



Concept of Ethics and Standards in Journalism: An Introduction

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Abstract:

Ethics and standards in journalism include ethical principles and good practice applicable to journalists. This subset of media ethics is known as the professional "code of ethics" and "theory of journalism" of journalism. Basic codes and rules are commonly found in the statements of professional journalism organizations and individual print, broadcast and online news organizations.

Keywords:

Ethics, Journalism

Introduction:

Like many broader ethical systems, journalistic ethics includes the principle of "limitation of harm". This may include, for example, increasing respect for vulnerable groups and withholding certain details from the report, such as the names of minors, the names of crime victims, or information not materially related to the news report. Damage someone's reputation or put them at undue risk. There have also been discussions and debates within the journalism community about the appropriate reporting of suicide and mental health, particularly in relation to word of mouth.

Evolution and Purpose of Codes of Journalism:

Although modern journalism dates back 400 years, journalism became more essential in some scenes during the 1900s. As in all fields, progress is a natural process that strives for continuous development and a better world for future generations. Newspapers operate under the ideal of presenting "unbiased" information to the public. The continuous evolution of journalism, the media and society as a whole means that journalism will continue to face challenges in pursuit of that ideal and the need for impartial presentation of information. In editorial meetings and frequent discussions between editors and journalists Be a constant subject. The evolution of



journalism today means that the dissemination of information means that newsrooms must be important not only for their own viability, but also for the people who depend on the information provided. Journalism, at its core, is a service profession, which means empowering the public with truth. There is an incredible responsibility in this profession and one that no publisher, editor or journalist should ever take lightly. Each country presents its own unique aspects and sometimes challenges the codes associated with today's journalistic codes. "Truth", "Accuracy" and "Objectivity". These are the cornerstones of journalistic ethics. Journalists should try to distance themselves from the regions, groups and countries they live in or from. Allowing that distinction to avoid affective bias plays a role in his journalistic writing. Many journalists today fall prey to this trap hole and end up stuck where they once fell.

Ethics and Journalism:

As we discussed earlier, morality is the measure of human actions from either a right or a wrong perspective. Journalism, on the other hand, is the act of gathering/sourcing current and human-interest information, editing it to meet in-house policy and then publishing/broadcasting it as news to the public at large. In essence, morality is a set of rules that are used to measure the standard of right or wrong actions from the very first nature of their occurrence. Therefore, a journalist should follow these standards to ensure the accuracy of the information published as news. Every organization, business or cooperative has its rules which are referred to as code of ethics, the practitioners in the field of journalism have implemented such code of ethics in their profession to ensure respectable standard of conduct from the organization. the outer world. To comply with these ethical rules, every practicing journalist must know how to source good human interest stories, with accurate facts of statistics and data, well researched by going to in-depth interviews with victims or sources/eyewitnesses, and not aggregated at the end. A bribe to kill such a story. With this, we can say that the journalist has followed his/her ethical code of journalism.



Ethical Journalism Problem:

Ethical problems can arise when a journalist completely abandons his responsibility and ethical standards of the profession, when performing his ethical duties in the field or in the office. This is because newspaper stories can ruin lives as much as they can make celebrities. Following are some of the ethical issues facing journalistic practices today. They are;

- **Character assassination:** means to destroy the reputation or image of a person by naming him or her by portraying untrue news about his or her personality. This can be called defamation of character.
- **Partisanship:** It is the act of acting with partiality by praising and always talking about some good actions done by a person or government ignoring their many mistakes, evils, failures, incompetence etc. This is the situation when the media house is government owned. Belonging to or belonging to the person praised.
- **Imprecision/ Lack of objectivity or facts:** It is a tool to publish news without proper verification by the journalist or further research if what is said is true or false. This is considered as inability/inability of the journalist to go the extra mile in finding and finding accurate facts of data and statistics to support their news reports.
- **Lack of fairness:** When a journalist attaches his/her feelings to a news story and thereby publishes one-sided news without balance and fairness, but only supports his/her own opinion or view.
- **Extraordinary:** This is most common in many of our newspapers today. They rule or exaggerate other events to capture the audience's attention. Most human-interest stories, such as crime and death, are exaggerated in other media to gather high benefaction.
- **Genderism:** It has to do with correct identification of gender in compound nouns. For example, instead of using the word camera man to qualify the person or person who operates the camera, just say camera operator. Also, use of Chairman instead of Chairwoman etc.
- **Corruption/Bribe:** This is the process of obtaining any kind of cash payment to remove a story or not to publish a particular story. But most journalists accept it to avoid



risking their lives or jobs or both. But even so, it is morally wrong and no journalist should accept a bribe for a story.

- **Invasion of privacy:** The constitution strongly warns against this act in Article 37 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of 1999. No journalist is expected to disclose private matters of any person without their consent. But in order to find the most human-interest stories, most journalists still invade privacy.
- **Cartel Journalism:** This is an association formed by journalists to obtain or provide services to each other when a news report concerns them or their friends or family members. Cartel journalism is a dysfunctional ethical practice, especially when it suppresses and distorts information.

Common Elements of Maintaining Code of Journalist Standard and Ethics:

1. Precision and Standards for Accurate Reporting:

- Journalists are expected to be as accurate as possible given the time and space available to produce a story and to find reliable sources. Making proper use of their sources and accurately quoting and using words from an interview or conversation.
- Events with a single witness are recorded with an attribute. Events with two or more independent eyewitnesses may be recorded as facts. Controversial facts are recorded with attribution.
- Independent fact-checking by another employee of the publisher is desirable. In 2018 "The Acton Plan" was created to help check information more effectively to get rid of false information.
- Corrections are published when errors are found. These corrections are called corrigendums in newspapers, they appear after publication in the next issue.
- Defendants in a trial are only considered to have "allegedly" committed a crime, until proven guilty, when their crimes are generally recorded as true (unless, of course, there is a serious dispute about a wrongful conviction). In many publications, when defendants are convicted or plead guilty, they replace "allegedly" with "convicted," "convicted," or "found guilty" in their reports to avoid the slightest possibility of a defamation case. wrong conviction.



- Feedback surveys and statistical information deserve special treatment to refer to any findings, results in precise terms and to specify accuracy including estimation errors and methodological criticisms or errors. This way the information can be properly analyzed and used without heavy bias.
- Today's journalism is based on true, accurate and objective information. Removing that aspect would be detrimental not only to journalism, but to the way information is transmitted and delivered to viewers and others around the world. Audiences will see a lack of ethics and standards, leading others to question what is or isn't good, reliable information.
- Quality journalism that scrutinizes and critiques social, political and economic power, especially by those with money and power, is in a constant state of vulnerability to manipulation and censorship.

2. Consider Clander and Defamation:

- Reporting the truth is almost never defamation, which makes accuracy so important.
- Private individuals have privacy rights that must be balanced against the public interest in reporting information about them. Public figures have fewer privacy rights under US law, where journalists are immune from civil lawsuits if they report without malice. Canada has no such immunity; Reports on public figures must be supported by facts.
- Publishers vigorously defend defamation lawsuits filed against their journalists, usually covered by defamation insurance.

3. Principles of Harm Limitation:

During the normal course of an assignment, a reporter may go about gathering facts and details, conducting interviews, conducting research and background checks, taking photos, and recording video and audio in the pursuit of justice. Harm limitation is concerned with the questions of whether and, if so, how, everything learned should be recorded. This principle of limitation means that the negative consequences of full disclosure must be given some weight, leading to practical and ethical dilemmas. The Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics



offers the following advice, which is representative of the practical ideas of most professional journalists.

- Empathize with those who may be adversely affected by news coverage. Use special sensitivity when dealing with children and inexperienced sources or subjects.
- Be sensitive when finding or using interviews or photographs of those affected by tragedy or grief.
- Recognize that collecting and reporting information may cause harm or discomfort. Pursuing news is not a license to be rude.
- Recognize that private individuals have a greater right to control information about themselves than public officials and others who command power, influence, or attention. Only public necessity can justify an intrusion into one's privacy.
- Show good taste. Avoid wandering for the sake of ardent curiosity.
- Be careful about identifying minor suspects or victims of sex crimes.
- Be discreet about naming criminal suspects before formal charges are filed.
- Balance a criminal suspect's right to a fair trial with the public's right to information.

Duties of Journalist:

When talking about journalistic duty, we are mainly talking about who and whom journalists serve by performing their performance through their loyalty, duty and existence of cooperation, their professional duties and responsibilities. We are going to look at some of the areas where journalists perform their duties with integrity and honesty. These are;

- **Reader:** It is the duty of any journalist to present accurate and timely news without sensational headline or lead. This means that the reader must be able to trust the veracity of the journalistic story.
- **Employer:** A journalist owes his/her loyalty to the employer to work in the interest of his/her employer, mainly the private, political and commercial interests of the employer.
- **Editor:** A journalist owes his cooperation to an editor in providing the editor with most of the human-interest stories capable of increasing the sales volume or patronage of such medium.



- **Advertisers:** A journalist must also owe a duty of co-operation to advertisers to prepare a good advertising campaign and promote the product advertised and to publish or broadcast such advertisements at the right time.
- **Law and Society:** All journalists in a given country have fulfilled their duties towards law and society. This means that all journalists must act as per the provisions of the constitution and any violation or deviation for such offense may attract punishment. Also to help the journalist carry out his work during the investigation, members of the society are also met to tell the journalist what they know about such issues so that the journalist can develop his/her story in terms of accuracy.
- **Self-regulatory bodies:** Journalists should also learn that they owe their loyalty and cooperation to a regulatory body like the Nigerian Press Council to uphold their professional ethics and take their grievances to them when the need arises.
- **Sources of information:** A journalist must learn how to maintain good relationships with their sources and how to keep promises of confidentiality, and most importantly identify themselves as a journalist who informs that their point of view or account will be published on the news. . A journalist owes a great duty to his sources to obtain more information from them in the future.
- **Others in the same profession:** Journalists are loyal not only to their colleagues but also to other journalists who are in the same team with them. They should work as a team when it comes to competition and scoops, while such a journalist has to work with his/her colleagues from the same media house.

Law in its true sense is very different from morality. A law is usually the official document of a country referred to as the constitution. It is an official document of a country that clearly punishes criminals who go against such laws to every citizen living in that country. Law is often made by the legislature, interpreted by the judiciary, and enforced by the executive branch of government. Ethics on the other hand guides either an individual or an institution, organization, firm, company, meeting or other co-operative society which spells out their punishment which may be through fines or sanctions. They may be made by any designated person, entity or persons over which it controls. Yet, every citizen of the country is bound by



law, no matter where, how and when its members commit a wrongdoing, they can be punished in any matter within the country.

Conclude:

We cannot conclude that journalistic codes of conduct play an important role in strengthening the ideal role of journalism in a democracy. We found widespread support for a code of ethics among the editors and journalists we interviewed, but we do not know how much of this is rhetoric and how much of this support translates into practice. We've heard examples from reporters that show the real weight of the code in newsroom discussions and contacts with sources. But we've also heard comments that completely dismiss the importance of codes.

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