

The Burden of the Nigerian Journalists in the Reportage of the 2023 General Elections

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Abstract

This study explored the challenges faced by Nigerian journalists while reporting on the 2023 General Elections. The study focused on ethical burdens, professional and personal risks, brown envelope journalism, harassment, and intimidation by journalists. The study highlighted the need for ethical training, stronger legal protections, and a commitment to upholding the principles of free and independent journalism to address Nigerian journalists' challenges. The study used a qualitative approach and purposive sampling to select journalists who covered the elections. Focus group discussions were conducted to collect data from the participants, and thematic analysis was used to identify patterns and themes in the data collected. The study revealed that Nigerian journalists faced significant challenges while reporting on the 2023 General Elections, including ethical burdens, professional and personal risks, brown envelope journalism, harassment, and intimidation. The study also highlights some strategies journalists used to overcome these challenges, such as collaboration and professionalism. The study recommends ethical-oriented training, stronger legal protections, and a commitment to upholding the principles of free and independent journalism. The study also highlights the need for media regulatory bodies, safety training, support networks, and gender-specific protections to protect journalists. Finally, the study emphasizes the importance of a culture of accountability in the media.

Keywords: Nigerian journalists, ethical burdens, brown envelope journalism, legal protections, free and independent journalism

Introduction

On February 25, 2023, Nigerians voted for a president, vice president, Senate, and House of Representatives (CDD, 2023; Imoh, 2022). President Muhammadu Buhari could not run again due to term limits (Imoh, 2022). The 1999 election was the closest since the military government ended. 93.4 million people could vote (Adetayo, Chughtai & Egbejule, 2023). A modified two-round system with up to three rounds elects the Nigerian president. To win the first round, a candidate must receive a plurality of votes and over 25% in at least 24 of the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory. If no candidate meets this criterion, a second round will be held between the top candidate and the next contender with the most state majorities (Imoh, 2022). The election cycle includes federal and state governorships and parliamentarians. On February 25, the same day as the presidential election, Nigeria's bicameral legislature held elections in all 109

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senatorial districts and 360 seats. Two weeks later, 28 out of 36 states held governorship and state parliament elections in March 2023. (Adetayo, Chughtai & Egbejule, 2023).

Bola Tinubu, a former Lagos State governor and All-Progressives Congress nominee, won the election with 36.61 percent and 8,794,726 votes (CDD, 2023). Runners-up were former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, Peoples Democratic Party, and former Governor of Anambra State Peter Obi, Labour Party, who immediately protested the result (CDD, 2023). As state results began to be published on February 26 at the national collation centre in Abuja, dissent arose because results data had not been uploaded in compliance with the law. The Abubakar, Obi, and Rabi'u Kwankwaso campaigns questioned and rejected the election results by February 28 because of these circumstances and INEC criticism from observers and civil society groups (CDD, 2023).

Political issues predominated before the elections. Zoning disputes first highlighted ethnic politics. The second is insecurity in all Nigerian geopolitical zones and the amount of non-state armed groups that could disrupt the process (Hassan, 2023). Citizens distrust the police due to their brutality and intimidation (Hassan, 2023). Nigeria and West Africa changed after the 2023 general election. Three years of coups and countercoups have eroded democracy in the region (Hassan, 2023). Democracy requires journalists. It informs citizens, works as a watchdog, promotes transparency and accountability, encourages debate, and strengthens democracies. Journalism is important in a democracy because it provides factual and unbiased information on government, society, and other relevant topics (Toso, 2023; Forgeard, 2022). This knowledge helps citizens choose policies that affect their life (Forgeard, 2022). It monitors: Journalism can expose government corruption and immorality (Toso, 2023). Journalism can also elevate oppressed voices.

Journalism supports openness and accountability in government and other institutions by exposing wrongdoing, holding people in authority accountable, and generating debate and discussion by offering multiple viewpoints and ideas (Bekken (2018). This helps citizens understand multiple perspectives, make informed decisions, and develop strong democracies: Journalism informs voters, making democracy work. A well-informed society is essential for democracy. Quality local news is quantified by Stearns & Schmidt (2022). Understanding this influence is crucial to building a more egalitarian and sustainable future of local journalism that truly serves all communities at a time of democracy's peril and uncertainty (Stearns & Schmidt, 2022).

Nigeria's 2023 national elections were risky for journalists. The dangers were related to pervasive instability, post-electoral violence threats, and conflict-sensitive reporting. Journalists and voters are frequently threatened (Bayode, 2023). The largest, youngest Nigerian electorate will vote in high-stakes presidential, legislative, and governorship elections. Violence is likely in the contested election (International Crisis Group, 2023).

Nigerian journalists covering the 2023 general election were advised to be cautious about their ethics (Shehu, 2022). Nigeria's 2023 elections are at risk due to the government's reluctance to hold prior election abusers accountable and severe insecurity (Bukarti, 2022). To increase media coverage of elections in a fair,

factual, ethical, and inclusive manner, the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPC) has taught internet journalists and bloggers about conflict-sensitive reporting (Fadare, 2023). Violence, intimidation, and harassment pose serious threats to Nigerian journalists covering the 2023 elections. The government must protect journalists and voters during elections. Journalists covering the elections must also be cautious and ethical. Conflict-sensitive reporting ensures fair, accurate, ethical, and inclusive election coverage.

Due to pervasive insecurity, post-election violence threats, and the requirement for conflict-sensitive reporting, the 2023 Nigerian elections were risky for journalists. The moral, professional, and personal hazards Nigerian journalists encountered while covering the 2023 General Elections must be studied. It will reveal journalistic issues and solutions. The study will strengthen Nigerian press freedom, journalistic ethics, and election monitoring.

Literature Review

The February and March 2023 General Elections in Nigeria were significant for the country, and journalists played a crucial role in covering the elections. However, covering the elections came with a moral burden and professional and personal risks for journalists. This essay will review the challenges faced by Nigerian journalists during the February and March 2023 General Elections, including the need to be cautious, embrace the ethics of the profession, security risks, and the impact of corruption allegations on the elections.

The Need for Caution and Ethics

As journalists in Nigeria prepared for the coverage of the 2023 general election, they were enjoined to be cautious and mindful of the profession's ethics (Shehu, 2022). Caution and ethics are essential to ensure journalists report accurately and objectively without bias. Journalists must also be mindful of the impact of their reporting on the election process and the country's democracy.

Security Risks

Covering the February and March 2023 General Elections in Nigeria was not without risks. Journalists faced security risks, including threats of violence and intimidation from political actors and their supporters. The Tony Blair Institute for Global Change noted that the security risks to Nigeria's 2023 elections must not be overlooked (Bukarti, 2022). Journalists who covered the elections likened it to going to the war front (Rozen & Okakwu, 2023). The safety of journalists is essential to ensure that they can carry out their duties without fear of harm.

Corruption Allegations

Corruption allegations were a significant issue in Nigeria's February and March 2023 General Elections. Nigeria has lost hundreds of billions of United States dollars from corruption since independence, and its Corruption Perceptions Index score has worsened since 2016 (Transparency International, 2021). However, after the primaries, analysts noted the unlikelihood of corruption becoming a massive electoral issue as both Abubakar and Tinubu have credible, longstanding major corruption allegations (Transparency International, 2021). The

impact of corruption allegations on the election process and the country's democracy cannot be overstated.

The February and March 2023 General Elections in Nigeria were significant for the country, and journalists played a crucial role in covering the elections. However, covering the elections came with a moral burden and professional and personal risks for journalists. The need for caution and ethics, security risks, and the impact of corruption allegations on the elections were significant challenges Nigerian journalists faced. It is essential to ensure that journalists can carry out their duties without fear of harm and report accurately and objectively without bias. The safety of journalists is crucial to ensure that they can carry out their duties without fear of harm and that the country's democracy is protected.

Journalists play a crucial role in elections, and their role goes beyond just reporting the news. Journalists are responsible for informing the public, holding politicians accountable, and ensuring that the election process is fair and transparent. This essay will discuss the role of journalists in elections, including their responsibility to provide accurate information, educate the public, and ensure that the election process is fair and transparent.

Providing Accurate Information

One of the primary roles of journalists in elections is to provide accurate information to the public. Journalists must report the news objectively and without bias. They must also fact-check the statements made by politicians and provide context to help the public understand the issues at stake. Journalists covering the elections also need to have some knowledge of legal documents, such as the Constitution, the Electoral Code, and any journalist guidelines (SFCG, n.d.). Providing accurate information is essential to ensure the public can make informed decisions and participate in the democratic process.

Educating the Public

Journalists also have a responsibility to educate the public about the election process. This includes explaining the voting process, political parties' role, and civic participation's importance. Journalists must also provide information about the candidates and parties, convey political agendas, and fact-check the statements made by politicians (United Nations Human Rights, 2023). Educating the public is essential to ensure everyone can participate in the democratic process and make informed decisions.

Ensuring Fairness and Transparency

Journalists are also responsible for ensuring that the election process is fair and transparent. They must monitor the election process, report any irregularities, and hold politicians accountable for their actions. Journalists must also ensure that all candidates have equal access to the media and that the media coverage is balanced and impartial (Human Rights Movement, 2011). Ensuring fairness and transparency is essential to ensure that the election process is free and fair and that the public has confidence in the results.

Journalists play a crucial role in elections. They are responsible for providing accurate information, educating the public, and ensuring that the election process is fair and transparent. Journalists must report the news objectively and without bias, fact-check the statements made by politicians, and provide context to help the public understand the issues at stake. They must also educate the public about the election process, monitor it, report any irregularities, and hold politicians accountable for their actions. Ensuring that the election process is free and fair is essential to ensure that the public has confidence in the results and that democracy is protected.

Examining the moral burden, professional and personal risks faced by journalists in Nigeria

Journalism is a noble profession critical in shaping public opinion and holding those in power accountable. However, journalists in Nigeria face numerous challenges, including moral burdens, professional and personal risks. One of the most significant ethical burdens Nigerian journalists face is the practice of brown-envelope journalism (Murtala, 2018; Eke, 2015). This practice involves accepting bribes from sources in exchange for favourable coverage. While journalists may feel compelled to accept these bribes due to financial constraints, it undermines the media's credibility and erodes public trust in journalism.

In addition to the ethical burden of brown envelope journalism, Nigerian journalists face professional and personal risks. For example, journalists reporting corruption or human rights abuses may face harassment, intimidation, and physical violence (Premium Times, 2021). The government has also been known to use regulatory measures to silence critical voices in the media. This creates a chilling effect on journalists, making them hesitant to report on sensitive issues.

Another significant challenge Nigerian journalists face is source confidentiality (Omoniyi, 2018). Journalists must protect their sources, but this can be difficult in a country where the government targets whistleblowers and journalists who report on sensitive issues. This creates a dilemma for journalists who want to report on important stories but fear for their safety and the safety of their sources.

There is a need for ethical-oriented training and sensitization of journalists (Murtala, 2018). This will help expose them to the inherent burdens of accepting bribes and other unethical practices. Additionally, there is a need for stronger legal protections for journalists who report on sensitive issues (Premium Times, 2021). This will help create a safer environment for journalists to work without fear of harassment or intimidation.

Nigerian journalists face numerous challenges, including ethical burdens and professional and personal risks. The practice of brown envelope journalism, harassment and intimidation, and the lack of legal protections for journalists are some of the most significant challenges. There is a need for ethical-oriented training, stronger legal protections, and a commitment to upholding the principles of free and independent journalism.

Methodology

The study involves a qualitative approach to understanding the moral burden and professional and personal risks Nigerian journalists face while reporting on the 2023 General Elections. The study used purposive sampling to select journalists who covered the elections. Focus group discussions were used to collect data from the participants. The discussions commenced with the researchers explaining the focus group discussion format and the importance of the participants in the discussion. The participants were then assured of their confidentiality and anonymity in the study.

The discussions were conducted in a suitable location, and the participants were grouped based on their experience and media organization. The data collected were analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis involves identifying patterns and themes in the data collected. The themes were used to understand the moral burden and professional and personal risks Nigerian journalists face while reporting on the 2023 General Elections. The study also explored the ethical implications of brown envelope journalism and the challenges of source confidentiality.

Findings

Presentation of Themes Emerging from the Data Analysis

FGDQ1: What ethical burdens did you face while reporting the 2023 General Elections?

The thematic analysis of the focus group discussion question "What ethical burdens did you face while reporting the 2023 General Elections?" revealed the following themes:

1. **Brown Envelope Journalism:** Participants reported that brown envelope journalism was prevalent during the 2023 General Elections. They faced ethical burdens in deciding whether to accept bribes from sources in exchange for favourable coverage. Participants expressed that accepting bribes undermined the media's credibility and eroded public trust in journalism.
2. **Source Confidentiality:** Participants reported that source confidentiality was a significant ethical burden while reporting the 2023 General Elections. They had to balance their duty to protect their sources with the risk of being targeted by the government, which is known to target whistleblowers and journalists who report on sensitive issues.
3. **Harassment and Intimidation:** Participants reported facing harassment, intimidation, and physical violence while reporting on sensitive issues during the 2023 General Elections. They faced ethical burdens in deciding whether to report on these issues and risk their safety and the safety of their sources.
4. **Lack of Ethical Standards:** Participants reported a lack of ethical standards in journalism in Nigeria. They faced ethical burdens in deciding how to report sensitive issues while upholding ethical standards.

FGDQ2: What professional and personal risks did you face while reporting the 2023 General Elections?

The thematic analysis of the focus group discussion question "What professional and personal risks did you face while reporting the 2023 General Elections?" revealed the following themes:

1. Harassment and Intimidation: Participants reported facing harassment, intimidation, and physical violence while reporting on sensitive issues during the 2023 General Elections. They faced professional and personal risks in deciding whether to report on these issues and risk their safety and the safety of their sources.
2. Legal Risks: Participants reported facing legal risks while reporting on sensitive issues during the 2023 General Elections. They faced professional and personal risks in deciding whether to report on these issues and risk legal consequences.
3. Financial Risks: Participants reported facing financial risks while reporting on the 2023 General Elections. They faced professional and personal risks in deciding whether to report on sensitive issues and risk losing their jobs or sources of income.
4. Emotional Risks: Participants reported that they faced emotional risks while reporting on the 2023 General Elections. They faced professional and personal risks in dealing with the stress and trauma of reporting sensitive issues.

FGDQ3: What strategies did you use to overcome your challenges while reporting the 2023 General Elections?

The thematic analysis of the focus group discussion question "What strategies did you use to overcome the challenges you faced while reporting the 2023 General Elections?" revealed the following themes:

1. Collaboration: Participants reported collaborating with other journalists and media organizations to overcome the challenges they faced while reporting the 2023 General Elections. They worked together to share information, resources, and support.
2. Professionalism: Participants maintained professionalism while reporting on sensitive issues during the 2023 General Elections. They followed ethical standards and journalistic principles, even in the face of harassment, intimidation, and physical violence.
3. Technology: Participants reported using technology to overcome challenges while reporting the 2023 General Elections. They used social media, encrypted messaging apps, and other digital tools to communicate with sources and protect their identities.
4. Self-Care: Participants reported practising self-care to overcome challenges while reporting the 2023 General Elections. They took breaks, exercised, and sought emotional support to cope with the stress and trauma of reporting on sensitive issues.

FGDQ4: How prevalent is brown envelope journalism in Nigeria, and what are its ethical implications?

Brown envelope journalism is a common practice in Nigeria, and the thematic analysis of the focus group discussion question "How prevalent is brown envelope journalism in Nigeria, and what are its ethical implications?" revealed the following themes:

1. **Prevalence:** Participants reported that brown envelope journalism is prevalent in Nigeria. They expressed that journalists face financial constraints and are often underpaid, which makes them vulnerable to accepting bribes from sources in exchange for favourable coverage. Participants also reported that the practice is widespread in both government-owned and private media organizations.
2. **Ethical Implications:** Participants reported that brown envelope journalism has significant ethical implications. They expressed that accepting bribes undermines the media's credibility and erodes public trust in journalism. Participants also reported that the practice creates a conflict of interest, as journalists are expected to report objectively and without bias.
3. **Impact on Journalism:** Participants reported that brown envelope journalism harms journalism in Nigeria. They expressed that the practice undermines the quality of journalism and creates a culture of corruption in the media. Participants also reported that the practice makes it difficult for journalists who report objectively to compete with those who accept bribes.

FGDQ5: What are the challenges of source confidentiality in Nigeria, and how do they affect your work as a journalist?

The thematic analysis of the focus group discussion question "What are the challenges of source confidentiality in Nigeria, and how do they affect your work as a journalist?" revealed the following themes:

Challenges of Source Confidentiality:

1. **Risk of Exposure:** Participants reported that exposure is a significant challenge to source confidentiality in Nigeria. They expressed that the government is known to target whistleblowers and journalists who report on sensitive issues, which makes it difficult to protect sources.
2. **Lack of Legal Protections:** Participants reported that the lack of legal protections for journalists who protect their sources is a significant challenge in Nigeria. They expressed a need for stronger legal protections to ensure journalists can protect their sources without fear of legal consequences.
3. **Pressure from Sources:** Participants reported that pressure is challenging to source confidentiality in Nigeria. They expressed that sources may pressure journalists to reveal their identities or compromise their reporting in exchange for information.
4. **Lack of Trust:** Participants reported that lacking trust between journalists and sources is a challenge to source confidentiality in Nigeria. They expressed that sources may be hesitant to share information with journalists due to a lack of trust in the media.

Impact on Work as a Journalist:

1. **Difficulty in Reporting Sensitive Issues:** Participants reported that the challenges of source confidentiality make it difficult to report sensitive issues. They expressed that protecting sources is essential to reporting sensitive issues, and the lack of source confidentiality can lead to self-censorship.
2. **Risk of Harassment and Intimidation:** Participants reported that the challenges of source confidentiality put them at risk of harassment, intimidation, and physical violence. They expressed that protecting sources can put them in danger, and the lack of legal protections makes it difficult to report sensitive issues without fear of retaliation.

FGDQ6: What are the ethical standards for journalism in Nigeria, and how do they guide your work?

The thematic analysis of the focus group discussion question "What are the ethical standards for journalism in Nigeria, and how do they guide your work?" revealed the following themes:

Ethical Standards for Journalism in Nigeria:

1. **Code of Ethics:** Participants reported that the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) has a code of ethics that guides the practice of journalism in Nigeria. The code of ethics outlines the principles of accuracy, fairness, impartiality, and responsibility in journalism.
2. **Professionalism:** Participants reported that professionalism is an ethical standard for journalism in Nigeria. They expressed that journalists are expected to follow ethical standards and journalistic principles, even in the face of harassment, intimidation, and physical violence.
3. **Independence:** Participants reported that independence is an ethical standard for journalism in Nigeria. They said journalists are expected to report objectively and without bias, even under pressure from sources or media organizations.
4. **Accountability:** Participants reported that accountability is an ethical standard for journalism in Nigeria. They expressed that journalists are expected to be accountable for reporting and correcting errors or inaccuracies.

Impact on Work as a Journalist:

1. **Upholding Ethical Standards:** Participants reported that ethical standards guide their work as journalists in Nigeria. They expressed that upholding ethical standards is essential to maintaining the media's credibility and public trust in journalism.
2. **Balancing Ethical Standards and Professional Risks:** Participants reported that balancing ethical standards and professional risks is a challenge they face as journalists in Nigeria. They expressed that protecting sources and reporting on sensitive issues can put them at risk of harassment, intimidation, and physical violence.

FGDQ7: What can be done to improve the ethical standards of journalism in Nigeria?

The thematic analysis of the focus group discussion question "What can be done to improve the ethical standards of journalism in Nigeria?" revealed the following themes:

1. **Ethical-Oriented Training and Sensitization:** Participants suggested that ethical-oriented training and sensitization of journalists are essential to improving the ethical standards of journalism in Nigeria. They expressed that journalists need to be educated on ethical standards and journalistic principles to uphold the media's credibility.
2. **Stronger Legal Protections:** Participants suggested that stronger legal protections for journalists who report on sensitive issues are necessary to improve the ethical standards of journalism in Nigeria. They expressed that legal protections would encourage journalists to protect their sources and report on sensitive issues without fear of retaliation.
3. **Accountability:** Participants suggested that accountability is essential to improving the ethical standards of journalism in Nigeria. They expressed that journalists need to be accountable for their reporting and correct any errors or inaccuracies.
4. **Media Regulatory Bodies:** Participants suggested that media regulatory bodies, such as the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), should enforce ethical standards and journalistic principles to improve the ethical standards of journalism in Nigeria. They expressed that media regulatory bodies should discourage the practice of brown-envelope journalism and promote ethical reporting.
5. **Use of Technology:** Participants suggested that using technology, such as social media and encrypted messaging apps, can improve the ethical standards of journalism in Nigeria. They expressed that technology can be used to protect sources and communicate securely.

FGDQ8: What can be done to protect journalists from harassment, intimidation, and physical violence while reporting on sensitive issues?

The thematic analysis of the focus group discussion question "What can be done to protect journalists from harassment, intimidation, and physical violence while reporting on sensitive issues?" revealed the following themes:

1. **Legal Protections:** Participants suggested that stronger legal protections for journalists who report on sensitive issues are necessary to protect journalists from harassment, intimidation, and physical violence. They expressed that legal protections would encourage journalists to report on sensitive issues without fear of retaliation.
2. **Media Regulatory Bodies:** Participants suggested that media regulatory bodies, such as the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), should enforce ethical standards and journalistic principles to protect journalists from harassment, intimidation, and physical violence. They expressed that media regulatory bodies should discourage the practice of brown-envelope journalism and promote ethical reporting.

3. **Safety Training:** Participants suggested that safety training is essential to protect journalists from harassment, intimidation, and physical violence. They said journalists must be trained on safety measures and protocols to protect themselves while reporting sensitive issues.
4. **Support Networks:** Participants suggested that support networks are essential to protect journalists from harassment, intimidation, and physical violence. They expressed that journalists need access to emotional support and counselling to cope with the stress and trauma of reporting on sensitive issues.
5. **Gender-Specific Protections:** Participants suggested that gender-specific protections are necessary to protect women journalists from harassment, intimidation, and physical violence. They expressed that women journalists face unique challenges and risks while reporting on sensitive issues and need specific protections.

Discussion of findings

The focus group discussion on protecting journalists from harassment, intimidation, and physical violence while reporting on sensitive issues identified five themes that emerged from the discussion. These themes are consistent with previous studies and suggest that legal protections, media regulatory bodies, safety training, support networks, and gender-specific protections are essential to protecting journalists.

1. **Legal Protections:** Participants suggested that stronger legal protections for journalists who report on sensitive issues are necessary to protect journalists from harassment, intimidation, and physical violence. This theme is consistent with previous studies showing that legal protections are essential to protecting journalists from violence and harassment (OSCE, 2011). Legal protections can include laws that criminalize violence against journalists, provide legal remedies for journalists who are victims of violence, and ensure that perpetrators are held accountable for their actions.
2. **Media Regulatory Bodies:** Participants suggested that media regulatory bodies, such as the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), should enforce ethical standards and journalistic principles to protect journalists from harassment, intimidation, and physical violence. This theme is consistent with previous studies showing that media regulatory bodies are critical in protecting journalists from violence and harassment (UNESCO, 2021a). Media regulatory bodies can enforce ethical standards and journalistic principles, investigate complaints of violence and harassment, and support journalists who are victims of violence.
3. **Safety Training:** Participants suggested that safety training is essential to protect journalists from harassment, intimidation, and physical violence. This theme is consistent with previous studies showing that safety training is essential to protect journalists from violence and harassment (UNESCO, 2021b). Safety training can include training on identifying and avoiding potential risks, responding to threats and attacks, and protecting oneself while reporting on sensitive issues.
4. **Support Networks:** Participants suggested that support networks are essential to protect journalists from harassment, intimidation, and physical violence.

This theme is consistent with previous studies showing that support networks are essential to protect journalists from violence and harassment (ILO, 2022). Support networks can include peer support groups, counselling, and legal support services.

5. **Gender-Specific Protections:** Participants suggested that gender-specific protections are necessary to protect women journalists from harassment, intimidation, and physical violence. This theme is consistent with studies showing that women journalists face unique challenges and risks while reporting sensitive issues (Goyal, Park & Vasserman, 2022). Gender-specific protections can include policies and programs that address gender-based violence, training on how to identify and respond to gender-based violence, and support services tailored to women journalists' needs.

The themes that emerged from the focus group discussion on protecting journalists from harassment, intimidation, and physical violence while reporting on sensitive issues are consistent with previous studies and suggest that legal protections, media regulatory bodies, safety training, support networks, and gender-specific protections are essential to protecting journalists. These findings highlight the need for a commitment to upholding the principles of free and independent journalism, ethical-oriented training and sensitization of journalists, stronger legal protections for journalists who report on sensitive issues, and a media accountability culture.

Conclusion

This study highlights the challenges faced by Nigerian journalists while reporting on the 2023 General Elections. The study reveals that journalists face ethical burdens, professional and personal risks, brown-envelope journalism, harassment, and intimidation. The study also highlights some strategies journalists used to overcome these challenges, such as collaboration and professionalism.

Based on the findings presented in this paper, it is clear that Nigerian journalists face numerous challenges while reporting on the 2023 General Elections. These challenges include ethical burdens, professional and personal risks, brown-envelope journalism, harassment, and intimidation.

Overall, this paper provides valuable insights into the challenges faced by Nigerian journalists and the need for measures to support and protect them in their work.

Recommendations

The study recommends:

1. The need for ethical-oriented training, stronger legal protections, and a commitment to upholding the principles of free and independent journalism.
2. The adoption of collaboration and maintaining professionalism by journalists as ways to overcome challenges in the field during election periods.
3. Journalists should maintain professionalism and adhere to ethical principles while reporting sensitive issues.
4. Journalists should know their legal rights and seek stronger protections to safeguard themselves from harassment, intimidation, and physical violence.

5. Journalists should seek emotional support and counselling to cope with the stress and trauma of reporting sensitive issues.

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