Cannons of Broadcasting in the Digital Era: A Review of Extant Literatures

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ABSTRACT

The canons of broadcasting in the Digital Era were investigated in this research. It aimed to discover the imperatives of media canons in broadcasting in the digital age, as well as investigate numerous media canons and their broadcasting consequences. The research was based on Kant's Duty Law Theory. Because the study was a position paper, it relied on the library research approach, which required gathering information from the library, journals, the internet, book chapters, and other sources. According to the conclusions of this study, media ethics signifies media professionalism; hence, it is vital for journalists to adhere to their profession's ethical principles, especially because journalism acts as the public's conscience. Several sorts of media ethics were also discovered to aid journalists in carrying out their civic obligations to the public. As a result, the study concluded that, among other things, the brown envelope syndrome, plagiarism, and sycophancy should be ethically addressed by journalists on an individual basis through self-regulation in order to breed and build morally and ethically balanced journalists, as media ethics remains the springboard for modern journalism practice. Journalists in Nigeria should be upright and independent in carrying out their duties as enshrined in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, enabling laws, and cannons of journalism in the digital media and era, according to the study, because it is in the interest of both individual journalists and media organisations that news be presented as objectively as possible.

KEY WORDS: *Cannons, Ethics, Broadcasting, Journalism, Digital media.*

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, journalism in Nigeria has become an important force in the society not only as means for the expression of ideas but also as a social force to be reckoned with and a vehicle for mobilistion as the media has become one of the important and basic social processes in any society. This is simply so because man as social being must communicate and by so doing establish credibility and enhance survival (Asemah & Udoakah, 2018). Hence, the digital media performs a number of vital functions such as: information, education, agenda setting, watchdog, cultural promotion, integration of culture etc. without which society would be in chaos and in the dark (Akinfeleye, 1990). However, journalism as a profession demands discipline, abiding by ethics and good moral behaviour in order to safeguard the society, which depends so much on journalists for timely and day-by-day information. This is essential because the society is expected to react constructively and knowledgeably through information received from the journalists. Consequently,

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the people will be able to take appropriate decisions through numerous informative, educative and entertaining programmes that are disseminated by journalists (Okoro, 2004).

The world is now a digital village and journalism as a profession has greatly facilitated the digitisation of the world (Nwaoboli, 2022). The digital age also known as the Information Technology (IT) era, may be characterised as a time in which information dominates all areas of human life and activity. The digital world provides us with a vast quantity of data and information that is accessible to anyone. As a result, the cannons of news gathering and dissemination in the digital era have been endangered.

As such, the emphasis on the free flow of information and the protection of intellectual property owners' economic interests in the digital age has introduced contemporary cannons, the majority of which are related to media laws, such as the right of access to information and the right to privacy, which are jeopardised by the emphasis on the free flow of information. However, the digital world is here to stay (Nwaoboli, Ezeji & Osife-Kurex, 2022) and broadcasters and the broadcasting industry must adhere to the cannons of digital broadcasting and the digital age.

Broadcasting is the transmission of information, ideas, meanings, data, etc through radio waves from a radio or television station to audiences in distant or near areas. Broadcasting is a completely electronic means of communication that originated in Nigeria in 1932 as a test by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) (Oso & Pate, 2011). Onabajo (2004) observes that broadcasting in Nigeria has come a long way and gone through numerous changes to keep up with the complexity of a rapidly changing society.

In its onset, broadcasting was majorly a reserve for federal and state governments until 1992, when the federal government decided to de-regulate the broadcast media (Nigeria Press Organisation, 1998). On the other side, cannons also known as ethics is concerned with ideas of as right and wrong (Okunna, 1997). Cannons can be described as the study of moral duties and obligations, as well as what is good and evil at any given scenario or point of time irrespective of whether the action or inaction is legal or not. Cannon is also known as a normative science of behaviour that focuses on doing the right thing.

Conversely, media ethics might be defined as the underlying values, morals and principles of right and wrong that govern broadcasters and the broadcast business in their public service duties in the digital era. Cannons in journalism has a direct impact on the general public and society. Like other professions, practitioners are meant to be guided by a code of conduct that all members must follow and is enforced by a body that all members approve (Qaribu, 2016).

The cannons of great journalism include truthfulness, objectivity and impartiality among others (Kempf, 2007). Due to the nature of the audience for whom the content is intended, however, it is now important to have professionals put the piece of information together for public consumption while taking audience diversity into mind. There are compelling grounds to assume that if a journalist behaves unethically or unprofessionally, society will swiftly identify the behaviour as such (Qaribu, 2016). This means that, in order to avoid unethical behaviour in the packaging and transmission of news, the ideal candidate for the job is a professional who will follow the journalistic code of ethics (Asemah & Ekerikevwe, 2013).

Due to government pressure on journalists, a desire to protect personal and corporate interests, poverty and insufficient professional training, many journalists engage in unethical

practices such as sensationalism, invasion of privacy, infringement of code of conduct, impunity, disregard for security laws and collection of brown envelopes (Bankole, 2002). Listeners, readers and viewers in Nigeria have lost trust in mass media contents due to the impact of unethical actions on news judgment and objectivity, as opposed to the ethics of the profession; listeners, readers and viewers have lost faith in mass media contents.

Ethics, according to Ojo (2003), should give a standard by which a journalist may judge if an activity is ethical or wrong, good or bad, responsible or irresponsible; journalists nowadays must be aware of their limits in order to prevent misusing the media's power. The researcher used the library research method, which involves a step-by-step procedure for gathering information for the paper's composition and presentation. This strategy was crucial since it aided in the identification of fresh research gaps. The research process included identifying and uncovering relevant information, analysing the results and lastly formulating and communicating one's opinions. As a result, our study, which reviews extant literatures of broadcasting cannons in the digital era, is based on this background.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Cannons Explained

Cannons also known as ethics are moral principles that help people distinguish between what is right and what is wrong, good and evil, fair and unfair and just and unjust. This is because a person's actions in any given situation may be judged not only by his conscience, but also by social, professional and organisational norms (Kempf, 2007; Day, 2006). Cannon is also broad science of good and wrong. The notion may be traced back to Aristotle's work NICHOCHEAN ETHICS which impacts the journalist's conscience in the execution of his duties (Duyile, 2005).

Aristotle maintained in that book that pleasure might be attained by the development of the virtues of wisdom, temperance, bravery and justice through the contemplative use of the intellect. According to Duyile (2005), ethics belongs to the intellect and one's conscience is the judge. Every profession is controlled by particular ethical or code of conduct standards. Daramola (1999) defines cannons as the study of human behaviour in terms of whether it is right or bad, or the study of human conduct in light of moral principles. The term "cannons" thus refers to a set of rules or a code of behaviour.

Ethics is also a philosophical ideology that examines human behaviour from the standpoint of integrity (Pavlic & Melntosh, 2011). It is concerned with what human behaviour should or should not be, but it is also a reflection of the standards and principles that should guide us in deciding what is right and putting it into practice in daily life. As a result, ethics is a theoretical and normative science, as well as a hypothetical and practical stance.

Media Ethics

Media ethics is the study of what we should do in the media. It has to do with the act of making rational judgments and sound moral decisions in daily journalistic performance; critical reflection on and self-confrontation with the moral choices that arise on a daily basis; rules of conduct or morality that direct us to the right or best course of action in a given situation; and guide on what is wrong and right, fair and unfair and just and unjust in media practices.

Media ethics, according to Ike (2005), is a collection of guidelines that help journalists and news organisations in carrying out their responsibilities properly without endangering their profession's and media's reputations. To put it another way, the basic purpose of media ethics is to safeguard the media's credibility. As a result, media ethics serves as a watchdog for the press, seeking to prevent journalists from participating in unprofessional and unethical conduct such as intentional deception and violation of others' privacy. Journalists are tasked with informing, educating and entertaining their readers. They hunt for news, which they believe is everywhere and tell the public about what is going on around them in order to fulfill their tasks.

The role of the press in our society includes carrying ideas, presenting representative images of society, classifying society's values and goals, monitoring the government and holding it accountable to the people, informing, educating and entertaining the public, promoting the concepts of accountability, integrity, honesty, fairness and equity and giving voice to the marginalised (Ike, 2005). The media need a set of standards against which it may be measured in order to carry out these and other tasks. These templates for measuring are known as media law, or the result of regulations in the form of ethical journalism profession. The media is often seen as a vehicle for national development and its behaviour is expected to be guided by ethical values. Naturally, the media may act as collaborators rather than as subversive operatives that continuously undermine government efforts.

According to Mahatma Gandhi, the Indian political philosopher, journalism's only goal should be to assist others (Christopher & Okereke, 2013). The media has enormous influence, yet just as an unrestrained river may flood a whole area and destroy crops, so can an uncontrolled pen. Little wonder, Duyile (2005) describes media cannons as prescriptions guiding all journalists in behaving properly while carrying out their functions to inform, educate, entertain and lead the public.

Overview of Digital Media

Digital media may be defined as a system of public communication, content production and distribution systems, computer and network-based technologies that enable the creation of these systems (Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2022; Asemah, Nwaoboli &. Beli, 2022; Asemah, Nwaoboli & Nwoko, 2022; Ekhareafo & Nwaoboli, 2022). Newspapers, periodicals, books, radio, television and the cinema, among other traditional sources of mass communication, are all undergoing a digital change. The term "digital media" also refers to the creation of new media that can be accessed through the internet and other digital delivery methods, many of which appeal to specialised audiences and communities rather than a large public in the traditional sense (Randall, 2000).

Digital media includes software, digital photographs, digital video, video games, web pages, websites, social media, digital data and databases, digital audio files like mp3, electronic papers and electronic books. Paid media includes traditional media (e.g., television, radio, print, or outdoor advertising), the internet and digital media, as well as paid media ethics (e.g., paid search advertisements, web and social media display advertisements, mobile advertisements or email marketing). This economic model encourages businesses to develop sponsored content and then pay platforms like Instagram for the right of displaying it in users' newsfeeds. Paid media, often known as promoted or sponsored content, is presented to these clients. Digital content may be purchased or leased (McQuail, 2010).

The company owns and manages promotional channels such as a website, blog, official social media accounts, brand communities, marketers and promotional activities. This kind of promotion builds long-term relationships with existing and potential clients while also attracting media attention. Website extensions, on the other hand, include blogs, social media and other sources, while these three aspects constitute brand extensions. The more owned media a firm owns, the more opportunities it has to increase its brand's online presence. Earned media refers to public relations channels including television, newspapers, blogs and video sites that do not need direct payment or control by marketers (McQuail, 2010), but are included because viewers, readers, or users are interested in them. Free media is simply online word of mouth, most often in the form of "viral" trends, mentions, shares, retweets, reviews, recommendations, or third-party content.

Characteristics of the Digital Media

Some characteristics of the digital media are:

a. Communication in real time and at a quicker rate

Digital media delivers messages or material in real time. The term "real time" refers to the time at which a process occurs. It also refers to the time when a certain event occurs and is accessible by others at the same time. When we enter data, the result happens simultaneously. When material is created, it is instantly and forever accessible to customers. The use of digital technology in developing media has resulted in speedier content delivery to consumers.

b. Personalisation and Customisation

Personalisation entails meeting a person's needs and providing complete pleasure. Customers' interests, needs and habits are taken into account by new media companies while creating content. Individual desires and preferences are prioritised. We may specify our preferences on the website if we wish to listen to or watch a certain kind of audio or video. And content producers are always willing to help. The need for localised content is high. By monitoring the behaviours of consumers, content creators may personalise the material.

c. Mobility and Virtuality

The 'virtuality' of new media is another intriguing feature. Everything is virtual in the sense that it is not physically existent. In the virtual world, computer-mediated communication offers a new form of experience. Nobody can perceive the other person's physical presence in the virtual world. We can communicate with the outside world using software and hardware without knowing where they are. We use computers to create realistic sights, sounds, and other experiences that make us feel as though we are in the actual world. We are linked to each other in an online environment in the virtual world.

d. Convergence

Convergence is one of the characteristics of the digital media. Digital media, often known as multi-media, integrates numerous modes of mass communication such as print, television and radio. On the internet, every kind of media coexists. Another word for this is multimedia journalism. In this case, every facet of the media is an important part of the story. Multimedia reporting is often confused with parallel reporting. A story may be covered by two or three journalists at the same time for print, video, or audio. The stories are separated from one another in such situations. Despite the fact that they are all on the internet, the only thing they have in common is the concept;

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otherwise, each narrative is unique. In multimedia journalism, several media elements are weaved into the tale according to the story's needs. Journalists may use a range of digital tools to help them create multimedia stories (McQuail, 2010).

e. Interactivity

Interactivity is the first and most important characteristics that distinguishes digital media from traditional media. With digital media, communication may be reviewed, shared, liked and remarked on (Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2021; Nwaoboli, 2022). Interactivity converts the consumer into a producer, enabling them to not only receive but also build media messages, allowing them to not only respond to but also develop media messages provided by the media industries. Passive consumers have become active producers as a result of this trait. The majority of news portals presently provide viewers the ability to interact with information, contact with content producers and contribute user-generated content.

f. Linkage

Linkage is another characteristics of the digital media. Because of archiving and information available on the internet, links are possible with digital media. It is easy to link one piece to a prior item on the same topic or to a different author's article on the same subject. The utilisation of connections adds to the depth of the story. Each story has a certain amount of space and time in digital media, just as there is a fixed amount of space and time in print, television and radio (Akinfeleye, 1990). While the problem in traditional media is to tell the whole story in the limited time and space available, the challenge in digital media is overcome by providing links to related material. It may be a report that is not on the website or an article on the same page. While links broaden the scope of the story and allow for simultaneous examination of several viewpoints, they also run the danger of diverting a reader to another website or piece of information. As a result, in every story, judicious use of connections is essential.

Cannons of the Broadcast Media

Several cannons govern the behaviour of journalists in the broadcast media. Some of them are:

1. Copyright

The federal Copyright Act of 1968 enshrines the protection of literary works against unauthorised reproduction, publication, performance, transmission, or alteration. Infringement occurs when someone copies, publishes, performs, transmits, or alters an original work without the permission of the copyright owner (Black & Roberts, 2011). The author/creator usually owns the copyright, however any of the rights given by the Copyright Act might be licensed to others. As a result of digital technology and networks, the way copyrighted works are distributed to the public has changed considerably. The digital technologies available have changed the nature of what artists may produce and how they share their work with the public, as well as how the public can access and interact with that material.

2. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is described as the unlawful use, theft and publication of another author's words, thoughts, ideas, or phrases in the name of creating one's own original work. In recent years, there has been an upsurge in the number of reported plagiarism instances in numerous industries in Nigeria. A number of journalists have been accused of plagiarizing work. Plagiarism is a result of

copyright violations. With the proliferation of information on the internet and in digital media (mainly open source papers, PDFs, PowerPoint presentations, blogs and so on), it is becoming simpler for anybody to copy and paste material.

3. Photo and video manipulation in the digital realm

This is a technique for converting a photo or video into the image or video that you want. Photo/video editing has historically been used to deceive or persuade others, as well as for self-expression and impromptu narratives. Even little changes may have a huge impact on how we see or evaluate an image or video. Photo/video editing deceptively alters the essence of photographs. The spectator has a hard time telling the difference between a manipulated image and reality (Neher & Sandin, 2007). A rising body of organisations examine the ethical use of digital editing in photojournalism. In the United States, for example, the National Press Photographers Association (NPPA) has created a Code of Ethics to promote the authenticity of published pictures, urging photographers not to change images that may mislead viewers or misrepresent persons. Infractions of the code are taken very seriously, especially when it comes to digitally modifying previously published photographs.

4. Character Assassination

This is a hostile verbal attack intended to smear a person's reputation or undermine their trustworthiness. The objective of a deliberate verbal assault is to tarnish someone's public image. According to Asemah (2011), character assassination is an unethical and illegal journalistic strategy. Some government officials and politicians pay the media in order to ruin the reputations of their opponents or enemies. As a political technique, politicians utilise the media to destroy their opponents' reputations in front of the public. To discredit their opponents' integrity, they utilise name-calling and other fabrications. Akinfeleye (1990) linked this unethical behaviour to a lack of acceptable ethics for journalistic activities in Nigeria. Character assassination is unethical and illegal and a journalist might be prosecuted for defamation or reputation harm.

5. Afghanistanism

This is the practice of writing about distant issues while neglecting home issues; it began in editorial writing but has now expanded to all sorts of journalistic writing. Afghanistanism may be caused by fear or a lack of boldness. Since charity should begin at home, journalists who work in these outlets are irresponsible and unethical, failing to perform the duty that society expects them to perform with courage and dedication by devoting time to harmless discussions of topics that are largely irrelevant to the majority of their audience.

6.   Advertorial

This is when advertisements are mixed in with editorial material without being distinguished. Submitting advertising material for editorial consideration is unethical.

7.   Freebies

These are gifts given to reporters, editors and sub-editors with the aim of either directly or indirectly influencing media coverage and contents. Most newsmakers are eager to have their photographs and stories published in newspapers and they frequently use gifts to entice reporters to work for them. This often leads to a conflict of interest, especially when the newsmaker is involved in something unethical that has to be revealed. Even though not all reporters find freebies repulsive,

all reporters have an obligation to avoid them (Lodamo & Skjerdal, 2009). Gifts, free trips and other preferential treatment may endanger the digital media and its managers' integrity.

8.   Junk Journalism

Junk journalism is a term used to describe a news story that was released without proper investigation or information prior to publication. This kind of journalism, sometimes known as garbage journalism, is rife with lies. It is always exciting, but it is usually unimportant. Junk journalism, according to Asemah (2011), frequently concentrates on unusual societal problems. The objective is to grab the audience's attention and get them to pay attention to the tale.

9. Brown Envelope Syndrome (BES)

The brown envelope phenomenon, which is common in Nigerian media, is the practice of bribing journalists to carry out their duties. Journalists will compromise their objectivity and honesty for monetary gain. According to Daramola (2009), it is the monetary incentive given to journalists to either produce a lovely piece about a person or erase the negative narrative about the individual. The monetary inducements that were concealed in brown envelopes gave rise to the term "brown envelope." At press conferences, journalists will be given the envelopes. Brown envelope journalism has been related to a range of challenges in Nigeria. One of them is to avoid telling a story that makes someone else seem terrible.

10.   News fabrication

News fabrication or distortion is the deliberate withholding of key facts in a news story. Some journalists do this because they want to help someone who might be involved in the story. According to the ethics of the profession, journalists are responsible to their readers, listeners and viewers. A multitude of conditions may influence news coverage. When a journalist is unable to reach the people involved in a story to get their thoughts, for example, he will continue with the information he has.

11.   Sycophancy

A sycophant is someone who wants to obtain favour by beguiling the affluent or powerful (Okunna, 1997) via excessive and insincere praise is a widespread ethical concern. Politicians, affluent individuals and media owners, all of whom are employers and have enormous influence over journalists, are praised by the sycophant journalist (Asemah, 2012). This is particularly true in politics. In Nigeria, like in other Third World countries, the government controls the bulk of the media and as a consequence, the media often celebrates government personnel and programmes.

12.   Moonlighting

Moonlighting is when a journalist carries two jobs at the same time and gets paid for both of them (Okunna, 1997). It's a circumstance in which journalists often work two jobs to make ends meet, often for competing media companies. As a result, conflicts of interest and affiliations emerge, creating fertile ground for unethical journalistic activity. In this kind of situation, objectivity is typically one of the first victims. If a moonlighting journalist is required to produce a critical report on his or her second job, he or she may lack the confidence to do the assignment professionally and honestly.

Theoretical Framework

Kant's Duty Law Theory

This study is based on Kant's theory of the duty Law. This responsibility theory of ethics was established by Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), a proponent of deontological ethics. He thinks that a good person is one who consistently acts rightly and that a right action is one that is performed out of a sense of responsibility (McQuail, 2010).

Responsibility ethics, to put it another way, promotes people to act out of a sense of duty. Rather than being founded on personal experience, this commitment is rational. The Categorical Imperative is Kant's term for this. According to the notion, each decision must be based on a moral norm that is as binding as natural laws like gravity. "Unconditional," as in "without experience," is the meaning of categorical. Doing the right thing is the correct thing to do even under the most dire of situations. As a result, the idea assumes that we should do what is morally acceptable regardless of the consequences because each person must logically choose and follow his or her own ideals, this approach also emphasises personal commitment.

The argument underlying this viewpoint is that certain things are intrinsically good and should be sought regardless of the consequences and that we must follow certain norms or our actions would be arbitrary and aimless. This theory could be applied to studies on media and conflict/crisis management, media and terrorism, media and war reporting and other related topics. It also has to do with the press and investigative journalism, as well as the press and corruption and the press and government policy (Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017). To encourage and maintain fair and objective news reporting, journalists must be taught and continue to grow their skills. Journalists prefer to function as responsible members of society since professionalism entails rules and procedures. This concept is also relevant to the current study since it may be used to studies on media professionalism.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Cannons as found in this study, are primarily self-imposed and enforced. As a result, mass communication cannons refer to a set of moral standards produced by mass communication practitioners to guide their professional conduct. Cannons of digital broadcasting dictate the digital journalists' fundamental principles and values, as well as his or her responsibilities to oneself and others. It pushes the professional to make decisions about how to live, how to do business and how to think, behave and react to the people and events in the field.

Although in the day-to-day operations of the media business in the digital era, journalists face a host of ethical challenges and rapid decisions are required since the profession necessitates meeting deadlines. Faced with these ethical dilemmas, an ethical journalist should, despite all odds, choose the best choice for society's benefit. As a result, it is vital for journalists to adhere to mass media cannons, especially as journalism acts as the public's conscience.

Despite this, a variety of factors, such as ownership, brown envelopes, plagiarism and sycophancy, impede journalists from obeying media cannons while gathering and sharing information. Until recently, these pressures have made journalists helpless in terms of ethics and morality. As a result,

society need broadcast journalists who are morally, ethically and mentally sound in order to help social development via relevant, dependable and accurate information.

The study, therefore, suggests that, among other unethical practices in the digital media by journalists, the brown envelope syndrome, plagiarism and sycophancy should be ethically addressed by journalists on an individual level through self-regulation in order to breed and build morally and ethically balanced journalists, as media ethics remains the springboard for modern journalism practice. Also, in the digital media and era, journalists in Nigeria should be upright and independent in carrying out their duties as enshrined in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, enabling laws, and cannons of journalism, as it is in the interest of both individual journalists and media organisations that news be presented as objectively as possible.

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