of the journalism professional bodies like Nigerian Press Council, National Broadcast Commission, Broadcast Organization of Nigeria, Nigerian Union of Journalists, Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria, and Nigerian Guild of Editors. When these regulatory bodies do their job effectively, then it will ensure the fulfillment of fairness, balance, and accuracy in journalism profession which will further fast-track social development process.

Methodology

The research was a descriptive survey. The population comprised journalists based in Abeokuta especially registered journalists in Ogun State chapter of the Nigerian Union Journalists. The choice of Ogun State for this study was borne out of the idea that, Abeokuta, Ogun state is the cradle of journalism having produced and still producing many great journalists who are spread across different media organizations in Nigeria. The population for this study comprised of journalists from different newspaper and broadcast organizations. In order to avoid the hassle of studying the whole population, the researcher therefore selected one hundred (100) among the whole population to represent the sample size of the study. The sample was selected using purposive sampling method through which the researcher administered a structured questionnaire to professional journalists only; and especially the registered members of NUJ in Abeokuta Ogun State with 92 questionnaire returned. In the analysis of the primary data, the researcher presented the data in frequency counts, tables and percentages for easy comprehension.

Data Presentation, Analysis, and Discussions

The following shows the presentation, analysis and discussions of data derived from the questionnaires.

Table 1: Functions that journalism regulatory bodies perform in Nigeria

	ITEMS	Res%	Ensuring professionalism	Making law/rules for journalists	Ensuring adherence to rules	All of the above	Total
1	How would you describe the function of journalism regulatory bodies in Nigeria?	Frq.	14	6	54	18	92



		Per.	15.2%	6.5%	58.7%	19.6%	100%
			Enquire into complaints about journalism conducts	Documenting the media	All of the Above		
2	Which of the following also falls within the duties of the regulatory bodies?		14	6	72		92
			15.2%	6.5%	78.3%		100%
			Yes	No	Can't say		
3	Would you say regulatory bodies ensure the protection of the rights and privilege of journalists in the lawful performance of their duties?		56	18	18		92
			60.9%	19.6%	19.6%		100%

Source: Field Survey, 2020

The above table reveals that 15.2% of the respondents said the function of journalism regulatory bodies in Nigeria is to ensure professionalism, 6.5% of the respondents said that making laws/rules for journalists, 58.7% of the respondents said that their function was to ensure adherence to rules of journalism. while 19.6% said that all of the above.

15.2% of the respondents said that regulatory bodies performs their duties by enquiring into complaints about journalism conducts, while 6.5% said by documenting the media, and 78.3% said they preferred all of the above options.

60.9% of the respondents said regulatory bodies ensure the protection of the rights and privilege of journalists in the lawful performance of their duties, while 19.6% said no and 19.6% could not say.

Table 2: How best the regulatory bodies performed their obligations

	ITEMS	Res%	Yes	No	Can't say			Total
4	Do the regulatory bodies also foster the achievements and maintenance of high professional standards by the Nigerian press?	Frq.	62	0	30			92
		Per.	67.4%	0%	32.6%			100%
5	Would you say the regulatory bodies perform their duties as due?	Frq.	44	36	12			92
		Per.	47.8%	39.1%	13.0%			100%
			High	Low	Very low	Can't say		



6	To what extent would you say that the regulatory bodies perform their duties in Nigeria?	44 47.8%	30 32.6%	12 13.0%	6 6.5%		92 100%
		Radio and TV content	Newspaper and magazines Contents	Both	None		
7	In which of the following areas have the regulatory bodies performed their functions most?	38 41.3%	12 13.0%	36 39.1%	6 6.5%		92 100%
		Ensuring professionalism	Ensuring adherence to rules	Documenting the media	Monitoring performance	All	
8	Identify any of the following areas that you perceive media regulators have performed best?	20 21.7%	24 26.1%	18 19.6%	6 6.5%	24 26.1%	92 100%

Source: Field Survey, 2020

From the table above, it is revealed that 67.4% of the respondents said that regulatory bodies foster the achievements and maintenance of high professional standards by the Nigerian press, while 32.6% of the respondents could not say.

47.8% of the respondents said that regulatory bodies perform their duties as due, while 39.1% of the respondents said No, and 13% of the respondents could not say.

47.8% of the respondents said that the extent at which the regulatory bodies perform their duties is high, 32.6% of the respondents said that it is low, while 13% of the respondents said that it is very low, and 6.5% of the respondents can't say.

41.3% of the respondents said the regulatory bodies performed their functions the most through radio and TV contents, 13% of the respondents said through newspapers and magazines contents, while 39.1% of the respondents said both, and 6.5% of the respondents said None.

21.7% of the respondents said that they perceived that media regulators has performed best through ensuring professionalism, 26.1% of the respondents said through ensuring adherence to rules, 19.6% of the respondents said that documenting the media, while 6.5% of the respondents said that monitoring performance, and 26.1% of the respondents said that all of the above.

Table 3: How Abeokuta journalists perceive the effectiveness of the regulatory bodies

ITEMS	Res%	Yes	No	Can't say			Total
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9	Would you say the performance of the regulatory bodies have translated into better journalism practices in Nigeria?	Frq. Per.	44 47.8%	24 26.1%	24 26.1%			92 100%
			Adherence to ethics	Content control	News accuracy	All of the above	None of the above	
10	In what ways has the regulatory bodies influenced higher professionalism in journalism?		14 15.2%	24 26.1%	6 6.5%	36 39.1%	12 13.0%	92 100%
			High	Low	Very low	Can't say		
11	How would you rate the effectiveness of the journalism regulatory bodies in Nigeria?		56 60.9%	24 26.1%	6 6.5%	6 6.5%		92 100%

Source: Field Survey, 2020

The above table revealed that 47.8% of the respondents said that the performance of the regulatory bodies have translated into better journalism practice in Nigeria, while 26.1% of the respondents said otherwise, and 26.1 of the respondents could not say

15.2% of the respondents said the regulatory bodies influenced higher performance in journalism through that adherence to ethics, 26.1% of the respondents said through content control, 6.5% of the respondents said through news accuracy, while 39.1% of the respondents said all of the above, and 13% of the respondents said none of the above.

60.9% of the respondents said the rate of effectiveness of the journalism regulatory bodies in Nigeria is high, 26.1% of the respondents said it is low, while 6.5% of the respondents said very low, and 6.5% of the respondents can't say.

Discussion of Findings

Functions that media (journalism) regulatory bodies perform

Every profession has a form of law and regulation with which the practitioners must abide. The media as a fourth estate of the realm is one profession that is regulated by various government and non-government organizations.



The government regulatory bodies include the National Broadcasting Commission NBC, and the Nigerian Press Council, while the non-government regulatory bodies included: Nigeria Union of Journalists, National Association of Newspaper Proprietors, Nigerian Guild of Editors, etc. It was revealed in this study that journalism regulatory bodies in Nigeria have certain functions they perform. These functions were analyzed in items 1, 2, and 3 in table 1. It was revealed in table 1, that 15.2% of the respondents said journalism regulatory bodies in Nigeria function to ensure professionalism, 6.5% of the respondents said journalism regulatory bodies in Nigeria function to make laws/rules for journalists, while 58.7% of the respondents said that they ensure adherence to rules, and 19.6% said that they function in all of the above.

Also in item 2, 15.2% of the respondents said that regulatory bodies perform their duties by enquiring into complaints about journalism conducts, while 6.5% said by documenting the media, and 78.3% said they perform their duties through all of the above.

That is why Nwaze (2003) asserts that the mission of the regulatory bodies is to proactively respond to the needs of the Nigeria mass media and the public by facilitating through complaints, resolution, research training and workshops the sustainable development of journalism institutions in Nigeria. In short, it was revealed in item 3 that 60.9% of the respondents said regulatory bodies ensure the protection of the rights and privilege of journalists in the lawful performance of their duties.

Therefore, this study has been able to establish that the functions of the Nigerian journalism regulatory bodies include: making of laws/rules for journalists, ensuring adherence to rules, and regulations; enquiring into complaints about journalism conducts, documenting the media, and ensure the protection of the rights and privilege of journalists in the lawful performance of their duties.

Meanwhile, it was revealed that the broadcast media was more monitored than the print media. This means that the NBC performs her duty more strict than it was observed in the print journalism. In item 7, 41.3% of the respondents said the regulatory bodies performed their functions the most through radio and TV contents, 13% of the respondents said through newspapers and magazines contents, while 39.1% of the respondents said both. These findings confirm the observation of the researcher that broadcast journalists were more regulated through NBC codes monitoring and sanctions than what is obtainable in newspaper publications

Journalists rated the level at which the regulatory bodies performed their duties. In item 8, it was revealed that 21.7% of the respondents said that they perceived that media regulators has performed best by ensuring professionalism, 26.1% of the respondents said by ensuring adherence to rules, 19.6% of the respondents said that by documenting the media, while 6.5% of the respondents said that by monitoring performance, and 26.1% of the respondents said that all of the above. This means that journalism regulatory bodies have performed best in terms of ensuring adherence to rules by media houses and also be ensuring professionalism. This in a way supports the social responsibility theory which says that the media should be self-regulating within the framework of law and establishment institutions.

Perceptions of journalists on the effectiveness of the regulatory bodies

On how Abeokuta journalists perceive the effectiveness of the regulatory bodies, there were diversified opinions on effectiveness of regulatory bodies among the journalist, in item 9 of table 3 The 47.8% of the respondents said that the performance of the regulatory bodies have translated into better journalism practice in Nigeria, while 26.1% of the respondents said otherwise. This buttresses the findings that have been made earlier that the regulatory bodies are perceived to be lagging in their functions.

In item 10, table 3, the various shades of opinions of Abeokuta Journalists were revealed. from the table, it was revealed that 15.2% of the respondents said the regulatory bodies influenced higher performance in journalism by ensuring adherence to ethics, 26.1% of the respondents said through content control, 6.5% of the respondents said by ensuring news accuracy, while 39.1% of the respondents said all of the above, and 13% of the respondents said none of the above.

In item 11 60.9% of the respondents said the rate of effectiveness of the journalism regulatory bodies in Nigeria is high, 26.1% of the respondents said it is low, while 6.5% of the respondents said very low, and 6.5% of the respondents can't say.



This means that many journalists perceived the regulatory bodies to be doing well while others perceived them to be lagging behind in their duties.

Conclusions

Base on the findings of the study, it has been revealed that journalism regulatory bodies have many functions that are similar in nature towards ensuring professionalism in Nigerian journalism. However, not much similarities were discovered. Many of the regulatory bodies have not performed very well in their functions. Although, the notion that they exist is enough to keep journalists in check, but when the regulatory bodies failed to do their jobs as due, there will be a lacuna in the practice of journalism in Nigeria.

The study also concludes that the major media regulatory body that functions most is National Broadcast Commission, this means that the broadcast media industry is more regulated. Though, journalists perceived that the performance of the regulatory bodies have translated into better journalism in Nigeria, but then, considering that a significant number of journalists viewed that the regulatory bodies have not performed well enough, there is a need for the regulatory bodies to improve in their performance especially, towards the print industry.

Recommendations

Considering the findings and conclusions of this study, it is recommended that:

- i. There is a need for the regulatory bodies to improve in their functions by ensuring regular monitoring of the practices of journalists and their media organizations.
- ii. Nigerian Press Council must be charged to be active in regulating the print industry by ensuring that only those who are qualified are allowed to practice journalism, while appropriate sanctions should be meted out to any erring journalist or media organization. This will put them at par with the National Broadcast Commission.
- iii. The regulatory bodies should improve in the discharge of their duties by ensuring more hands are injected to the bodies in order to ensure effective service delivery.

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