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## **An Assessment of Adherence to Journalism Code of Conduct among Journalists in Plateau State**

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### **Abstract**

*This study evaluates journalists' awareness and adherence to ethical guidelines in the course of fulfilling their journalistic duties. Grounded in social responsibility theory, the research employs a quantitative methodology with an analytical survey design. Using purposive sampling procedure, 157 registered journalists in Plateau State were surveyed through a structured questionnaire featuring a 4-point Likert scale. Findings indicate high awareness but inconsistent adherence to the journalism code of conduct, influenced by personal ethics, organizational pressures, public opinion, legal frameworks, and economic conditions. The study concludes that adherence to ethical standards of journalism is present but inconsistent, reflecting the complex environment in which journalists operate. It also conclusively states that adequate training, fair working conditions and supportive environment provided to journalists by the media organizations they work with will strengthen their resolve to resist undue commercial pressures. The study therefore recommends that media organizations and professional bodies implement regular training and workshops for journalists to improve their awareness of the journalism code of conduct, while also adopting a holistic approach to addressing the various factors influencing adherence to the journalism code of conduct, such as fostering a culture of strong personal ethics, mitigating organizational pressures by facilitating editorial independence, advocating for supportive legal and regulatory frameworks, and ensuring that journalists' financial incentives align with their ethical performance, ensuring*



*that financial constraints do not force journalists to compromise on the ethical standards that govern the journalism profession.*

**Keywords:** Journalism, Ethics, Code of Ethics, Media Regulation, Freedom of the Press, Public Interest.

## Introduction

The ethics of journalism in Nigeria have been widely debated, with many journalists accused of not upholding the standards of objectivity, truthfulness, fairness, and justice that are core to the profession. Cultural norms shape societal views of what is ethical or unethical, which influence journalistic standards in Nigeria. Ethical standards in journalism, as outlined by professional associations, aim to protect the integrity of the field, and are essential for journalists who seek to report news with precision and reliability (Odionyenma, Okparaeké, Martin-Etenge, Udedibie & Macaulay, 2023). Nworgu (2010) emphasizes the public's trust in news media and underscores the need for journalists and news organizations to adhere to high ethical standards, as journalism's core responsibilities involve gathering, writing, editing, and disseminating information accurately to the public. Akakwandu (2013) adds that journalists should prioritize the public's interest, as public trust is essential to the profession. This trust is especially significant as Nigerian journalists are constitutionally tasked with monitoring the government and holding it accountable to the people, as noted in Chapter II, Section 22 of the 1999 Constitution (Adeyeye & Egbulefu, 2018). Despite these responsibilities, journalists in Nigeria face criticisms for breaching privacy,

spreading misinformation, and causing harm while on duty. Mari (2015) notes that while journalism upheld strong professional values throughout the late 20th century, technological advances and shifting media consumption patterns in recent years have challenged these principles. Ruggiero, Karadimitriou, Lo, Núñez-Mussa, Bomba & Sallusti (2021) argue that these changes have reshaped journalists' roles, encouraging a flexible work ethic but risking objectivity and accuracy. In Nigeria, the rise of internet-based journalism has amplified ethical issues, including fake news, hate speech, and questionable sources (Ugo, Anruchi & Okoro, 2023). Internet-based journalism promises greater transparency and accountability through its interactive nature, allowing users to engage directly with media content, which adds value but also opens the door to potential abuses. Achampong (2017) points out that the advancement of technology enables anyone to act as a journalist, often with limited training, which further complicates ethical standards as more unverified information circulates. Consequently, citizen journalism allows individuals to report breaking news from remote areas, yet risks arise as users selectively consume information that aligns with their views. Journalism in Nigeria faces significant ethical challenges, driven by technological



shifts and the evolving media landscape. As journalists strive to maintain credibility, they must balance professional ethics with new expectations and public engagement in a rapidly changing environment.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Nigerian journalists adhere to the regulations and ethics governing mass media with little diligence (Uchechukwu & Nwafor, 2021). Several scholars such as Angese, Okoro & Etumnu (2019); Udoakah, Senam & Udoh (2014); Ibituru & Achulonu (2018) have advised stakeholders to set up additional training opportunities for Nigerian journalists and media professionals as well as venues for journalists to be exposed to more mass media regulations and ethics. The Nigerian government, as one of the stakeholders, has outlined the desired operating guidelines for the media in several places in the Nigerian constitution. Along with establishing journalism education institutes, the government has also ordered the Nigerian University Commission (NUC) and other oversight organizations to require mass media laws and ethics to be taught in mass communication majors upper education programs. Various regulatory agencies are also keeping an eye on compliance and disciplining non-compliant individuals. Asemah (2011) reiterates further that due to instances of unethical behavior, media professionals who are supposed to be models of honesty, integrity, and truthfulness seem to be rapidly losing their reputation among

right-thinking members of the society. Media professionals in Nigeria have been the target of documented examples of unethical and professional misbehavior over the years. Sensationalism, character assassination, bribery, corruption, sycophancy, conflicts of interest, and many other ethical dilemmas are linked to the majority of unethical concerns.

### **Objectives of the Study**

This study is anchored and guided by the following research objectives:

1. To assess the awareness of journalism code of conduct among journalists in Plateau State.
2. To examine the extent to which journalists adhere to ethical standards in their reportage in Plateau State.
3. To identify the factors influencing adherence to the journalism code of conduct among journalists in Plateau State.

### **Research Questions**

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the level of awareness of journalism code of conduct among journalists in Plateau State?
2. To what extent do journalists adhere to ethical standards in their reportage in Plateau State?
3. What factors influence adherence to the journalism code of conduct among journalists in Plateau State?



## Literature Review

### Journalism Code of Ethics Overview

Journalism ethics serve as the foundation for providing accurate, impartial, and comprehensive information to the public. The Society of Professional Journalists (2014), in agreement with Onwunali, Tejumaiye, Husseini, & Tommy (2023) and White (2008), outlines four core principles that guide ethical journalism: truthful reportage, minimizing harm, independence, and accountability and transparency. These principles are briefly discussed below.

1. Truthful Reportage: Journalists must be fair, accurate, and courageous in their reporting, verifying facts before publication, and holding themselves accountable for the information they share. They must disclose their sources and be cautious in granting confidentiality, especially in sensitive situations

2. Minimizing Harm: Journalists should treat sources and subjects of news with respect and empathy, avoiding unnecessary harm or discomfort. Special care is required when dealing with vulnerable groups like minors or victims of sexual offenses. Journalists must also be mindful of the long-term effects of their reporting on individuals and communities

3. Independence: Ethical journalism requires independence from external influences such as politics or financial

interests. Journalists should avoid conflicts of interest, refuse gifts or favors, and distinguish between news and advertising.

4. Accountability and Transparency: Journalists must be accountable for their work, correct mistakes swiftly, and be transparent about their decision-making process. This fosters public trust and helps maintain credibility.

Despite these ethical guidelines, challenges such as bribery, corruption, and sensationalism persist, particularly in Nigerian media, undermining the role of the press as the watchdog (Santas & Asemah, 2014; Alemoh, 2011).

### The Nigerian Journalist's Code of Ethics

The Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) introduced a Code of Ethics in 1998 to establish universal ethical standards. This code emphasizes the following principles:

1. Truth and Fairness: Journalists must provide accurate, balanced, and fair reports, verify facts, and correct any misinformation promptly. They must protect individual privacy unless disclosure serves the public interest (Odionyenma, 2023).

2. Privilege and Non-Disclosure: Journalists are expected to maintain confidentiality and respect agreements with sources, especially when dealing with off-the-record information (Pepple & Achalonu, 2018).





3. Decency: Ethical journalism requires reporters to avoid the use of sensational language, protect the dignity of individuals, and approach sensitive issues with empathy. They should not use language that incites violence or discrimination (Odionyenma, 2023).

4. Discrimination: Journalists must avoid derogatory terms and biases based on race, religion, or other characteristics, and refrain from accepting bribes or other incentives for altering news coverage (Onyebuchi, Obayi & Udorah, 2019).

Access to Information: Journalists should use transparent, lawful methods to gather information, promote national welfare, and advocate for human rights and democracy. Proper credit must be given to sources, and plagiarism must be avoided (Ukolor, 2004).

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is situated within the Social Responsibility Theory of the media, which asserts that the media, while free from direct government interference, has a duty to serve the public good by providing truthful, comprehensive, and balanced news. The key principle of this theory promotes ethical journalism and protects public interests. It also faces challenges, such as ambiguity in standards, economic pressures, and self-censorship (Siebert, Peterson & Schran, 1956).

In the context of the study, this theory provides a lens through which journalists' adherence to ethical practices can be assessed. The theory's emphasis on truth, accuracy, objectivity, and public accountability aligns with the key tenets of the Nigerian Journalist's Code of Ethics. The research explored how these principles are applied by journalists in Plateau State and their role in fostering an informed public discourse.

### **Methodology**

This study employs a quantitative method with an analytical survey. The target population consists of 262 practicing journalists in Plateau State (Nigerian Union of Journalists, 2024). A sample size of 157 respondents was determined using the Survey Monkey sample size calculator, with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select respondents from different categories within the population, ensuring a representative sample. The data were collected via a questionnaire, and the responses were analyzed using a Likert scale.

### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

A total number of 157 copies of the questionnaire was administered to the respondents. However, only 153 copies of the questionnaire were fit for analysis with 4 questionnaires not fit for analysis, yielding a high response rate of 97%.

### Criteria Mean Analysis

A four-point Likert scale was used to evaluate the responses, where SA (Strongly Agree) = 4, A (Agree) = 3, D (Disagree) = 2, and SD (Strongly Disagree) = 1, represents the value assigned to each scale. Thus, the

criteria mean for decision-making is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Criteria Mean} = \frac{4+3+2+1}{4} = 2.5$$

This means that a mean score above 2.5 indicates agreement with the statement, while a mean score below 2.5 indicates disagreement.

**Table 6: Level of Awareness of**

### Journalism Code of Conduct among Journalists in Plateau State

	Construct	SA	A	D	SD	X	Decision
1	Journalists in Plateau State demonstrate a high level of awareness of the journalism code of conduct.	45(29.4%)	92(60.1%)	15(9.8%)	1(0.7%)	3.1	Accepted

From the table above, the mean score of 3.1 indicates that the respondents agree that journalists in Plateau State demonstrate a high level of awareness of the journalism

code of conduct. This suggests that the majority are well-informed about the ethical guidelines governing their profession.

**Table 7: Familiarity with the Journalism Code of Conduct among Journalists in Plateau State**

	Construct	SA	A	D	SD	X	Decision
2	The majority of selected journalists in Plateau State are familiar with the journalism code of conduct.	42(27.5%)	84(54.9%)	27(17.6%)	0(0%)	3.0	Accepted



From the table above, the mean score of 3.0 shows agreement that majority of journalists in Plateau State are familiar with the journalism code of

conduct. This reinforces the finding that there is a general awareness and familiarity with ethical standards among journalists in the state.

	<b>Construct</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>3</b>	Some journalists in Plateau State have limited awareness of the journalism code of conduct.	<b>33(21.6%)</b>	<b>86(56.2%)</b>	<b>32(20.9%)</b>	<b>2(1.3%)</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

**Table 8: Awareness of the Journalism Code of Conduct among Journalists in Plateau State**

From the table above, the mean score of 2.9 indicates agreement that some journalists have limited awareness of the journalism code of conduct. This highlights a potential area for improvement in educating all journalists about ethical standards of journalism.

**Table 9: Awareness of the Journalism Code of Conduct among Journalists in Plateau State**

	<b>Construct</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>4</b>	There is the need to increase awareness of the journalism code of conduct among journalists in Plateau State.	<b>67(43.8%)</b>	<b>71(46.4%)</b>	<b>13(8.5%)</b>	<b>2(1.3%)</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

From the table above, the mean score of 3.3 indicates strong agreement on the need to increase awareness of the journalism code of conduct among journalists in Plateau State. This suggests that while awareness exists, it could be further enhanced to ensure comprehensive understanding and adherence.



**Table 10: Varied Awareness of the Journalism Code of Conduct among Journalists in Plateau State**

	Construct	SA	A	D	SD	X	Decision
5	There is a varied level of awareness of the journalism code of conduct among journalists in Plateau State.	49(32%)	84(54.9%)	18(11.8%)	2(1.3%)	3.1	Accepted

From the table above, the mean score of 3.1 suggests agreement that there is a varied level of awareness among journalists. This underscores the importance of targeted training to ensure a uniform understanding of the code of conduct.

**Table 11: Consistent Adherence to Ethical Standards among Journalists in Plateau State**

	Construct	SA	A	D	SD	X	Decision
6	Journalists in Plateau State consistently adhere to ethical standards in their reporting.	34(22.2%)	88(57.5%)	28(18.3%)	3(2%)	3.0	Accepted

From the table above, the mean score of 3.0 indicates agreement that journalists consistently adhere to ethical standards. This positive finding suggests that journalists are generally committed to maintaining ethical practices in their work.

**Table 12: Occasional Adherence to Ethical Standards among Journalists in Plateau State**

	<b>Construct</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>7</b>	Journalists in Plateau State occasionally adhere to ethical standards in their reporting.	<b>37(24.2%)</b>	<b>24(15.7%)</b>	<b>90(58.8%)</b>	<b>2(1.3%)</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

From the table above, the mean score of 3.0 indicates agreement that journalists occasionally adhere to ethical standards. This suggests variability in adherence, pointing to areas where consistent ethical behavior can be reinforced.

**Table 13: Deviation from Ethical Standards in Reportage among Journalists in Plateau State**

	<b>Construct</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>8</b>	Journalists in Plateau State sometimes deviate from ethical standards in their reportage.	<b>40(26.19%)</b>	<b>84(54.9%)</b>	<b>23(15%)</b>	<b>6(3.9%)</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

From the table above, the mean score of 3.0 indicates agreement that journalists sometimes deviate from ethical standards in their reportage. This highlights the need for interventions to minimize such deviations.

**Table 14: Limited Degree of Adherence to Ethical Standards among Journalists in Plateau State**

	Construct	SA	A	D	SD	X	Decision
9	Journalists in Plateau State adhere to ethical standards to a small extent.	32(20.9%)	90(58.8%)	28(18.3%)	3(2%)	3.0	Accepted

From the table above, the mean score of 3.0 indicates that journalists in Plateau State acknowledge that adherence to ethical standards in their reportage is limited. This suggests a general awareness of the

challenges faced in consistently maintaining ethical standards, highlighting the need for interventions to enhance consistent adherence to ethical standards among journalists.

**Table 15: Rare Adherence to Ethical Standards among Journalists in Plateau State**

	Construct	SA	A	D	SD	X	Decision
10	Journalists in Plateau State rarely adhere to ethical standards in their reportage.	13(8.5%)	31(20.3%)	41(26.8%)	68(44.4%)	2.7	Accepted

From the table above, with a mean score of 2.7, the data suggests that a significant portion of journalists rarely adhere to ethical standards. The highest percentage falls under “strongly disagree,” indicating a

recognition of this challenge among journalists, and underscoring the need for robust mechanisms to encourage and enforce adherence to ethical standards, thereby addressing

the underlying factors that lead to such lapses.

**Table 16: Factors that Influence Adherence to the Journalism Code of Conduct**

	<b>Construct</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>11</b>	Personal ethics play a significant role in influencing adherence to the journalism code of conduct in Plateau State.	<b>47(30.7%)</b>	<b>16(10.5%)</b>	<b>89(58.2%)</b>	<b>1(0.7%)</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

From the table above, a mean score of 3.1 indicates that personal ethics are seen as the major factors influencing adherence to the journalism code of conduct among journalists in Plateau

State. This suggests that enhancing personal ethics through education and training will improve adherence to ethical standards.

**Table 17: Pressures from Media Organizations on Impact of Journalists' Adherence to Journalism Code of Conduct**

	<b>Construct</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>12</b>	Pressures from media organizations can impact journalists' adherence to the journalism code of conduct in Plateau State.	<b>53(34.6%)</b>	<b>85(55.6%)</b>	<b>14(9.2%)</b>	<b>1(0.7%)</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

From the table above, with a mean score of 3.2, the data indicates that pressures from media organizations significantly impact on journalists' adherence to the code of conduct.

This highlights the need for media organizations to create supportive environments that reduce pressures that lead to ethical compromises.

**Table 18: Public Opinion and Feedback Can Influence Journalists' Adherence to Journalism Code of Conduct**

	Construct	SA	A	D	SD	X	Decision
13	Public opinion and feedback can influence journalists' adherence to the journalism code of conduct in Plateau State.	23(48.1%)	93(60.8%)	14(9.2%)	3(2%)	2.6	Accepted

From the table above, the mean score of 2.6 suggests that public opinion and feedback have a moderate influence on journalists' adherence to

the code of conduct, suggesting that public engagement and feedback mechanisms could be enhanced to better support ethical journalism.

**Table 19: Legal and regulatory frameworks on journalists' adherence**

	Construct	SA	A	D	SD	X	Decision
14	Legal and regulatory frameworks in Plateau State can shape journalists' adherence to journalism code of conduct.	52(34%)	83(54.2%)	16(10.5%)	2(1.3%)	3.2	Accepted

From the table above, a mean score of 3.2 indicates that legal and regulatory frameworks play a significant role in shaping journalists' adherence to

ethical standards. This suggests that strengthening legal and regulatory frameworks will enhance adherence to the journalism code of conduct.

**Table 20: Economic Factors, Such as Financial Incentives or Constraints Influence Journalists' Adherence to Journalism Code of Conduct**

	Construct	SA	A	D	SD	X	Decision
15	Economic factors, such as financial incentives or constraints, can influence journalists' adherence to the journalism code of conduct in Plateau State.	49(32%)	85(55.6%)	18(11.8%)	1(0.7%)	3.1	Accepted

From the table above, the mean score of 3.1 suggests that economic factors, such as financial incentives or constraints, significantly influence journalists' adherence to the code of

conduct of journalism. This suggests that addressing economic challenges and providing fair compensation will improve ethical adherence among journalists.

### Discussion of Findings

**RQ1:** What is the level of awareness of journalism code of conduct among journalists in Plateau state?

This study assesses the level of awareness and adherence to the journalism code of conduct among journalists in Plateau State, as well as the factors influencing such adherence. The findings are discussed in relation to each research question, with comparisons to similar studies to provide a broader context.

The analysis reveals that journalists in Plateau State generally exhibit a high level of awareness of the journalism code of conduct. Tables 6 and 7 show the mean scores of 3.1 and 3.0, respectively, indicating strong familiarity with the ethical guidelines. However, Table 8, with a mean score of 2.9, suggests that a subset of journalists have limited awareness, and Table 9, with a mean score of 3.3, underscores the need for



increased awareness initiatives. These findings are consistent with a study conducted by Oluniyi & Olaniyan (2017), which found that journalists in Lagos State demonstrated high awareness of the Nigerian Press Code, but noted gaps in comprehensive understanding. Similarly, a study by Asogwa & Asemah (2013) in Enugu State reported high awareness among journalists but emphasized the necessity for ongoing education to maintain and deepen the awareness.

**RQ2:** To what extent do journalists adhere to ethical standards in Plateau State?

In the same vein, the study found that while there is general adherence to ethical standards, it is not consistent. Table 11 shows a mean score of 3.0, indicating that journalists generally adhere to ethical standards. However, Tables 12 (3.0), 13 (3.0), and 14 (3.0) highlight occasional adherence, deviation from standards, and limited adherence, respectively. This inconsistency mirrors the findings by Ekeanyanwu & Obianigwe (2012), who note similar patterns of inconsistent adherence among journalists in South-East Nigeria. They attributed these inconsistencies to various pressures and challenges within the media environment. Additionally, Akinwale (2010) found that journalists in South-West Nigeria often face ethical dilemmas that led to occasional lapses in adherence to established ethical standards.

**RQ3:** What factors influence adherence to the journalism code of conduct in Plateau State?

Several factors influence adherence to the journalism code of conduct among journalists in Plateau State. Personal ethics, as indicated by Table 16 (3.1), play a significant role. This finding is supported by a study conducted by Nwabueze & Okonkwo (2018), which found that personal moral beliefs significantly impact on journalists' ethical behavior. Pressures from media organizations, as highlighted in Table 17 (3.2), are also a major influence. Similarly, a study carried out by Edeani (1990) notes that organizational pressures often compel journalists to compromise on ethical standards. Public opinion and feedback as captured in Table 18 (2.6) also impact on adherence, though to a lesser extent. Legal and regulatory frameworks as highlighted in Table 19 (3.2) and economic factors such as financial incentives or constraints as elucidated in Table 20 (3.1) further shape adherence. These findings align with Nwabueze's (2010) study, which found that regulatory environments and economic conditions significantly influence journalists' ethical decisions.

Furthermore, the findings of this study connect closely with the social responsibility theory, which posits that the media should serve the public interest, adhere to ethical standards, and be accountable to society. The high level of awareness among journalists in Plateau State, as indicated by the findings, suggests that they are informed about their ethical obligations, which is a fundamental aspect of the social responsibility theory. This awareness is crucial for ensuring that journalists





act as the gatekeepers of information, promoting the public good and upholding democratic values. The inconsistency in adherence to ethical standards, however, reflects the challenges that journalists face in balancing professional ideals with real-world pressures. The influence of personal ethics, media organizational pressures, legal and regulatory frameworks, and economic factors highlights the complex environment in which journalists operate. According to the social responsibility theory, media organizations have a duty to support their journalists in maintaining ethical standards by providing adequate training, fair working conditions, and resisting undue commercial pressures. This study's findings underscore the need for a supportive media environment that aligns with the principles of the social responsibility theory to enhance consistent ethical behavior among journalists.

In addition, the need for increased awareness and education about the journalism code of conduct, as identified in this study, further emphasizes the importance of ongoing professional development. By fostering a culture of continuous learning and ethical reflection, media organizations can help journalists navigate the ethical challenges they face, thereby fulfilling their social responsibility to the public.

## Conclusion

There is a high level of awareness of the journalism code of conduct among journalists in Plateau State. However, there is the need for

continuous education to ensure comprehensive understanding across the board. Adherence to ethical standards is present but inconsistent, reflecting the complex environment in which journalists operate. Personal ethics, organizational pressures, legal frameworks, and economic factors significantly influence adherence, highlighting the multifaceted nature of ethical journalism. Furthermore, the connection to the social responsibility theory underscores the importance of media organizations which must support their journalists through adequate training, fair working conditions, and resisting undue commercial pressures. Ensuring consistent adherence to ethical standards requires a supportive environment that aligns with the principles of social responsibility.

## Recommendations

Going by the findings that emanated from the study, the following recommendations are proffered:

1. Media organizations and professional bodies should implement regular training and workshops for journalists to improve awareness of the journalism code of conduct. These educational initiatives should cover the principles and practical applications of the code of conduct, ensuring that all journalists, regardless of their experience level, are well-informed and up-to-date with ethical standards.

2. Media organizations should establish clear policies and provide resources to support journalists in adhering to ethical standards. This



includes creating an environment where ethical behavior is encouraged and rewarded, and where journalists feel empowered to resist pressures that may lead to ethical compromises. Thus, regular evaluations and feedback mechanisms can help maintain high standards of ethical reporting.

3. Media organizations should adopt a holistic approach to address the various factors influencing adherence

to the journalism code of conduct. This includes fostering a culture of strong personal ethics, mitigating organizational pressures by ensuring editorial independence, and advocating for supportive legal and regulatory frameworks. Additionally, economic incentives should be aligned with ethical performance, ensuring that financial constraints do not force journalists to compromise standards.

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