



Nigerian Journalists' Perception of Corruption in the Nation, the Media and among Journalists

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Abstract

This study investigated Nigerian journalists' perceptions of corruption, focusing on their views of national corruption, corruption within the media, and their self-perception regarding corrupt practices. The study was guided by the Critical Political Economy of the Media Theory, which highlights the influence of social factors and economic interests on media operations. A survey methodology was employed, using a structured questionnaire administered to 158 journalists in Plateau State, Nigeria. The findings reveal a strong consensus among journalists that corruption is deeply entrenched and culturally normalised in Nigeria, posing a major obstacle to national development. Within the media sector, corruption is also perceived as widespread. Journalists acknowledged the presence of unethical practices such as monetary inducements. The study reinforces existing literature on the structural enablers of corruption in the media, including poor remuneration, ownership structures, and political interference. Based on the results, the study recommends ethics training, improved working conditions, internal monitoring systems, independent media ownership reforms, and enhanced support for investigative journalism to strengthen media integrity and accountability.

Keywords: Media, Corruption, Nigerian Journalists, Critical Political Economy, Perception

Introduction

Corruption is a major problem in many countries, with far-reaching negative consequences and serious implications for stability and development (Kanyane, 2024). In Nigeria, corruption is widely perceived as pervasive, infiltrating all sectors of society (Ahmed et al., 2019; Akanle & Nkpe, 2021). Nigeria was ranked 144th out of 180 countries in the 2023 Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index, an index that assesses perceived levels of corruption in the public and political sectors, as evaluated by experts in these fields. Among the entities tasked with exposing and combating corruption, the media stands as a formidable force (Achakpaikyo et al., 2022). The media serves as the conscience of the nation by exposing public graft, encouraging public debate on issues of governance, and promoting a vision of good governance to which political leaders are expected to aspire (Ahva, 2022). However, there is growing concern that the media itself is compromised, with instances of paid news, biased reporting, bribery, and censorship reflecting deeper systemic corruption (Ahmed et al., 2020).

Several studies have revealed that journalists in Nigeria are poorly remunerated and often work in severely underfunded news organisations (Yusha'u, 2018; Odionye et al., 2021). It has also been argued that because journalists employed by media organisations receive inadequate

salaries, they are more susceptible to corruption and unethical conduct (Yusha'u, 2018). Journalists, according to Hamada (2020), as vanguards of truth and transparency, are expected to expose corruption and hold those in power accountable. This raises important questions regarding the involvement of journalists in the very systems of corruption they are ethically mandated to scrutinise and expose. In such circumstances, the integrity and perception of journalists themselves become pivotal concerns.

A valuable starting point is to ask whether journalists perceive corruption differently. This is especially pertinent as Herrero-Jiménez et al. (2024) suggest that investigating how journalists perceive corruption can provide important insights into their reporting behaviour. In this context, this study addresses a critical gap in existing research by examining Nigerian journalists' perceptions of corruption across three key dimensions: the national landscape of corruption, corruption within the media industry, and their personal susceptibility to corrupt influences. While previous studies have largely focused on societal or institutional corruption, the self-perception of journalists who are central actors in anti-corruption efforts remains underexplored. By offering empirical insights into how journalists navigate ethical dilemmas and external pressures, this research contributes to the development of strategies aimed at safeguarding journalistic integrity and revitalising the media's watchdog role in combating systemic corruption.

Statement of the Problem

Corruption remains a persistent barrier to Nigeria's socio-economic development, with the country consistently ranking among the most corrupt nations in global indices such as Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI). Although the media is widely recognised as a crucial watchdog institution tasked with exposing corruption and promoting accountability (Ahva, 2022; Schauseil, 2019), there is mounting evidence that the Nigerian media itself is entangled in systemic corruption, including practices such as paid news, censorship, and bribery (Ahmed et al., 2020). Existing studies have highlighted the vulnerability of journalists to unethical practices, often linked to poor remuneration, political interference, and chronic underfunding of media institutions (Yusha'u, 2018; Odionye et al., 2021). However, these investigations predominantly focus on societal or institutional corruption, overlooking a vital dimension: journalists' self-perception regarding their susceptibility to corruption. This gap is significant, as journalists are not merely observers but active participants in shaping public narratives about corruption. Their ethical decisions directly affect public trust and the media's ability to hold the powerful to account (Herrero-Jiménez et al., 2024). Yet, there is limited empirical research examining how journalists perceive their personal vulnerability to corruption, how these perceptions relate to their views on national and media corruption, or how such dynamics might undermine their professional integrity.

By examining Nigerian journalists' perceptions across three dimensions (1) national corruption, (2) media corruption, and (3) self-perceived susceptibility this study addresses the aforementioned gap and contributes to broader societal efforts to combat systemic corruption. It aims to ensure that those responsible for exposing corruption are not themselves complicit in its perpetuation.

Research Objectives

1. To examine Nigerian journalists' perceptions of the prevalence of corruption in wider Nigerian society.
2. To explore journalists' views on the extent and nature of corruption within the Nigerian media industry.

3. To investigate journalists' self-assessment regarding their own susceptibility to, or involvement in, corrupt practices.

Conceptual Clarification

Concept of Corruption

The term corruption has attracted various definitions over time. Etymologically, it is derived from the Greek word *corruptus*, meaning an aberration or a deviation from what is considered proper. The United Nations Global Programme against Corruption (as cited in Yusuf, 2014) defines corruption as the "abuse of power for private gain". Transparency International similarly defines it as "the abuse of entrusted power for private gain", offering a concise and focused interpretation. The World Bank (also cited in Yusuf, 2014) explains corruption as the abuse of office for personal gain, which occurs when a public official accepts, solicits, or extorts a bribe, or when private individuals offer bribes to manipulate public processes for competitive advantage. In line with this, Myint (2000) describes corruption as the use of public office for private benefit, whereby an officeholder exploits their position or status for personal advantage. Supporting this view, Agbu (2003) notes that public office may be misused even in the absence of bribery, through acts such as nepotism, patronage, theft of public assets, or diversion of state resources. Based on these perspectives, corruption may be understood as any behaviour that violates established norms of public trust. It encompasses the misuse of authority or position regardless of whether one is elected, appointed, or otherwise engaged in public service and implies that anyone, not only public officials, can be involved in corrupt practices.

The Corruption Perceptions Index and the ranking of nations by Transparency International, which assess perceived levels of corruption in countries' public sectors, tend to focus primarily on three main categories: bureaucratic corruption, electoral corruption, and political corruption. However, certain unethical practices, though not neatly fitting into these categories, have attracted significant attention due to their harmful impact on national economies. These include nepotism, favouritism, extortion, embezzlement, bribery, and fraud, all of which contribute substantially to the erosion of public trust and the weakening of institutional integrity (Yusuf, 2014). According to Igbinovia and Aigbive (2009), corruption has severe consequences for the nation, including resource wastage, infrastructural collapse, poor service delivery, a weakened and politicised civil service, massive looting of public funds leading to low economic indicators, and an underdeveloped economy driven by poor corporate governance and weak regulatory oversight.

Corruption and the Media

The media is widely regarded as the watchdog of the society, playing a vital role in promoting transparency and accountability. A free and independent press is instrumental in combating corruption, as numerous studies have established a strong positive correlation between press freedom and the control of corruption. A free press improves public access to information, making it more difficult for politicians and public officials to engage in corruption without scrutiny (Starke, et al. 2016); Nzeaka, et al. 2022). However, while the media is often positioned as a key player in the anti-corruption landscape, it is not immune to corruption itself. Although the literature largely focuses on the media's role in exposing corruption, there is limited research on corruption within media institutions (Mendes, 2013). Findings from Transparency International's Global Corruption Barometer reveal that media-related corruption is a concern in many developing countries, with issues such as cash-for-news, staged or fake reporting, undisclosed advertisements, nepotism, and manipulation by political or private interests being reported (Ristow, 2010; Spence, 2008; GRDC, 2010; Transparency International, 2003).

In countries like Nigeria, corruption in the media is exacerbated by factors such as poor remuneration, inadequate funding of media organisations, limited professional training, and low ethical standards. Ownership structures often tied to government or partisan interests, along with weak and undemocratic legal frameworks, further compromise the independence and integrity of the press (Mendes, 2013). These challenges hinder the media's ability to function effectively as a watchdog, thus weakening its role in promoting good governance. Although investigative journalism in Nigeria has, on occasion, exposed significant instances of corruption, there remains a substantial gap between the potential role of the media in fighting corruption and the actual outcomes achieved.

Review of Empirical Studies

There are few studies that have nexus with the current study. Olajide and Fanawopo (2023) investigated journalists' perspectives on the role of the Nigerian media in promoting good governance and accountability within a democratic context. The study adopted a qualitative approach using in-depth interviews with ten purposively selected journalists from both broadcast and print media organisations. The findings revealed that although journalists are increasingly reporting on governance issues, their effectiveness is significantly hindered by ownership structures, editorial biases, and relationships with political officeholders. The study contributes to media and governance scholarship by highlighting the structural and political constraints limiting journalistic independence, and it underscores the need for a more autonomous media landscape to enhance democratic accountability in Nigeria.

Also, Aderogba (2013) critically examined the state of corruption within the Nigerian media from the perspective of media practitioners using the survey method. Despite stakeholders' efforts to promote ethical journalism, findings showed widespread corruption, with over 75% of journalists admitting to engaging in unethical practices, even though a majority acknowledged such acts as unethical. Furthermore, more than half of the media organisations surveyed were indifferent to corrupt practices within their operations. The study contributes to the discourse by exposing the disconnect between ethical awareness and practice, and recommends improved conditions of service and institutional sensitisation to mitigate corruption in journalism.

In another study, Ahmed and Adisa (2018) explored how internal organisational dynamics and external pressures shape the framing of corruption-related news in Nigerian newspapers, particularly following the 2016 wave of high-profile arrests. Through in-depth qualitative interviews with six purposively selected newspaper correspondents in Kwara State, and analysed using NVivo software, the study revealed that economic constraints, media ownership, political interference, and PR influences distort journalistic objectivity. The study adds to the understanding of media capture in Nigeria and recommends prompt remuneration and protection of journalists to enhance the credibility of corruption reportage.

Similarly, Apuke (2016) assessed Nigerian journalists' knowledge and perceptions of brown envelope syndrome in Jalingo metropolis using a quantitative survey of 75 purposively selected journalists. Anchored on the Social Responsibility Theory, the study found that bribery is most visible during news sourcing and reporting, significantly undermining journalistic objectivity and ethical standards. The findings contribute empirical insight into how economic inducements compromise journalism's public service role and recommends stricter enforcement of media ethics, alongside enhanced training and education to restore professionalism in newsrooms.

Corroborating, Aja et al. (2024) investigated Nigerian journalists' perception and performance of the watchdog role using a nationwide survey. The study found that journalists exhibit a generally negative disposition toward the watchdog doctrine, with many lacking belief

in its relevance or primacy in news reporting. The findings highlight the gap between normative journalistic roles and practical commitment, concluding that the level of watchdog performance is largely determined by how journalists conceptualise investigative reporting. The study recommends targeted training in investigative journalism to strengthen the watchdog capacity of the Nigerian press.

Additionally, Musa and Antwi-Boateng (2023) conducted a historical analysis to interrogate the status of investigative journalism within the context of Nigeria's promotional politics. The study concluded that beyond the limitations imposed by the country's illiberal democratic environment, investigative journalism faces structural, institutional, and political constraints, including image laundering by politicians using promotional intermediaries. This study deepens the critique of power-media relations in Nigeria and underscores the need for institutional reforms to enable investigative journalism to function as a democratic accountability mechanism.

Based on the above, it is evident that existing studies have explored the media's role in promoting good governance, the prevalence of corruption among journalists, and the influence of organisational and political pressures on news framing. However, they largely overlook journalists' self-perception of corruption and how it intersects with national and institutional corruption. Many investigations focus on external influences or specific unethical practices like brown envelope syndrome without linking them to journalists' ethical consciousness or broader societal dynamics. Additionally, limited attention has been given to how journalists perceive their own vulnerability to corrupt practices within the system they report on. These gaps highlight the significance of the current study, which uniquely examines journalists' perceptions of corruption across three interconnected levels national, media industry, and personal, providing a more holistic understanding of the ethical challenges facing journalism and offering insight into how these perceptions may influence the credibility and accountability of the media in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Critical Political Economy of the Media Theory, a perspective rooted in the foundational work of Dallas W. Smythe and further developed by Vincent Mosco. Mosco (2015) expanded on Smythe's ideas by emphasising the interconnectedness of political and economic forces in shaping media operations. The theory explores how media ownership, funding structures, and economic constraints influence media content and editorial decisions. According to Hardy (2014), it critically examines power dynamics, questioning who owns the media, who finances it, and whose interests it serves. This theory posits that the media is not a neutral or purely objective institution but one shaped by broader capitalist and political interests.

In the context of this study Nigerian Journalists' Perception of Corruption in the Nation, the Media, and among Journalists the theory offers a useful lens for examining how economic and political influences shape journalists' understanding and reporting of corruption. In Nigeria, media organisations often operate under financial strain, with poor funding, low journalist remuneration, and ownership patterns tied to political elites or business moguls. These conditions create vulnerabilities to corruption within the media sector itself. As Jin (2018) notes, financial dependence and ownership interests can lead to compromised reporting, biased coverage, or outright suppression of corruption stories. Thus, Critical Political Economy of the Media Theory helps to explain why journalists may perceive corruption as pervasive not only in the nation at large but also within the media and among themselves. It provides insight into the systemic pressures that affect journalists' ability to report freely and ethically, revealing how media

corruption is often a reflection of broader structural imbalances tied to ownership and economic control (Hardy, 2023). The theory, therefore, underpins the rationale for investigating not only corruption in society but also within the institutions expected to hold power to account.

Research Methodology

This study adopted a survey research design, with the questionnaire serving as the primary instrument for data collection. Surveys and questionnaires provide a structured means of gathering data, reducing variability and ensuring consistency in the information obtained. The rationale for selecting this methodology was driven by the research objectives, which aimed to assess subjective perceptions specifically journalists' views on national, media, and self-related corruption across a representative sample. Surveys are particularly effective in quantifying subjective phenomena, as they standardise responses while offering nuanced insights into individual perspectives (Bryman, 2016). To enhance reliability, participation was restricted to journalists registered with the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), thereby ensuring that respondents possessed formal training and professional experience. Furthermore, the use of a mixed-mode administration (both physical and online) increased accessibility and helped minimise non-response bias. To ensure the validity and reliability of the data collection instrument, the questionnaire underwent rigorous testing through expert review. Two senior academics with specialisation in media studies research evaluated the questionnaire's alignment with the study's objectives and theoretical framework. Their feedback led to revisions in item phrasing and the inclusion of additional Likert-scale questions to improve measurement precision.

The population for the study comprised 262 journalists, representing the total number of NUJ-registered journalists in Plateau State. To determine the appropriate sample size, the Taro Yamane formula was applied, resulting in a sample of 159 respondents. Accordingly, 159 questionnaires were administered both physically and online; however, one questionnaire was deemed invalid and subsequently discarded. Descriptive statistical tools specifically, simple percentages and frequency distributions were employed in the analysis of the collected data.

Presentation of Findings

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Items	Frequency n=258	Percentage (%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	95	60.1
Female	63	39.9
<i>Age Range</i>		
Under 25	7	4.4
25–34	21	13.3
35–44	54	34.2
45–54	61	38.6
55 and above	15	9.5
<i>Years of Experience as a Journalist</i>		
Under 5 years	23	14.6
5–14 years	62	39.2
15–25 years	54	34.2
Above 25 years	19	12.0
<i>Type of Media Organisation</i>		
Print	20	12.7
Broadcast	95	60.1
Online	22	13.9
Others	21	13.3

The gender distribution indicates a higher representation of male journalists compared to their female counterparts. This disparity may reflect broader trends in the Nigerian journalism

industry, where male journalists are often in the majority. Most respondents fall within the 35–54 age range, suggesting that the study’s insights are primarily drawn from mid-career and experienced professionals. This implies that the perceptions and experiences captured are likely influenced by individuals with significant industry exposure, potentially offering more informed perspectives on the study’s objectives. The data also show that a substantial proportion of journalists (73.4%) have between 5 and 25 years of experience. This reinforces the notion that the majority of participants possess considerable professional background, which may shape their understanding and perception of corruption. The relatively balanced distribution across varying levels of experience ensures that the study reflects a broad range of viewpoints from both newer entrants and seasoned practitioners.

Finally, the predominance of respondents from the broadcast media sector (60.1%) suggests that a larger number of journalists in Plateau State operate within this domain. Consequently, the findings may be particularly reflective of issues and perceptions prevalent in the broadcast sector. Nonetheless, there is still reasonable representation from print (12.7%), online (13.9%), and other media organisations (13.3%), which contributes to a more comprehensive view of the media landscape. This diversity of media types helps to capture the diverse opinion in corruption perceptions across various platforms.

Table 2: Journalists’ Perception of Corruption in Nigeria

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Corruption is a major problem in Nigeria	120 (75.9%)	35 (22.2%)	2 (1.3%)	1 (0.6%)	0 (0%)
Nigerian society tolerates corruption to a large extent	87 (55.1%)	65 (41.1%)	6 (3.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
I believe that corruption significantly hinders development	112 (70.9%)	46 (29.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

In Table 2 above, 98.1% of journalists either strongly agree (75.9%) or agree (22.2%) that corruption is a major problem in Nigeria, indicating widespread recognition of the issue. Most journalists (96.2%) also agree that corruption is widely tolerated in Nigerian society, underscoring the societal challenge in addressing it. Significantly, all journalists (100%) agree that corruption severely hinders Nigeria’s development, highlighting the perceived impact of corruption on national progress. The near-unanimous consensus underscores journalists’ acute awareness of the pervasiveness and normalisation of corruption in the Nigerian society.

Table 3: Journalists’ Perception of Corruption in the Media

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Corruption is a major problem within the Nigerian media industry	39 (24.7%)	77 (48.7%)	29 (18.4%)	12 (7.6%)	1 (0.6%)
Many media organisations in Nigeria engage in corrupt practices	16 (10.1%)	77 (48.7%)	25 (15.8%)	35 (22.2%)	5 (3.2%)
Only a few media organisations in Nigeria engage in corruption	3 (1.9%)	60 (38.0%)	36 (22.8%)	46 (29.1%)	13 (8.2%)

The data in Table 3 reveals that a majority of journalists perceive corruption as a significant issue within the Nigerian media industry. Specifically, 73.4% (24.7% strongly agree and 48.7% agree) affirm that corruption is a major problem in the media, while only a small minority (8.2%) disagree or strongly disagree. Similarly, over half (58.8%) of the respondents believe that many media organisations engage in corrupt practices, although a notable 25.4% either disagree or strongly disagree, suggesting some level of divided opinion. Interestingly, 38% agree with the statement that only a few media organisations are corrupt, while 37.3% (disagree and strongly

disagree combined) reject this notion, reinforcing the belief that corruption is widespread rather than isolated.

Table 4: Journalists' Self-Perception of Corruption

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I feel pressured to engage in corrupt practices within my profession	8 (5.1%)	43 (27.2%)	44 (27.8%)	57 (36.1%)	6 (3.8%)
I believe that being offered monetary gratification to cover or publish a story is corruption	16 (10.1%)	80 (50.7%)	22 (13.9%)	40 (25.3%)	0 (0%)

Table 4 reveals mixed perceptions among journalists regarding personal encounters with corruption in their professional practice. A combined 32.3% (5.1% strongly agree and 27.2% agree) reported feeling pressured to engage in corrupt practices, while 39.9% remained neutral or uncertain, suggesting possible reluctance to disclose or ambiguity in recognising corrupt pressure. However, a significant 39.9% (36.1% disagree and 3.8% strongly disagree) explicitly rejected experiencing such pressure. Regarding the classification of monetary gratification as corruption, a majority of respondents (60.8%) affirmed this (10.1% strongly agree and 50.7% agree), yet a notable 25.3% disagreed, and 13.9% were neutral. This indicates that while many journalists acknowledge that being offered money for coverage is unethical, a substantial proportion either rationalise or remain uncertain about such practices, reflecting potential normalisation or ethical confusion within the profession.

Discussion of Findings

The first objective of the study sought to examine journalists' perception of corruption in Nigeria. The findings suggest a strong consensus among journalists that corruption remains a pressing national issue. There is widespread agreement that corruption is not only prevalent but also widely tolerated within society, indicating a cultural normalisation of unethical behaviour. Furthermore, there is unanimous agreement among respondents that corruption significantly impedes national development. This collective perception highlights the gravity with which journalists view the impact of corruption on Nigeria's socio-economic progress and aligns with the broader discourse on corruption as a fundamental barrier to national advancement.

The second objective focused on journalists' perception of corruption within the media. The findings revealed that journalists perceive corruption as a serious problem within the media industry itself. A clear majority acknowledged that corruption is a significant issue in Nigerian media, with many believing that a substantial number of media organisations are actively involved in corrupt practices. However, there appears to be some level of disagreement or ambivalence regarding the extent of this corruption, with a portion of respondents suggesting it may be limited to only a few organisations. This perception reinforces the view that corruption in Nigeria is not confined to politics or governance but is deeply embedded within media institutions as well. These findings are consistent with earlier studies by Aderogba (2013) and Olajide and Fanawopo (2023), which also highlighted the normalisation and systemic nature of corruption in Nigeria. They support the Critical Political Economy of the Media Theory, which argues that media content and journalistic behaviour are shaped by broader political and economic structures. Similarly, the findings echo those of Ahmed and Adisa (2018) and Apuke (2016), who emphasised the role of ownership structures, political affiliations, and inadequate remuneration in compromising journalistic integrity. Within this context, journalistic practices are not merely ethical decisions but are influenced by institutional vulnerabilities and survival strategies. The findings also align with Musa and Antwi-Boateng (2023), who observed that media institutions are increasingly being used as tools for political image laundering rather than serving as watchdogs of democracy.

The third objective examined journalists' self-perception of corruption. The results present a complex picture of how journalists view their personal vulnerability to unethical practices. While some admitted feeling pressured to engage in corruption, a substantial number either rejected this or remained neutral perhaps due to uncertainty or a reluctance to disclose such experiences. In defining corruption, most journalists agreed that accepting monetary inducements to influence coverage constitutes corrupt behaviour. However, the presence of dissenting or neutral views indicates that not all journalists interpret such actions as unethical, pointing to potential gaps in ethical awareness or the influence of systemic normalisation within the profession. This finding resonates with Apuke (2016), who found that although journalists are aware of the unethical nature of brown envelope syndrome, many still engage in it due to poor working conditions and weak institutional oversight. The findings challenge the notion, as suggested in Aja et al. (2024), that ethical lapses stem primarily from ignorance; rather, they reveal how institutional and economic pressures can blur ethical boundaries within journalistic practice.

Conclusion

The study affirms that Nigerian journalists recognise corruption as a deeply entrenched issue affecting not only the broader society but also the media industry and their own professional conduct. Journalists overwhelmingly perceive corruption as a major impediment to national development and acknowledge its widespread societal acceptance, suggesting a cultural normalisation of unethical practices. Within the media, corruption is seen as both systemic and institutional, though views differ on its pervasiveness. Journalists' self-perception reveals a nuanced tension between ethical ideals and the pressures imposed by structural and economic realities, with some feeling compelled to compromise integrity. These findings reinforce existing literature and support the Critical Political Economy of the Media Theory, which underscores how ownership structures, political ties, and financial vulnerabilities shape journalistic output. Ultimately, the study highlights the need for both ethical reorientation and systemic reform to restore journalistic accountability and strengthen the media's role in promoting transparency and democracy.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study advances the following recommendations.

1. Media organisations and professional bodies such as the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) should implement continuous ethics training programmes to reinforce journalists' understanding of corruption and promote adherence to professional standards. These programmes should address grey areas in ethical perceptions, particularly regarding practices such as monetary inducements and editorial compromise.
2. Poor remuneration and job insecurity were found to be significant enablers of corruption. Media owners and regulatory bodies should ensure improved salaries, timely payment, and better working conditions for journalists to reduce their vulnerability to corrupt influences.
3. Media outlets should establish internal mechanisms for monitoring and addressing corruption within their operations. This includes setting up ethics committees, anonymous reporting channels, and clear penalties for violations of ethical conduct.
4. To curb undue political and economic influence, there is a need for more independent and publicly accountable media ownership structures. Regulatory reforms should be introduced to promote editorial autonomy and reduce the grip of political or business elites on news content.

5. Training and funding should be made available for investigative reporting, which is central to the media's watchdog role. Capacity-building initiatives should equip journalists with skills in data-driven journalism, fact-checking, and in-depth reporting.

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