

**EXAMINING THE FACTORS SUSTAINING CORRUPT PRACTICES AMONG
JOURNALISTS IN TANZANIA: THE QUEST FOR BROWN ENVELOPE AND
ETHICAL MINDSET.**

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CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certifies that he has read and hereby recommends for acceptance by The Open University of Tanzania a dissertation entitled, ***Factors behind Corrupt Practices among the Journalists in Tanzania*** in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Degree of Masters in Mass Communication.



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DECLARATION

I, Lusajo Wilson Mwakabuku, declare that the work presented in this dissertation is original. It has never been presented to any other University or Institution. Where other people's works have been used, references have been provided. It is in this regard that I declare this work as originally mine. It is hereby presented in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree of Master of Mass Communication.

.....
Signature

.....
Date

DEDICATION

This one goes to you, Mom. You are not with us but your commitments and struggles to ensure my success are the pillars I live by. RIP Mom.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the factors that contributed to the perpetuation of corrupt practices among journalists in Tanzania, the benefits they derived from such unethical behaviour, and the impacts of these practices on journalistic integrity, public trust, and democratic accountability. Using a qualitative approach, the study collected data through interviews, document reviews including online sources and FGD with journalists from various media outlets in Tanzania. The descriptive data analysis was framed within the context of Gatekeeping Theory and Utilitarianism, providing insight into how corrupt practices influenced media content and the broader implications for society. The findings revealed that economic challenges, such as low salaries, lack of institutional recognition, and inadequate working conditions, were primary drivers of corruption among Tanzanian journalists. Corrupt practices were further reinforced by the benefits accrued by journalists, including financial gain, career advancement, access to exclusive information, and protection from powerful individuals or institutions. However, these short-term advantages led to long-term negative consequences, including the erosion of journalistic integrity, loss of public trust in the media, suppression of investigative journalism, and the weakening of democratic accountability. The study concluded that while corrupt practices offered immediate personal gains for journalists, they significantly undermined the role of the media as an independent watchdog, contributing to biased reporting and diminished public access to accurate information. To address these challenges, the study recommended improving journalists' working conditions, strengthening regulatory frameworks, promoting ethical journalism training,

supporting investigative reporting, and diversifying media ownership. These measures were deemed essential to restore the credibility of the Tanzanian media and ensure its effective role in fostering democratic governance.

Keywords: Corruption in Journalism, Media Integrity, Public Trust, democratic Accountability

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Every profession is guided by a certain set of ethics and so does journalism. Thus, ethical journalism retracts the corruption practices also called brown envelope¹ solicitation or the acceptance of any form of gifts that might influence news sourcing, production and publication. For this reason, this study is proposed to explore the discrepancy between journalistic practice, which often can be unethical, and the journalistic mindset, which typically demonstrates positive ethical awareness. Laying out the study, this chapter provides information on the introduction to the study, study background, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study, and limitations before finalising the useful definitions of the concepts used herein this study.

1.2 Background to the Problem

Journalism practice is guided and impacted by specific norms, laws, values and traditions in nation-states across the globe (Onyebadi & Alajmi, 2021; Transparency International, 2018; Mungiu-Pippidi, 2013). In an overview of corruption in the media among developing countries, the U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre report identifies various forms of media corruption, including bribery (cash for news),

¹ Brown envelope journalism is about a reporter being paid to publish a story or feature in favour of his or her paymaster. It is a situation where a journalist intentionally demands monetary compensation or any other form of material incentive or gift, or wilfully receives the same even without outright solicitation, in order to carry out his or her professional function, or upon its completion (Onyebadi and Alajmi, 2021). Therefore, whether the journalist asked for the brown envelope in advance or received it later, he or she would have acted in a professionally unethical manner.

staged or fake news, gift-giving, concealed advertising, and nepotism, particularly prevalent in developing countries (Stapenhurst, 2000). In the United States, for example, the notions of press freedom and freedom of speech enshrined in the 1st Amendment of the country's constitution empower journalists to publish factual stories. However, the reality that the publication may be unflattering to a sitting Journalism practice is guided and impacted by specific norms, laws, values and traditions in nation-states across the globe (Onyebadi & Alajmi, 2021; Hanitzsch & Vos, 2020; Park, 2012). Despite the reality that the publication may be unflattering to a sitting United States president, governor, senator, congressman or other people in authority in both public and private sectors of the society (*ibid.* p.2). That is to say, the publication of such stories will not constitute an obstruction to the professional growth of their authors.

On the contrary, Human Rights Watch (2012) reports, that Article 53 of Qatar's 2012 media law specifies up to 1 million Qatari Riyals (approx. US \$275,000) as a consequence for any publication that upsets the royal family collectively, or negatively showcases any of its members. Onyebadi & Alajmi (2021) report that Kuwait Freedom House stated in 2014 that a person (referring to journalists in this context) could be jailed for up to 5 years for publicly criticizing the Amir (monarch), the veracity of such portrayal being inconsequential in the sentencing process. Here the problem comes where journalism is thought by many scholars to have an immense effect in controlling corruption but they do not know the conditions under which its performance brings about positive results in some countries while serving to protect corrupt policies and corrupt policy makers in some other countries

(Hamad, 2020). In this sense, the extent of this practice where some journalists accept financial compensation or other gifts for favourable coverage varies among nation and states.

In African countries for example, Skjerdal (2018) argues that one must search for a long time to find a journalist who has not been offered a small monetary contribution from a conference convener concealed as transport money or similar in a discrete brown envelope. He adds that this practice is so entrenched that local NGOs believe it's a part and parcel of professional journalism and that it is difficult and close to impossible to get media coverage if a subsidy is not offered (p.163). Highlighting on the magnitude of media corruption in Africa, Adeyemi (2013), Mukhtar & Gujbawu (2016), and Suntai & Targema (2018) argue that regardless of the efforts being made by various stakeholders in the media industry, it was discovered that the media was largely corrupt since their activities are devoid of objectivity, and has caused the masses to have little or no confidence in their activities.

In Tanzania, Gondwe (2011, 2014) asserts that a general understanding among African scholars is that the media in Africa have been characterised by four major vices that have undermined the credibility of journalists: corruption, biases (partisanship), conflicts of interest and non-professionalism. The mushrooming of media houses, content diversity and the advent of technology, which are supposed to be celebrated as a development, have unfortunately inflated the vices of unethical reporting among journalists. It is little wonder that corruption has now turned into a serious journalism setback – brown envelope journalism; a field that is raising questions among journalism scholars in Africa with no exception of Tanzania.

Cementing on the seriousness of corruption in the media problem in Tanzania, Mpagaze and White (2010) emphasise that Tanzanian journalists have a negative perception of themselves as an occupational group with low ethical standards and believe that most journalists would easily accept a bribe to falsify news reports. At the same time, they want to live up to the high levels of truthfulness expected of them. Many journalists experience heavy pressure including bribery from institutions that live by a good image: government ministries, NGOs, finance and business leaders, politicians and foreign companies operating in Tanzania. It is out of these circumstances that this work is proposed to assess the contradiction of the ethical mindset in journalism profession and how it equips its practitioners against the unethical conducts brought unto them from corrupt practices in the name of ‘travel or sitting allowances’.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The proliferation of corrupt practices in journalism has become rampant enough to be termed as brown envelope journalism in research (Gondwe, 2011). The Media Council of Tanzania (MCT) ethicists and watchdog organisations in Tanzania strongly denounce the brown envelope practice as a form of corruption (Makoye, 2013; MCT, 2016). MCT and non-statutory watchdog organisations note that over 60% of journalists in Tanzania are freelance, and therefore more susceptible to bribe taking. In this context, their acceptance of gifts, sitting allowances or what Skejerdal (2018) concealed as per diem expenses or travel money, but in fact include a surplus rate, which the reporter can pocket for his personal use influence journalists and impair their ability to cover the news. Nonetheless, most of the practitioners in the

impair their ability to cover the news. Nonetheless, most of the practitioners in the journalism field do not pay much attention to warnings that corruption is unethical. Thus, researchers: Skejerdal, Mpagaze and Makoye (*ibid*) concluded that journalists in Tanzania regard brown envelope acceptance as a norm. As Makoye (*ibid*) insists, the amounts received in these envelopes determines the magnitude of media mentions of the message in question, through print, broadcast and online media platforms and the journalists who dare to be objective and critical end up missing out on subsequent invitations to press conferences and are blacklisted by event organisers. Thus, corporations and politicians in Tanzania aiming at setting the agenda through the media, simply call press conferences, pass their message, then hand envelopes to the journalists at the end of the meetings. Despite MCT's stipulation of the professional code of ethics, condemnation, and warnings against any unacceptable journalists' behaviours, e.g., bribery, the magnitude of brown envelope practice amounts within the circles of the Tanzanian media industry and beyond.

While the condemnation of corrupt practices by the relevant authorities i.e., MCT amplified in the world, Africa and Tanzania in particular, journalists do not seem to shun away from the tradition (Mpagaze, 2011). So far, the reasons for prolongation of this unethical behaviour among journalists have been superficially researched. More importantly, there is little understanding of the ways in which this uncalled-for practice has been beneficial to its practitioners. While most studies have been condemning brown envelope practice, this study on the other hand, attempts to examine the benefits accrued from it and compare them with the resulting social,

political, economic and professional impacts to provide a better understanding of the phenomenon and eventually pertinent solutions that can be deployed by stakeholders responsible for the same.

1.4 Research Objectives

This study was sought to attend to general and specific objectives as stipulated below;

1.4.1 General Objective

This study investigated the factors behind the corrupt practices among journalists in Tanzania.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

To deduce the factors for why corrupt practices are still accepted amongst the journalists in Tanzania, the following specific objectives were examined;

- i. To identify the reasons behind the prolongation of corruption practices among journalists in Tanzania,
- ii. To explore the benefits that journalists accrue from corruption practices in Tanzania and
- iii. To examine the impacts of corruption practices in relation to the benefits journalists accrued in Tanzania

1.5 Research Questions

To meet the set research objectives, the following research questions guided the investigation;

- i. Why have corruption practices been prolonged among journalists in Tanzania?
- ii. What benefits do journalists accumulate from corruption practices in Tanzania?
- iii. What were the impacts of corruption practices from the benefits journalists accrued in Tanzania?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to make significant contributions to various stakeholders by deepening the understanding of the factors behind the continuation of corrupt practices in the media industry in Tanzania.

For researchers, the study will serve as a foundation for further inquiry into media corruption, offering a nuanced perspective on the dynamics of brown envelope journalism, including both its detrimental and perceived beneficial aspects. It will provide empirical insights that can inform future studies on media ethics, professional integrity, and the socio-economic conditions influencing journalists' conduct.

For policymakers, the findings will offer evidence-based recommendations on strengthening media governance frameworks. It will highlight the gaps in existing regulatory measures and emphasize the need for more proactive interventions by bodies such as the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT) to restore public trust, ensure media reliability, and reinforce ethical journalism practices beyond merely formulating guidelines.

For students, particularly those in journalism, communication, and media studies, this study will act as a reference point for understanding the ethical dilemmas in professional journalism. It will encourage critical reflection on media ethics and the real-world challenges journalists face in balancing professionalism with economic realities.

For media practitioners, including journalists and media house managers, the study will serve as a self-assessment tool, shedding light on how their conduct is perceived by the public. Understanding the impacts of corruption on media credibility will help them reassess their professional ethics and adopt more sustainable, integrity-driven reporting practices.

For the general public, the study will enhance awareness of the implications of brown-envelope journalism on news credibility and democracy. By understanding how media corruption affects information dissemination, citizens will be better equipped to demand higher ethical standards from journalists and media institutions. Overall, this study will contribute to a broader discourse on media ethics and corruption, offering comparative insights relevant not only to Tanzania but also to other African nations and the global media landscape.

1.7 Scope of the Study

While there may be other causes of journalism deterioration of the professional code of ethics, this study was confined only to corruption practices and its underlying impacts against the journalist's ethical mind. Though there may be a good number of corruptions condemning studies in other African countries and elsewhere, this study was only restricted to Tanzania context which geographically, contextually and even

the national laws dealings with media is different from other countries. The study views brown envelope in both positive and negative perspectives as opposed to most studies that have always been reproving it.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

The study was limited by inactive participation of the journalists in attending to the interview enquiries due to pre-supposition that whenever any media houses, government and professional boards talk about brown envelope, the focus is on conviction of the practice. To attend to that, a researcher explained to the respondents that an inquiry was basically intended to assess the factors for the continual appropriation of the brown envelope practices amongst the journalists that were supposedly to have been resulted from the benefits they got.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

While the following terms may differ in meaning and use in different contexts and studies, this study used them to arrive at the set objectives and thus their meanings are contextual as explained below;

1.9.1 Corruption

According to Bonucci (2023:41) corruption is more than bribery. It therefore entails all forms of unethical behaviour including state or policy capture, kleptocracy, nepotism or cronyism, conflicts of interest and lobbying whereas Ngugi et al (2023) define corruption as bribery, fraud, embezzlement or misappropriation of public funds, breach of trust; or an offence involving dishonesty in connection with tax, bid rigging secret inducements for advice, abuse of office to improperly confer a benefit on themselves or anyone else. In this study, the term corruption refers to all forms of

remunerations including conflicts of interest and a know who syndrome that journalists accrue from any source and hinders them from being objective in news collection, writing, reporting and dissemination.

1.9.2 Corrupt Practices

These are all endeavours that journalists indulge into to gain political, economic or social favour. They include journalists' actions that manipulate their customers or clients, news sources and consumers either by saying or implication to offer them any form of bribe. The tendency of journalists receiving or accepting any form of corruption in favour of the provider.

1.9.3 Brown Envelope

This refers to the informal transfer of money from sources to journalists for certain agreed obligations. It is the journalist or reporters, editors or script writers obliged to manipulate the information by favouring the offerors and ignoring or purifying the negatives – reporting the positives. Cash enticements are concealed in brown envelopes and given to journalists during or before press briefings. It's also a cover term for corruption practices among journalists or news houses. It is therefore a substitute term for corrupt practices as used in this study.

1.9.4 Prolongation

It is the extension of the duration of something. As shown in 2.3, corruption in media houses or journalism is not a newly reported issue but a long time ever existed phenomenon. Despite being researched and reported, this unethical conduct is still persistent. In this study, prolongation has been used to refer to the continuation or

persistence of corruption in a new cover named brown envelope journalism. It is a substitute term for perpetuation as well.

1.9.5 Benefits Accrued

These refer to the repayments that journalists gain from the sources that, in this study, are presumed to make corruption practices prolonged. They are also the motivations for journalists' acceptance of bribes in the form of travel, sitting or participation allowances.

1.1 Organisation of the Study

This study was structured into six chapters, each systematically addressing key aspects of corruption practices in journalism, particularly brown envelope journalism, and its impact on the media profession in Tanzania. The organization ensures a logical flow from the study's background and theoretical grounding to its empirical findings, discussions, and recommendations.

The first chapter introduces the study by providing a general overview of journalism as a profession guided by ethical standards and the issue of corruption within the field. It highlights the ethical dilemma posed by brown envelope journalism, where journalistic awareness of ethical principles often contradicts actual unethical practices. This chapter lays the foundation for the study by presenting the background of the research, the statement of the problem, research objectives, and research questions. Additionally, it outlines the significance, scope, and limitations of the study while providing operational definitions of key concepts used throughout the research.

Chapter Two critically reviews existing literature related to corruption in journalism, examining the contradiction between ethical awareness and unethical practices. It provides an in-depth discussion on the key concepts related to brown envelope journalism, the significance of ethical journalism, and the impact of corruption on media integrity. The chapter also covers an empirical and theoretical review of previous studies on media corruption, identifying contextual, methodological, and theoretical gaps that the proposed study seeks to address.

The third chapter explains the research methodology employed in this study. It details the research approach, design, and location of the study, along with the population and sampling techniques used. Furthermore, it outlines the methods of data collection, data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations observed throughout the study. This chapter is crucial in ensuring the reliability, validity, and trustworthiness of the findings presented in later sections.

Chapter Four presents the study's findings, focusing on the factors contributing to the persistence of corrupt practices among journalists in Tanzania. The chapter explores the reasons behind the continued acceptance of brown envelopes, the benefits journalists derive from engaging in corruption, and the broader impacts of these practices on journalists, society, and the profession as a whole. The findings are systematically presented based on the study's objectives and research questions. To enhance credibility, this chapter also includes a description of the study's respondents and their relevance in shaping the study's outcomes.

Building on the findings presented in the previous chapter, chapter six offers a detailed discussion of the results in relation to the study's objectives. It critically examines the causes, benefits, and implications of prolonged corruption in Tanzanian journalism, drawing comparisons with existing literature. The discussion is anchored in the Gatekeeping Theory (GCT) and Utilitarianism Theory, providing a theoretical lens through which the study's findings are interpreted.

The final chapter synthesizes the key findings of the study, presenting a concise summary of the research insights. It provides conclusions drawn from the findings and offers practical recommendations for journalists, media houses, policymakers, and media regulators to mitigate corruption in journalism. The chapter also suggests areas for further research to deepen understanding of brown envelope journalism in Tanzania and beyond.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the review of the literature related to corruption practices in journalism, a critical review of the contradiction between ethical mindset and the unethical conducts from corruptions. It therefore consists of the definition of key concepts used in the study, the essence of corruption in journalism, empirical and theoretical review of literature on brown envelope journalism – corrupt practices in journalism profession and the contextual, methodological and conceptual/theoretical gap in the existing literature to the proposed study.

2.2 The Essence of Corruption in Journalism

Journalistic codes of ethics are conventionally regarded as declarations that journalists will try to follow the best professional practices and ethical standards, meet their social responsibility obligations, and accept public accountability (Fidalgo et al., 2022). The often-going unreported corruption in journalism, commonly referred to as “brown envelope” journalism, involves monetary bribes enclosed in brown envelopes that seek to influence journalists to produce more positive reporting on an issue or to kill a negative story (Ndhlove, 2022; Fidalgo et al., 2022). The name is derived from cash enticements concealed in brown envelopes and given to journalists during or before press briefings.

It is reported that the term "brown envelope" was first coined in 1994 after the cash-for-questions affair, a political scandal in the United Kingdom. The Guardian alleged that the owner of Harrods department store, Mohamed Al-Fayed, had paid a Member

of Parliament in the House of Commons to ask a question using a brown-coloured envelope for the transaction (Lodamo & Skjerdal, 2009). Thus, brown envelope refers to the informal transfer of money from sources to journalists for certain agreed obligations. It is the journalist or reporters, editors, or script writers obliged to manipulate the information by favouring the offerors and ignoring or purifying the negatives – reporting the positives.

2.3 Empirical Review of Literature in Corruption in Journalism

These are the observable traits of media houses/journalism corruption experienced and presented in the readily available studies on corruption in journalism. Nowadays, news agencies use communication technology to collect news, videos, and images from around the world at remarkable speed. This technology has enabled news agencies to deliver pieces of news to their audiences all over the world. According to Babran & Ataherian (2019), through the verification of media ethical charters of different countries, we can find out that the value-based morality, norms, and procedures that are present in the community govern the media system of every country based on this reality, there is a straight relationship between that charter, values, and society norms or culture that is why this part provides a review of the brown envelope syndrome in some countries as described below;

2.3.1 Literature on Ethical Codes of Conduct in Journalism

According to Herrscher (2002), codes of ethics are one of the most widespread instruments of (self-)regulation for journalistic activity, pointing out the best professional practices and ethical standards to be followed and the need to allow some kind of scrutiny by the public. These codes are also termed scope, authorship,

range of action, and enforcement capacity. Fidalgo et al. (*ibid*) argue that the journalists' commitment to a self-regulatory basis helps to protect news media from political interference and, thus, to preserve freedom, independence, and pluralism. The starting point for all codes of ethics for journalism is the concept of press freedom: freedom of thought, freedom of opinion, and freedom to obtain, disseminate, and receive information as stipulated in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948). Thus, freedom of the press includes active advocacy for public forums, defence against state intervention and censorship of the media, and institutional protection of these rights. Essentially, setting the standards in the responsibility of state regulation (through legal provisions) and professional self-regulation (through codes of ethics). On the other hand, Fidalgo et al. (p.213) assert that ethical norms are defined by profession and laid down in codes. While laws only prevent negative things from happening, ethical rules can achieve positive results. Codes can correct, supplement, replace, or even contradict the law. Where legislation is insufficient, inappropriate, or unsuitable, journalistic commitment should take effect. The development and establishment of professional ethics rules have taken place in this tension between averting possible legal restrictions on the one hand and offering a positive orientation framework for the profession on the other (McBride & Rosenstiel, 2014).

Though Fidalgo et al. (*ibid*) adopt and present McBride and Rosenstiel's (2014) simple summary of the professional codes of ethics in journalism as a new set of guiding principles for Journalists: Seek truth and report it as fully as possible, be transparent, and engage the community as an end, rather than as a means (p.215).

These concepts are just as relevant in a highly mediatised digital information environment, and they can be found in more recent codes as well.

On the other side, Babran & Ataherian (2019) assert that the media should perform their jobs by the following ethical principles: truth, objectivity, fairness, avoiding defamation, observing public decency, respecting personal privacy, avoiding plagiarism, respecting ethnicities, avoiding violence, stating the source of information, not crossing the red lines, avoiding lies and falsification, observing impartiality, and paying undivided attention to selecting words and images. They further summarised the media ethics as seen in the table below:

Table 2.1: A Summary of Media Codes of Ethics

	Scandinavian	Europe	America	Asia	Africa
1	Freedom expression	Freedom expression	Freedom expression	Respect individual privacy	Freedom expression
2	Respect individual privacy	Respect individual privacy	Respect individual privacy	Independence	Respect individual privacy
3	Independence	Independence	Independence	Avoid insults	Independence
4	Justice	Justice	Justice	Justice	Justice
5	Truth	Truth	Truth	Avoid of violence	Avoid of violence
6	Lack of plagiarism	Lack of plagiarism	Lack of plagiarism	Respect to public Ethics	Truth
7	Objectivity	Objectivity	Objectivity	Truth	Objectivity
8	Social responsibility	Social responsibility	Social responsibility	Honesty	Social responsibility
9	Fairness	Honestly	Advocacy	Fairness	Honestly
10	Accuracy	Independence	Accuracy	Accuracy	Fairness
11	avoiding defamation	Protection of Dignity	Avoiding defamation	Protection of Dignity	Protection of Dignity
12	respecting the ethnicities	respecting the ethnicities	respecting the ethnicities	respecting the ethnicities	respecting the ethnicities

[Source: Babran & Ataherian (2019:4)]

Nevertheless, a central question within journalistic ethics is the demarcation between the freedom of journalism and the interests of those affected by it, be it the objects of reporting or the recipients to whom media content is intended or expected to reach. In other words, who defines this balance and according to which criteria is just as much the result of an understanding of ethics in journalism and the role the media should play in a society as a question of who controls this boundary.

2.3.2 Literature on Journalists' Awareness of Professional Codes of Ethics

Though ethical values are important in its guidance role, they are not the sole factor influencing ethical decisions. Thus, ethical decisions are also dependent on the personal values of the decision-maker (Hoo & Yeing, 2010). In their study, they discovered that journalists lack awareness of their journalistic code contents and are, hence, less likely to apply the journalistic code of conduct in their daily activities, leading to detrimental results in achieving fact-based and responsible news reporting, thus rendering the role of news organisations as watchdog ineffective in Malaysia.

On the other hand, Azman et al. (2013) conducted a study on 'The Knowledge, Attitude and Acceptance of Journalism Ethics among Journalists'. In their study, they found out that 50% were neutral as to whether they were knowledgeable of their professional code of conduct, whereas the rest were not well-informed of the ethics. They argue that journalists are the 'bullet' for the government to spread their ideology and gain the trust of society. This is very true, as stated by the authoritarian theory, where all are entitled to permission to use the media, but the government is still the one who controls what the media publishes. This has raised concern about scrutinising the contradiction between journalists' ethical mindset and their unethical conduct (corrupt practices), for if they know what is right, then what is it that makes journalists act unethically? Are these sitting allowances 'for the brown envelopes? Do the government promise them some generous appointment? That study is envisioned to respond to such crucial questions.

2.3.3 Literature on Corruption Practices in Africa

Africa has been reported to be much affected by the brown envelope/corruption. In Ghana, for example, a reporter goes to a press conference, and inside her press packet, there's a brown envelope containing the equivalent of a \$20 bill. Not surprised, she slips it into her purse before heading back to the office to write up the event (Ristow, 2010:4). This simply implies that corruption or else cash for coverage in Africa is as common as the news itself.

In South Africa, Ristow (*ibid*) adds, a journalist admitted in an affidavit that he and several others had set up a media relations firm that received cash payments for helping an African National Congress official in his struggles with party rivals. The politician, Ebrahim Rasool, referred to the firm as his "air force" for battling opponents, according to the affidavit by Ashley Smith, who was a reporter for the Cape Argus at the same time he co-owned the media relations firm. That is to say, the brown envelope is harmful to journalists as this practice does not allow them to realise their professional duties such that even honest journalists are often accused of bribery. These incidences on an interpersonal level where the cash is handed directly to the journalist by a news source or intra-organizational, whereas an editor tells the journalist what to write or not write due to some sort of internal pressure, such as from advertising (Kruckeberg & Tsetsura, 2003). Though some researchers contend that brown envelope may be the result of low salaries to journalists, then if low pay is one explanation for incidents of cash for news coverage, perhaps the most obvious

explanation is also very simple: governments, corporations, and private individuals often want to control what is said about them (Ristow, 2010).

2.3.4 The Essence of Corruption Practices in East Africa

In East Africa, the situation is alarming as well, just like Ristow's (*ibid.* p.17) assertion that when these foundations of ethical journalism can be bought so cheaply, the essential role of the media in society is compromised. Now, one question is, how can the readers trust anything they read if they don't know whether the journalist has been paid? Society is compromised in a way that they lose trust in anything they read from the media, they, therefore, hear instead of listening. In Congo, for example, major news outlets use financial difficulties to justify reporters' violations of journalism ethics and standards. While some news outlets accept bribes to compensate for their precarious financial situation, other news organisations pretend that they oppose brown envelope journalism, although their reporters also secretly accept bribes (Mongo, 2021). Miguna (2017) argues that Kenyan journalism is in the Intensive Care Unit. It is dying from an acute bout of discernible poor training, incompetence, ineffective self-regulation, unprofessionalism, infiltration by organised criminal enterprises and an inability or unwillingness to serve the public interests. If the "patient" is not cured soon, it will die. This simply means that journalism in Kenya is no longer serving the public as its primary role requires them to, they instead ignore the public right to accurate information as Miguna (*ibid*) adds, many Kenyans find reading daily newspapers, listening to the radio and watching television a very painful experience. This pain is entirely caused by biased, slanted and distorted stories that are published daily. Miguna (*ibid.* p.1) declares that the

wealthy, regardless of their sources of wealth, are glorified. Common hoodlums, thieves, drug dealers and criminals are hailed as “prominent businessmen” or simply called “tycoons.” A Kenyan “tycoon” isn’t closely examined by the media; their obnoxious and ostentatious displays of primitive accumulation and consumption are excused as “cool.” Criminals are worshipped. This is culminated by a brown envelope even though journalists know what they have to do, they do the opposite, hence affecting the general media faces and the public. Miguna concludes, “Clearly, Brown Envelope journalism violates the Code of Conduct for the Practice of Journalism in Kenya” (*ibid*, p.4).

The situation in Uganda is no different from the rest of African journalism and brown envelope syndrome. For instance, the Ugandan journalism fraternity demonstrates that there is a range of subsidising practices that may or may not be seen as bribery per se. One journalist, for example, reports that the pay that Ugandan freelance journalists receive for an article sometimes does not even cover the expenses involved in collecting the story (Skjerdal, 2010). This justifies the truth that the media in Uganda are corrupt as well. This necessitates the critical investigation of this problem in the Tanzania context, which is the focus of the present study.

2.3.5 2.3.5 Tanzania and the Corruption Practices Syndrome

According to MCT (2022), despite enacting the laws and regulations guiding and protecting media freedom by the United Nations, the environment for journalism practice in Tanzania remained cloudy, especially during the first quarter of 2020, affecting reporting of the aftermath of the General Election later that year and the second wave of COVID-19. MCT (*ibid*) points out that the Media could not report

the post-election events critically, not least the disputed nomination of 19 women for the opposition Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (CHADEMA) parliamentary special seats. They add that inhibitions against journalism practice were amplified and thrown into sharp focus when the late President John Magufuli disappeared from public view, suffering from an unannounced illness. While media in neighbouring countries were speculating about the suspected indisposition of the head of state, back home, at least four people were arrested on accusation of “spreading rumours” on social media that President Magufuli was ill after he was not seen in public for more than two weeks.

This simply means that leaving out the brown envelope syndrome, the Tanzania media and journalism, in general, suffer from several setbacks including interference from the government bodies that ban media from reporting some sensitive news but important to the public as indicated in MCT (2022) i.e., WASAFI for six months in 2021, arresting and detention of the reporters/journalists, i.e., James Lanka in March 2021 for investigating a story on Uru market in Kilimanjaro, Stanley Kisaka and his four colleagues while investigating the alleged corruption against an accountant in Moshi Municipal Council, murdering of the journalists, i.e., Blandina Sembu, a presenter and reporter for ITV/ Radio One in Dar es Salaam, was allegedly murdered and her body found abandoned alongside Bagamoyo Road, at Mwenge in the city; damage of the equipment, i.e., on April 12, 2021, Pascal Katona, a journalist reporting for Channel Ten TV from Mpanda district, in Katavi region, had his working tools destroyed by furious voters whose contestant lost in the election of mosque leadership. Forceful eviction, i.e., Christopher James of ITV/Radio One and

Dickson Billikwija of Island TV were detained at Temeke Municipal offices for three hours under orders of the District Executive Director for they had gone to cover a meeting of the DED and businessmen from Mbagala Rangi Tatu. Other dangers include assault, denial of access to information, interrogation, harassment and threats from the police, all of which diminish the freedom of the press and increase pressure over media rights and ethical practicality in the collection, reporting or dissemination of information to the public. This is why Bilau (2022) insists that ‘there is no explicit legislative protection for free expression in the media in the country's legal statutes and that Tanzania has several current legal restrictions on freedom of expression in the media that are invoked with alarming regularity.

On the other hand, Bilau (2022) argues that journalists, editors, and media proprietors in Tanzania are controlled by self-enforced codes set up by the Media board of Tanzania but the rules do not expressly hinder them from accepting gifts. Surprisingly, Kothari (2018) contends that it is a socially acceptable practice for correspondents in Tanzania to get at least some amount of money for transport at the end of a press conference. Undoubtedly, notes Bilau (*ibid*) that there is a general lack of economic resources that makes journalists vulnerable to political and economic pressure and undermines the professionalism of journalists, not only in Tanzania but also in many African countries. However, these studies have also depicted the brown envelopes only with their negative side, leaving the positive side unexplored such that it's hard to conclude to what extent and circumstances we can term the brown envelopes as unethical to journalists.

According to White (2008), journalists justify their treachery in various ways according to their temperaments: the more pompous talk about freedom of speech and “the public’s right to know”; the least talented talk about Art; the seemliest murmur about earning a living – which in his study is economic reasons. Contextually, Bilau (*ibid*) contends that journalists strive to abide by the moral guiding principles of their profession, they confront situations that render adherence to journalistic ethical codes difficult and sometimes impossible, leading to an ethical dilemma. This ethical dilemma is a pivotal point this proposed study is envisaged to investigate – the contradiction between the journalists’ ethical mindset as trained and insisted in the MCT documents against the unethical saga, the brown envelope that actually should have benefits to them and impacts their professional performance. Furthermore, Mpagaze and White (2010) argue that journalists, editors and reporters in Tanzania have low ethical standards and believe that most journalists would easily accept a bribe to falsify news reports. Journalists experience heavy pressure, including bribery from institutions that live by a good image: government ministries, NGOs, finance and business leaders, politicians and foreign companies operating in Tanzania. Thus, because journalists want to live up to the high levels of truthfulness expected of them, they easily accept a disguised sitting allowance. The question here is, ‘Is it a crime for a person to live up to the standard? Magazine (2011), in his study Corruption in the Media: Perceptions of Tanzanian Journalists, reveals that corruption jeopardises the quality of journalism, which is determined by the norm of objectivity. While he stresses the brown envelope’s negative effects on journalism, the researcher missed the point as to whether the same practitioners benefit and to what extent. More shockingly, Forbes (2005) maintains that government officials

commonly offer bribes to journalists in return for positive coverage, a practice which discourages investigative reporting in Tanzania, whereas the Tanzania Human Rights Report (2006) assert that without providing bribes to journalists, a story would not be published. It is, therefore, out of these concerns that the present study is determined to investigate the contradiction between the journalists' mindset as opposed to their unscrupulous conduct.

2.4 Theoretical Review of Literature

Ample literature indicates that it is almost impossible to undertake an analysis of ethics without the construct of choice (Stewart, 2010). This is why Chonko (2012) contends that 'ethical theories provide part of the decision-making foundation for *Decision Making When Ethics are in Play* because these theories represent the viewpoints from which individuals seek guidance as they make decisions. In other words, all theories stress diverse ideas – a different decision-making style —such as foreseeing the aftermath and following one's duties to others to reach what the individual considers an ethically correct decision, adds Chonko (*ibid*).

As far as this study is concerned, corruption practices are used as a gate to objective information collection, presentation, and dissemination. This gate – the corruption practices, is used to limit the public from accessing objective, reliable, trustworthy, correct and valid information through information outlets such as blogs, magazines, radios, televisions and online media. The GCT is relevant to this study in explaining the general idea of judgement or decision-making about what information/news should be gathered, evaluated, and ultimately shared. Journalists, editors, and reporters/writers collect, evaluate and disseminate information for public

consumption. The public has the right to accurate and unfalsified information. This theory would be useful in explaining the reasons that the gate – corruption middles in the individuals and societal consumers of the news and the reasons why corruption practices in journalism.

Underlying the theory of gatekeeping is the fundamental assumption that information affects what happens in society and helps shape social reality (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). In other words, whoever controls the flow of information can influence social reality, and that's why politicians and agencies working in Tanzania try as much as they can to control media outlets using brown envelopes to subdue whatever is reported or written about them – subjectivity, favouring them.

Nevertheless, the GCT theory doesn't take into account the general ethical part of the journalism profession. Thus, a new comprehensive theory would address ethical issues. Take, for example, deontology theory. Kant's (1724) theory postulates that people should adhere to their obligations and duties when engaged in decision-making when ethics are in play – acting according to the maxim. This means that a person will follow his or her obligations to another individual or society because upholding one's duty is what is considered ethically correct (Chonko, 2012). The theory is best in explaining the moral obligations and professional codes of conduct a journalist is obliged to follow. However, though useful today, the theory is too old (1724-1804) and ignores the rational or logical basis for deciding an individual's duties and that Sometimes, a person's duties conflict with rights. Even Kant's (1780:25) proposition that a conflict of duties is inconceivable makes it difficult to

ascertain the reasons behind it. Thus, another theory would do the needful relevant to the study.

According to Chonko (*ibid*) Utilitarian ethical theories are based on one's ability to predict the consequences of an action. To a utilitarian, the choice that yields the greatest benefit to the most people is the ethically correct one. There are two types of utilitarianism, act utilitarianism and rule utilitarianism. Act utilitarianism subscribes precisely to the definition of utilitarianism – a person performs the acts that benefit the most people, regardless of personal feelings or societal constraints such as laws. Rule utilitarianism takes into account the law and is concerned with fairness. A rule utilitarian seeks to benefit the most people but through the fairest and most just means available. Therefore, the added benefits of rule utilitarianism are that it value justice and includes beneficence at the same time. Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and Stuart Mill (1806-1873) adopted and developed utilitarianism views from Mozi (490-403) Chinese philosophers, and they were concerned with actually making an action or policy morally good! This theory has developed into consequential utilitarianism in the 20th century, that what makes a good or unacceptable is the consequence it yields (Julia, 2022). This theory is relevant to this study for it will help collect data on the impacts of corruption in media and relating to benefits journalists accrue to arrive at a reliable conclusion and generalisation to what would be the best alternative to maintaining journalism professional ethics.

So, this study dived into two theories that complement each other: the GCT theory to explain why gate corruption practices still exist today, and the utilitarianism theory in considering the ethical codes of conduct that contradict journalists' ethical mind

professional mindset by collecting and analysing data on the benefits journalists accrues from corruption practices and relate them to social, political, economic and professional impacts to ascertain the extent to which this problem can be counterattacked.

2.5 The Contextual, Methodological and Theoretical Research Gap

With all the organised efforts to support media development and defend press freedom around the world, there has been remarkably little done in any concerted way to reduce the problem of corrupt journalism. There is a need for ethics research that focuses on the relationship between journalists' moral values (idealism and relativism) and their code of ethics. In other words, we need standards of what is right and wrong not to be changed according to situations or the concerned parties as a result of a brown envelope. This study noted the following gaps in the area:

2.5.1 Contextual Research Gap

Despite global efforts to support media development and defend press freedom, remarkably little has been done in a concerted way to address the issue of corrupt journalism. While studies on journalism ethics and professionalism in African media (e.g., Mpagaze & White, 2010; Mpagaze, 2011; Gondwe, 2011; Skjerdal, 2018; Bilau, 2022) have acknowledged the existence of brown envelope journalism, they primarily attribute it to low salaries and inadequate incentives for journalists. Skjerdal (2018) notes that brown envelopes are often disguised as per diems or transportation funds, including surplus amounts for personal use. However, specific studies on brown envelope journalism in Tanzania remain scarce. The reviewed literature does not adequately explore journalists', editors', reporters', and writers'

awareness, perceptions, and benefits in relation to the impacts of corrupt practices on the journalism profession and the public. Additionally, the magnitude of brown envelope journalism in Tanzania's digital media context and the potential motivations behind it, including its perceived benefits, remain unclear.

2.5.2 Methodological Research Gap

Most existing studies have focused on journalism corruption from a normative perspective, often condemning the brown envelope phenomenon without an in-depth empirical assessment of its prevalence, causes, and consequences in Tanzania. The available research primarily examines media ethics, professionalism, and legal obligations, without assessing the actual limitations that prevent journalists from adhering to ethical standards. Furthermore, the methodological approaches employed have largely been qualitative and descriptive, focusing on broad discussions of media corruption without utilizing comprehensive mixed-methods approaches that incorporate both quantitative measurements (e.g., surveys on journalists' experiences) and qualitative insights (e.g., in-depth interviews with media practitioners and policymakers). This study aims to fill this gap by employing a robust methodological approach to assess the extent of brown envelope journalism and its influence on journalistic performance, particularly in Tanzania's evolving media landscape, including digital platforms.

2.5.3 Theoretical Research Gap

Existing research on brown envelope journalism has primarily taken a deontological approach, focusing on journalism's professional obligations and ethical standards.

However, little attention has been given to gatekeeping theory in understanding the structural and institutional pressures that influence journalists' decisions to accept brown envelopes. Additionally, the reviewed studies lack a utilitarian perspective, which considers the duality of corruption practices by analyzing both the benefits accrued and the societal, political, economic, and professional consequences of media corruption. By integrating gatekeeping theory and utilitarianism theory, this study offered a more nuanced perspective on why corruption in media persists, how journalists rationalize their decisions, and whether there are perceived benefits that contribute to its continuation. This theoretical lens provided deeper insights into the moral and ethical implications of corruption practices in Tanzania's media industry.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The chapter covers the research methodology employed in conducting this study. It, therefore, explained the location where the study was conducted, the research approach, the research design, the population, the sample and sampling methods, the data collection methods, the data analysis procedures, and the ethical considerations adhered to during the study.

3.2 Area of the Study

This study was conducted in the Dodoma region, specifically focusing on the Dodoma City Council to narrow the scope and facilitate easier data collection. As the capital city, Dodoma had a rich media landscape, including digital media, which supported data collection from various media outlets such as TBC, ITV, Star TV, Radio One, WASAFI TV, RFA – Radio Free Africa, and newspapers like Mwananchi, Mwanasport, and The Guardian, all readily accessible within the city. Additionally, Dodoma, as the capital, is home to many businesses and the operations of government and non-governmental agencies, all aiming to appeal to the public. This competition for public attention among these agencies and organisations often leads to the practice of brown-envelope journalism, making it a suitable location for the study.

3.3 Research Approach

To fully understand corruption practices in journalism from various angles, a qualitative research approach was used. The qualitative approach allowed for the

collection of data to better comprehend the "how" and "why" of the research problem in terms of experience and context, unlike quantitative methods, which require vast amounts of data to reach conclusions (Creswell, 2017). The qualitative approach focused more on words than numbers and on depth rather than breadth, seeking to uncover the opinions, thoughts, and feelings of the respondents (Kothari, 2017; Creswell, 2009). For instance, ascertaining how journalists understood their professional code of ethics did not require numerical data but instead demanded deep explanations. Similarly, understanding journalists' perceptions of the brown envelope practice called for discussions and interviews rather than surveys. Moreover, exploring the benefits that journalists and media houses gained from the brown envelope practice required unstructured interviews and qualitative insights, rather than statistical information, to achieve a unique depth of understanding that is difficult to capture through closed questions or surveys.

Additionally, the qualitative approach offered flexibility in data collection techniques, such as asking follow-up questions and establishing meaningful conversations with respondents—an approach that is more challenging in statistical methods. As Albert Einstein famously stated, "Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted." In this context, although statistics have value, they did not serve the purpose of answering the "why" aspect of this research, which was explored by investigating the benefits that motivate journalists to engage in brown-envelope practices—unethical conduct.

3.4 Research Design

In this study, an exploratory research design was employed. Kothari (2014) and Creswell and Creswell (2014; 2017) describe a research design as the master plan, blueprint, and sequence of research tasks and activities—a plan for the methods and procedures researchers use to collect and analyse data. In the exploratory research design, the focus was on delving into phenomena to achieve a more precise understanding of loosely defined information through in-depth interviews, focus groups, and projective techniques. Therefore, the study aimed to investigate the reasons behind the factors behind corrupt practices among journalist (also referred to as continual appropriation of the brown envelope in this study), particularly the benefits that journalists derive from the practice and its subsequent impacts on their professional performance. In this study, the opinions, perceptions, and attitudes of journalists regarding the issue of the brown envelope were gathered from mainstream media practitioners, tabloid journalists, bloggers, digital media representatives, and social influencers.

3.5 Population, Sample size and Sampling techniques

This section defines the participants or respondents that the research worked with.

3.5.1 Population

In research, the population refers to the entire group of individuals, objects, or events that meet specific inclusion criteria and are of interest to the researcher (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). In this study, the population comprised media houses and representatives, including online-based media, but excluding bloggers working and residing in Dodoma City, from whom the findings were generalised. Online-based

media were included due to the paradigm shift, as both globally and in Tanzania, there has been a growing preference for online news over radio stations. In Dodoma, being a busy city like all other big cities, the public pays less attention to radio and television due to limited time but accesses online news wherever they are (Kaale & Mjema, 2025; Gondwe & Modile, 2024; Sanga, 2015). Consequently, the manipulation of journalists through the brown envelope practice, as well as the dissemination of fake or biased news to consumers, may have extended to online platforms, particularly in cases involving media and social media trends driven by public figures, such as politicians, celebrities, businesspeople, and government officials seeking public attention.

3.5.2 Sample size

The sample for this study was drawn from five media houses in each category, with editors, reporters, writers, and presenters selected to respond to both structured and unstructured questions, as well as participate in focus group discussions. Five (5) participants, one (1) from each of the following newspapers—The Guardian, Mwananchi, Uhuru, Mwanahalisi, and Mwanaspoti—were selected. Similarly, five (5) participants, one (1) from each of the following radio stations—Radio Free Africa, UFM, EFM, Clouds FM, and Radio One—were included. Five (5) participants, one (1) from each of the following television stations—ITV, TBC, Wasafi TV, Azam TV, and TVE—were selected, along with five (5) participants, one (1) from each of the following online media platforms: Ayo TV, Mpenja TV, Upendo TV, Global TV, and Ngassa TV were selected. Additionally, five (5) editors from across these media houses were chosen, and five (5) influential online bloggers

and social media icons were included, bringing the total sample size to thirty (30) participants, representing a broad spectrum of media outlets. While the number of respondents was initially determined, it was subject to change depending on the availability and willingness of the participants, with data collection continuing until saturation was reached.

3.5.3 Sampling Procedures/techniques

The selection of the sample was determined by factors such as time, the size of the population, the availability of manpower, expenses involved in administering the inquiries, and the overall research blueprint, including the design and approach used. For this study, purposeful criterion sampling methods were employed to create well-matched groups. Each respondent had to meet specific criteria, such as working in one of the media houses (newspapers, radio and television stations, or digital media), having at least two years of experience (which was deemed sufficient to encounter the corrupt practices, if applicable), and holding a position as a reporter, writer, editor, or presenter. Drivers, cleaners, and personal assistants were excluded from the sample.

3.6 Data Collection Methods and Instruments

Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes (Kabir, 2016). This study was planned to use the following methods in collecting data.

3.6.1 Interview Protocol

As part of the qualitative method, face-to-face interviews were used to collect data to understand how journalists perceived the brown envelope practice, the benefits they derived from it, and its impact on their professional performance, both positively and negatively. Interview questions were prepared to determine the extent to which the brown envelope practice remained prevalent and were supplemented by unstructured interviews, allowing for follow-up questions to clarify and expand upon the respondents' answers.

3.6.2 Focus Group Discussion

To further explore why the brown envelope practice is prevalent, specifically why journalists engage in it and the benefits they derive, a focus group discussion was conducted. Discussion guidelines were prepared and administered to journalists from the selected media who were willing to participate in the study. While editors, bloggers, and social media icons participated in interviews, they were not involved in the focus group discussions due to the nature of their roles in media houses and the logistical challenges of organising FGDs with them.

3.7 Data Analysis Procedures

Given that the study employed a qualitative research approach, the data—comprising notes, audio recordings, images, and text documents collected from both structured and unstructured interviews as well as focus group discussions—were analysed using descriptive text analysis procedures (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Gibson & Brown, 2009). This method allowed the researcher to examine the social experiences of the participants, specifically journalists, by decoding their words, actions, and even

visual materials to investigate their awareness, perceptions, the benefits they gain, and the extent to which the brown envelope practice influences their professional duties. In this context, statistical measures such as frequencies, percentages, and means were deemed irrelevant, as they are not suitable for quantifying the 'how' of journalists' perceptions or the 'why' behind the benefits and impacts of the brown envelope practice in Tanzania.

Descriptively, as explained in Nowell et al. (2017), the following were the stages involved in the study on the factors behind the prolongation of corrupt practices among journalists in Tanzania, descriptive text analysis was carried out through a structured, multi-stage process as evidenced below;

a) Data Preparation

The first step involved preparing the data collected through structured and unstructured interviews and focus group discussions. All interviews were transcribed verbatim, and relevant notes, audio recordings, and images were organised for analysis. The data was carefully cleaned to ensure accuracy, with irrelevant or redundant information removed. This process created a comprehensive dataset for subsequent stages of analysis.

b) Familiarisation with Data

The researcher immersed themselves in the data by thoroughly reading the transcriptions multiple times. During this stage, initial notes were made to capture early impressions, key themes, and notable patterns. The researcher reflected on the data, noting instances where journalists discussed their awareness of the brown

envelope practice, its benefits, and the impact it had on their professional performance.

c) Coding

Next, the researcher generated codes that represented key concepts and ideas emerging from the data. For example, segments of interviews where journalists discussed their ethical dilemmas or motivations for accepting bribes were assigned specific codes such as “ethical challenges,” “economic pressure,” or “professional benefits.” Coding was conducted manually, and as the analysis progressed, codes were refined and sub-codes created to capture nuances, such as differences between the experiences of junior and senior journalists.

d) Categorising Data

The coded data was then grouped into broader categories. For instance, codes related to the motivations behind accepting brown envelopes were categorised under themes such as “financial necessity” and “professional survival.” Similarly, categories were developed to capture journalists’ perceptions of the impact of corrupt practices, including “deterioration of journalistic standards” and “personal conflicts.” These categories helped structure the data into coherent groups.

e) Identifying Themes and Patterns

At this stage, the researcher identified overarching themes that explained the factors driving the prolongation of corrupt practices. Major themes included “economic hardship,” “lack of enforcement of ethical standards,” and “institutionalised corruption.” These themes were refined to ensure they were distinct yet related,

capturing the complexity of the issue. The theme of “economic hardship,” for example, was connected to sub-themes such as low wages and job insecurity, which emerged as primary drivers of journalists’ participation in corrupt practices.

f) Interpretation of Findings

The researcher interpreted the themes by linking them to the research questions and the broader context of journalism in Tanzania. For example, the theme of “institutionalised corruption” was analysed in relation to the weak regulatory frameworks governing the media sector. The findings suggested that the continuation of brown-envelope practices was not solely an individual issue but rather part of a larger systemic problem. This interpretation provided deeper insights into why these practices persisted.

g) Presentation of Findings

The findings were presented in a coherent narrative that illustrated the key themes and their implications. Direct quotes from journalists were included to support the thematic analysis and to provide an authentic representation of their experiences. For instance, one journalist explained how economic pressures forced them to accept brown envelopes despite their ethical concerns, thus highlighting the theme of “financial necessity.” The analysis was described in rich detail, emphasising the qualitative depth of the study.

h) Validation and Triangulation

To validate the findings, the researcher cross-checked the data from interviews and focus group discussions to ensure consistency. Triangulation was achieved by

comparing insights across different media platforms, including newspapers, radio stations, and digital media. Feedback from peers was also sought to review the analysis and ensure that it was grounded in the data without researcher bias. This process enhanced the credibility of the findings.

i) Drawing Conclusions

In conclusion, the researcher summarised the key factors behind the prolongation of corrupt practices among journalists in Tanzania. The findings were linked to existing theories of media ethics and corruption, demonstrating how economic pressures and weak institutional frameworks contributed to the persistence of the brown envelope practice. Recommendations were made for strengthening ethical standards within the media sector, including better enforcement of regulations and improved financial support for journalists. The study also suggested areas for further research, such as examining the role of media ownership in perpetuating corrupt practices.

By following these stages of descriptive text analysis, the researcher was able to provide an in-depth and nuanced understanding of the factors contributing to the continued presence of corrupt practices among Tanzanian journalists.

3.8 3.8 Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to all ethical considerations from the initial to the final stages. The following important ethical issues were taken into account: seeking permission for conducting this research, introducing the researcher and clearly stating the purpose of the study to the respondents, ensuring the privacy of respondents by maintaining confidentiality and anonymity, avoiding coercion of respondents to

provide information or to participate involuntarily, acknowledging all secondary data appropriately without manipulating any data, and collecting, analysing, and interpreting the data according to professional principles of research.

This study adhered to ethical principles throughout its research process, ensuring credibility, integrity, and respect for respondents' rights. The ethical issues considered were categorized into validity, reliability, and rationale for using triangulation.

3.8.1 Validity

To enhance the validity of this study, ethical measures were taken to ensure the accuracy and authenticity of the data. The researcher sought formal permission before conducting the study and introduced themselves to respondents while clearly stating the research's purpose. Additionally, informed consent was obtained from participants, allowing them to voluntarily engage in the study without coercion. This approach ensured that the data collected reflected genuine responses from participants, thereby increasing the study's validity.

3.8.2 Reliability

To maintain reliability, the study protected respondents' privacy by ensuring confidentiality and anonymity throughout the research process. Respondents' identities were not disclosed, and the information they provided was used solely for academic purposes. Moreover, secondary data sources were appropriately acknowledged, with no manipulation or distortion of data. By maintaining ethical

consistency in data collection, analysis, and interpretation, the study enhanced the reliability of its findings.

3.8.3 Rationale for Using Triangulation

Triangulation was employed in this study to increase the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. By utilizing multiple data sources and methods, including surveys, interviews, and document analysis, the study cross-validated information to minimize biases and enhance objectivity. This approach ensured that findings were not solely dependent on a single method or perspective, making the research more comprehensive and robust. Furthermore, triangulation helped to balance qualitative and quantitative insights, reinforcing the study's ethical commitment to producing well-rounded, evidence-based conclusions.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This study aimed to uncover the reasons why corrupt practices are still accepted among journalists in Tanzanian contexts. In this case, the study presents the identified reasons behind the prolongation of corruption among journalists, the benefits that journalists accrue from the practice and the underlying impacts it bears on the journalists themselves, society and the profession in particular. In other words, questions like why have corruption practices been prolonged among journalists in Tanzania, what benefits journalists accumulate from corruption practices in Tanzania and how the impacts of corruption practices relates to the benefits journalists accrue have been extensively explored and resolved in this chapter. To ensure the validity, trustworthiness and dependability of the findings, the identification of the relevant respondents is equally significant. Thus, this chapter begins with the clarification and description of the study respondents from whom data were collected, and then the presentation of the study findings.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of the Research Informants

According to Barton & Tucker (2021), demographic characteristics describe the outward and defining characteristics of the respondents including gender, age, race, ethnicity and culture, religion, group affiliation, region, occupation and education. experience, sexual orientation, family status, and social and economic levels. In this section, the gender, age, group affiliation, occupation, education and experience characteristics of the respondents are described. This information is crucial to justify

the extensive nature of the data collected and the reliability of the study findings. Furthermore, the acceptance of the articles or stories by editors, as seen in this chapter, may be influenced by the journalist's social status, including age, sex and education. The tables below explain the coverage the respondents participated in during the interviews.

Table 4.1: Female Respondents Aged between 24 and 45 in Media Houses

Age	Female	Male	Total
24-45	13	8	21
46-65+	4	5	9
			30 (see 3.5.2)

[Source: Field visit from April 23rd 2024 - June 30th 2024]

Data from Table 2.1 above indicate that female respondents aged between 24 and 45 in media houses were more likely to participate in the study than males. This trend can be attributed to employers' preference for hiring young women in media rather than men with the reason being that women are obedient, faithful and effective in media brand marketing. This was taken from one chief editor during follow-up questions during the interview when asked why there were more ladies in their office and more old men in their company;

“Though men are resilient and resourceful in management during their old age, we prefer females over males because ‘boys’ are troublesome, greedy and hard to handle. Women listen and follow what they are told and they are also advantageous in our marketing tasks – they easily get satisfied”

It is also evident from the table that men aged between 46 and 65+ were large in number compared to women. These numbers informed the researcher of the resilience capacity of men over women and the responsibilities they carry with their families that make them keep working to 65 years of age. Another reason is that men of older ages are best at management activities based on their experiences.

Table 4.2: Informants’ Media Affiliation and Occupation Occupation

	Media Affiliation	Newspapers	Radio Stations	TV Stations	Online Media	Total
Editors		2	0	2	3	7
Media Influencers		1	2	2	4	9
Journalists		3	3	4	4	14
						30

[Source: Field visit from April 23rd 2024 - June 30th 2024]

The table above indicates the number of respondents or informants’ media affiliation and their occupations as editors, influencers and journalists.

Table 4.3: Education and Experience Characteristics of Informants

Profession	Education			Experience in Journalism (years)		
	Masters	Degree	Diploma	1 – 5	6 – 10	11 – 15+
Editors	2	3	2	1	3	3
Journalists	6	8	0	3	6	5
Media influencers	2	4	3	3	4	2

[Source: Field visit from April 23rd 2024 - June 30th 2024]

The table above indicates the education status of the respondents and experiences because they influence the extent to how much they understand corrupt practices (with brown envelope as a cover name) among journalists.

4.3 Presentation of study findings

As stated earlier, this study aimed to investigate the factors sustaining corrupt practices among journalists in Tanzania: The quest for brown envelope and ethical mindset. To arrive at that the study devised three specific objectives: identifying the reasons behind the prolongation of corruption practices among journalists in Tanzania; exploring the benefits that journalists accrue from corruption practices and examining the impacts of corruption practices compared to the benefits journalists accrued. These objectives were met through well-designed research questions under three main inquiries: Why have corruption practices been prolonged among journalists in Tanzania; What benefits do journalists accumulate from corruption practices in Tanzania; How can the impacts of corruption practices weigh from the benefits journalists accrue? Data were collected from 30 informants and across media houses to respond to these inquiries: radio, television, newspapers and online media including document analysis. The study findings have been presented according to the objectives set as indicated below;

4.3.1 Factors for Prolongation of Corruption Practices Among Journalists in Tanzania

The selection of this research objective was triggered by the fact that the integrity of journalism in Tanzania is under scrutiny due to persistent corrupt practices that threaten the very foundation of the media's role as the fourth estate. This study

therefore delved into the complexities of corruption within the Tanzanian journalism sector, aiming to uncover the underlying factors that contribute to its perpetuation. Specifically, the question *‘Why have corruption practices been prolonged among journalists in Tanzania?’* was developed to understand why such practices continue to be accepted and even expected among journalists despite the known ethical dilemmas and the widespread acknowledgement of their detrimental effects. To arrive at reliable findings, conclusions and generalisations, the inquiry of this objective drew qualitative data collected from interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and document analyses. This research explored the intricate web of economic, social, political, and institutional influences that shape journalistic behaviour in the study area – Dodoma. By employing a descriptive text analysis approach, the study examined first-hand accounts from media practitioners to identify recurring themes and patterns that illuminate the reasons behind the ongoing acceptance and normalisation of corruption in the field. This exploration is grounded in the theoretical frameworks of Gatekeeping Theory (GCT) and Utilitarianism (see Chapter 3), which provide a lens through which the data's implications for journalists' ethical and professional mindsets can be interpreted. Through this analytical journey, themes or say factors for corrupt practices prolongation among journalists were discovered as indicated below;

4.3.2 4.3.2 Low Salaries and Economic Pressures

Multiple responses from the respondents indicated that journalists struggle to meet their basic needs, with their salaries often not lasting even two weeks. This economic pressure makes them more susceptible to accepting bribes or engaging in corrupt

practices, particularly during high-stakes situations like general elections. For instance, when responding to the question *‘How do financial pressures, such as low salaries or lack of job security, impact journalistic integrity and incentivize corrupt practices?’* during an interview a journalist said;

“As you know, our low salaries cannot stay even for two weeks to serve the journalist’s basic needs. What do you expect to live like? We have to move around to get data to report and we need the same money to do that. It is really difficult without money...and we don’t like it but we are forced to do it otherwise one may fail to cope with the job demands”. [**Source:** interview with journalist on 2nd April 2024]

This suggests a significant economic vulnerability among journalists, where financial instability directly impacts their ethical decision-making. The GCT theory, which explains how gatekeeping and corruption practices persist, can be applied here to understand how economic pressures compromise journalistic integrity. The lack of adequate financial compensation creates a situation (a gate) which limits journalists from performing up to their professional standards and are more likely to prioritise personal survival over professional ethics. The quote exposes the burden of underpayment and its consequences and its impact on journalism quality, and the complex demands of the job against financial reality.

In other words, the journalist’s statement highlights the difficult financial reality that many journalists face due to low salaries, which are insufficient to cover even basic living expenses for two weeks. This situation forces them into a precarious position where they struggle to balance their personal needs with the demands of their profession. In particular, the mention of having to “move around to get data to

report” emphasises the necessity of travelling, gathering information, and accessing sources—an essential part of journalism. However, the lack of financial resources makes this work extremely difficult, creating a vicious cycle where journalists are forced to find alternative means to meet their needs. This is why during an interview another journalist said;

"You wouldn't believe how hard this job is, it's really difficult. When you get money, you have to budget for transport to go and gather the next story. Meanwhile, you have children's school fees to pay, you have relatives, and because they see you on TV every day wearing a suit, they assume you have money. That's why when we go to an event and aren't given allowances or transport money, the story ends right there so that next time we go, we get something. You can't rely on the salary alone, which isn't even enough!"

[Source: interview with a journalist on 3rd April 2024]

The extract above testifies that the brown envelope is real. The journalists’ low wages place them under constant pressure, compelling them to make choices that might compromise their professional integrity to curter for extra life expenses. In some cases, journalists may resort to unethical practices, such as accepting bribes or aligning with powerful interests, in order to supplement their income. The phrase “we don’t like it but we are forced to do it” suggests that journalists are often compelled to engage in such behaviour reluctantly, driven by the need to survive rather than a desire to act unethically.

On the other hand, financial insecurity directly affects the quality of journalism. Journalists may lack the resources to conduct thorough investigations, travel to

important locations, or dedicate sufficient time to fact-checking and research. The overall result is a decline in the quality of news reporting, with journalists either cutting corners or being unable to pursue important stories due to financial constraints.

The journalist's statements also emphasise a disconnect between the job demands and the financial support provided. Journalism requires extensive time and effort, yet the pay does not reflect the level of commitment required. This creates an unsustainable working environment where many journalists may fail to cope with the pressures of the job unless they find alternative ways to make ends meet. This could include engaging in side jobs, prioritising stories that come with financial incentives, or even leaving the profession altogether. Furthermore, the responses illustrate the systemic issue of low wages within the media industry in Tanzania and its detrimental effect on journalists' ability to perform their roles effectively and ethically. Journalists are placed in a position where survival takes precedence over professional standards, leading to compromised journalism and, ultimately, a weakened press. For the industry to thrive, better compensation and support structures are needed to allow journalists to fulfil their responsibilities without being forced into ethically questionable decisions.

On top of that, some journalists claimed that some of their fellow workers are paid dearly, which motivates them to compete living up to their standards. When responding to the question *'How do personal motivations, aspirations, and pressures impact journalists' susceptibility to engaging in corrupt behaviour?'* a journalist replied;

“You see, the problem of low salaries is in every media organisation except state owned media like TBC. Actually, we also want to reap something in the end but our media companies pay the least they can. And if the situation is like that...what do you expect? Our fellows in TBC are dearly paid. I do not know whether they engage in the brown envelope you’re talking about but for us, it is now normal or else you perish”

[Source: an interview with a journalist on 2nd April 2024]

This data indicates that journalists’ motivations for personal development, and future aspirations are grounded on financial accumulation. Earning low salaries influences their decisions and they therefore become susceptible to accepting bribes to temper with news – manipulation hence putting integrity aside.

4.3.3 Cultural and Social Norms

This idea dealt with the societal and cultural influences on journalism ethics, particularly focusing on the challenges faced by women journalists. It was therefore mentioned that societal and cultural norms, particularly about gender, play a crucial role in perpetuating corrupt practices among journalists, especially females. For example, it was noted that female journalists face additional restrictions, limiting their participation in social and economic issues, which could exacerbate their vulnerability to corrupt practices. In an interview with the editor on ‘*how do societal and cultural norms influence journalistic ethics and integrity in Tanzania*’ she replied;

“Especially for women journalists who are not allowed to participate in social or economic issues. As women journalists, participating in some extra economic activities is nearly impossible.

While you have to collect information, especially in investigative journalism, you have to take care of the families too! And yet your financial status is unstable. Hahahaa, what do you do?"

[Source: an interview with the female editor on 3rd April 2024]

This points to the intersection of culture and gender as significant factors in the ethical challenges faced by journalists. In other words, Cultural norms may undermine the autonomy and agency of female journalists, making them more vulnerable to exploitation and less able to resist corrupt practices. The application of Utilitarianism in this context could explore how the ethical framework of "the greatest good for the greatest number" is compromised by systemic gender biases, which may lead to an environment where corruption is tolerated or even encouraged.

It follows that the evidence from document analysis like Media Council of Tanzania – MCT (2023) recognizes the existence of the challenges facing women in media relating to gender and social-cultural pressures. That is why in their 2023 (p.44) report, MCT reasoned that;

"The training focus was on equipping female journalists with knowledge and skills to enable them to perform better, increase confidence and be ready to manage media houses. The training also aimed at providing a wider perspective of management in the media to enable them to take up higher positions in their career in the newsroom and /or strengthen their capacity for those who had already reached managerial and editorial levels."

[Source: Documentary review of the MCT (2023:44) year report]

The extract from the MCT (2023:4) above indicates the prevalence of the socio-cultural challenges facing women in media that necessitated capacity-building

training amongst them. It is the culture that kept women performing below their abilities, lacking confidence and sometimes harassed sexually to excel in their careers. During FDG on the influence of social and cultural elements on journalists' ethical conduct, the female reporters claimed that...

"We women go through so much hardship. Sometimes, you go to gather news or seek clarification to balance a story from someone. When you arrive, they start hitting on you... and if you go to a private setting, for example, their home, they might force you into having sex.

She added;

Or they begin telling you things to make you feel like you don't deserve to be a journalist just because you're a woman. For instance, they might say, 'Why would a beautiful girl like you choose this, going around in the sun? Why not stay at home and take care of your children and husband?' It hurts a lot, but unfortunately, we endure it, and the work continues.

She concluded;

So, you're forced to work hard even if it is about sleeping with one of them who is richer to earn money so that when you go to someone else, they won't mistreat you."

[Source: Translated from FGD with journalists on 5th April 2024]

The findings indicate that gender roles and societal norms affect journalistic ethics. For instance, as stated in the quote above, societal and cultural norms, particularly those related to gender, play a significant role in shaping the ethical landscape for journalists in Tanzania. Women journalists, in particular, face restrictions that limit

their participation in important social and economic issues. These norms may also pressure women to conform to unethical practices due to their marginalised position within the industry further perpetuating corruption. In other words, female journalists face additional constraints, which can limit their participation in professional and economic opportunities, potentially making them more vulnerable to corruption.

4.3.4 Institutional and Regulatory Factors

Respondents pointed out a lack of institutional support and regulatory loopholes that could potentially enable corrupt practices. However, there was also a conflicting viewpoint where some respondents observed that the issue stemmed more from individual circumstances, such as low salaries and job insecurity, rather than regulatory loopholes. For example, when responding to the question of whether any regulatory or legal loopholes facilitated corruption among journalists in Tanzania, one of the journalists said;

‘None in the state-owned media, though there is no oversight’

Another one added;

“Because the problem of low salaries is in every media organisation except media government like TBC.”

Another one claimed;

“And these days, if you act like you know too much or if you stand firmly by the principles of solid journalism and reporting, it doesn’t take long before you end up dead, and our institutions don’t even help you”

[Source: FGD with journalists on 5th April 2024]

These findings indicate that there are institutional weaknesses in preventing corruption, especially in privately owned media. In other words, the institutional framework within media organisations in Tanzania, particularly state-run media, appears insufficient in preventing corrupt practices as well. The lack of oversight and accountability within these institutions allows corruption to persist unchecked. Furthermore, the disparity between government and private media organisations in terms of salary structures exacerbates the issue, with private media employees more vulnerable to corruption due to lower pay. While regulatory systems may not overtly encourage corruption, the absence of strong deterrents or effective enforcement mechanisms could contribute to a culture of impunity.

Additionally, journalists' vulnerability to corruption is heightened by the perceived absence of institutional support, compounded by the insufficient safeguards in place to defend those who seek to maintain ethical integrity.

On the other side, a documentary review indicated that media institutions were also responsible for perpetuating corrupt practices. Lacking oversight may result in acute challenges to the upcoming and junior journalists as well as women. In the report by Jackline Kuwanda (obtained through documentary analysis) in January 2024, the title *Tanzania's Newsrooms Are Increasingly Becoming Dangerous for Women Journalists* indicated that out of 100 female media workers, 77 per cent were reported experiencing sexual harassment within their respective media outlets in 2023. The extract below testifies to the existent problem as Miriam one of the promising journalists said;

“The work environment became so toxic that it left me with no other option than leaving. One day, when I was on my way [to report to work], he asked me to go to his house,” “I could never do that, and when I received that message, my mind started to think, now what should I do when I go to his house? “This incident significantly impacted me and fostered a perception that journalism [for women] requires tolerance of inappropriate behaviour.”“When someone with personal interest approaches you romantically, and you decline, the work environment can become hostile. I found myself quitting. I couldn’t continue working in such an environment”.

[Source: The Chanzo, - Online document analysis on 24th May 2024]

The excerpt above indicates that her editor was not straight about his intentions, initially conveying them by rejecting the stories she submitted, and claiming they were poorly written. His true motives only became apparent later on from his manipulations. Her refusal made the work environment toxic enough to undermine her professional growth and her sense of safety. His rejection of her stories under the guise of poor quality was likely a tactic to exert pressure and establish a dependency on his approval. This act of manipulation created a sense of professional defectiveness, placing Miriam in a vulnerable position.

Again, this reflects power imbalance, where refusal leads to punitive measures, such as increased work pressure or the sabotage of professional opportunities. The findings here indicate that the shift from subtle manipulation to overt hostility is common in media institutions, where victims are harassed and left with few options—either to comply with the harasser's demands or to face increasing professional isolation and mental stress. The findings further indicate that the

scenario had a significant impact on the young journalist's career and perception of the industry. In such situations, the journalist found her professional growth stunted, not because of a lack of talent or capability, but due to systemic harassment from the editor and lack of support from the institution. It was pointed out from the extract that editors may accept poorly written or compromised information/news or articles for sex but reject professionally and objectively written articles to exert pressure on a woman journalist for sex. This situation do not only jeopardises individuals' health but also fosters corrupt practices as the media house has no explicit framework to deal with corruption.

Furthermore, the respondent in the extract expresses a substantial shift in her perception of journalism for women, stating that this practice nurtured the belief that the profession requires women to tolerate inappropriate behaviours. This echoes a wider concern in male-dominated industries, where such incidents are not isolated but part of a larger pattern that discourages women from pursuing their careers fully. The recommendation that women's tolerance of harassment is a requirement for success in journalism points to a culture of corruption and impunity, where harassers face little consequence, and victims are left to navigate their professional lives amidst constant harassment. The institutional framework therefore has no explicit mechanisms for regulating corruption within the media houses in Tanzania something that perpetuates the corrupt practices.

4.3.5 Impact of Media Ownership and Influence

Media ownership structures were also highlighted as a contributing factor, with suggestions that paying higher salaries could mitigate corrupt practices. Additionally,

the political climate, particularly during elections, was identified as a time when corruption became more pronounced due to the influence of money as evidenced in the following interviewee responses to whether media ownership influences their reporting;

One blogger responded;

“It depends on the employer. How can I employ you and you bite me from the back? You receive directives and work, no questions. You do as told to.”

A radio reporter said;

“That is why you see nowadays every financially powerful person has the media with them. They dictate what to say and what not to say about them. If you cross the boundary, you’re fired!”

The editor said;

“Owners have absolute power. Have you ever seen or heard TBC or Uhuru Newspaper publish any news criticising the government? No, never. We don’t see that.”

Another reporter said;

“See, even politicians have their media behind them that pronounce their names, or they pay social media influencers to praise them, defend them or even some radio stations to air out the so-called remarkable success to their voters”

[Source: interviews with respondents on 24th and 26th April 2024]

The quotations above indicate that media ownership plays a crucial role in shaping the work environment and financial stability of journalists. Ownership structures that

prioritise profit over journalistic integrity may inadvertently encourage corrupt practices by not providing adequate financial compensation or ethical guidance.

The blogger's response emphasises a lack of autonomy in media employment, suggesting that employees must strictly follow directives from their superiors without questioning authority. The phrase "How can I employ you and you bite me from the back?" implies that loyalty is expected to the point of suppressing critical thought or dissent. This reflects a work culture where journalists are discouraged from challenging the status quo or expressing independent opinions, as their job security relies on compliance with the employer's wishes.

The radio reporter touches on the growing phenomenon of wealthy individuals or influential figures owning media outlets to control the narrative surrounding them. The statement, "They dictate what to say and what not to say about them," highlights how these powerful people manipulate the media to protect their image and interests. The threat of being fired for "crossing the boundary" suggests that journalistic integrity is compromised, as reporters are forced to adhere to the agenda of media owners rather than pursue objective reporting.

The editor further illustrates the idea that media outlets aligned with political or governmental interests avoid publishing content critical of those in power. The mention of TBC (Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation) and Uhuru Newspaper as

examples of media that would never criticise the government points to the lack of independent oversight in state-run or government-affiliated media. This reinforces

the perception that such outlets serve as mouthpieces for the government, limiting the diversity of voices and critical perspectives available to the public.

The final respondent discusses how politicians and influential individuals use media platforms, including social media influencers and specific radio stations, to promote their image and achievements. This form of media manipulation extends beyond traditional outlets to new forms of communication, such as social media. The reference to politicians paying influencers or radio stations to highlight their successes demonstrates how public perception is carefully curated through financial incentives, further diminishing the space for balanced, independent reporting.

Therefore, these responses indicate that media freedom is heavily constrained in Tanzania, particularly by political and economic power structures. Journalists and media workers face constant pressure to conform to the agendas of their employers, whether they are wealthy individuals or government entities. This creates a media landscape where critical, investigative journalism is suppressed, and the public is fed controlled narratives that serve the interests of the powerful, rather than objective, fact-based reporting. These dynamics hinder (as GCT theory suggests) the media's role as a watchdog in society and limit democratic engagement, as the public is deprived of diverse, critical viewpoints and perpetuates corrupt practices among journalists in Tanzania.

4.3.6 Journalistic Education and Professional Networks

Elicitation from the informants discovered the existence of ethical dissonance with journalists' practices derived from educational gaps and professional boards. In this regard, the role of journalism education and professional associations like the Media

Council of Tanzania (MCT) was also discussed. There was a perception that journalism education does not adequately instil ethical standards and that while MCT exists to promote ethical behaviour, its impact may be limited. When responding to the question of whether journalistic education and professional boards might have influenced perpetual corrupt practices among journalists, one of the chief editors said;

“We do double talks, receive their articles and teach them how to balance stories. You find a journalist bringing to you a one-sided story and pressuring you to accept to publish it claiming it’s a directive from the above. It brings serious concerns to us. Things have changed a lot, no more investigative journalism. Only ingratiation - “uchawa” has lavished.”

A journalist said;

“I don’t know. I don’t remember if I took a course in ethics. I think it is a special program at the university for people taking philosophy and ethics. For us, it is just how to write scripts, and stories to capture the attention of the viewers, listeners or watchers.”

A reporter said;

“I know I did one course during my bachelor’s degree but I do not know exactly why we have the so-called media council. It is just TCRA’s watchdog. It’s a toothless organization. It only complains without taking the initiative to protect journalists’ well-being. Now, imagine if a father complains, what about children? No training they do but you only see reports every year about what happened to one of our own. And not what they did to protect them. So, it is you to align with the powerful side for your safety.”

Another respondent informed;

“No, no need to blame the universities or our council. Imagine you have been taught a full course in a semester on ethical journalism. Isn't that enough? The MCT calls a general meeting every year in collaboration with TAMWA on capacity building for women, still, you will hear a certain woman has been sexually harassed. Some of them, do that on purpose to get favour.”

Another very experienced journalist with 26 years in the field said;

“Digital media has tarnished the industry. Universities teach students to use pen and paper to get money. Youth journalists have turned to content creation in social media. They write to capture the attention of the public, get endorsements for product advertisements, and get more likes and comments. Even the council needs money from its members. The more the members the more the money. The more you scrutinise them the less the revenue. It is very disappointing!”

[Source: Interview with Informants 27th to 30th April 2024]

The findings from the quotations above suggest a disconnection between journalism education and the realities of the field. While professional associations are in place to uphold standards, their effectiveness is questioned, indicating a potential gap in ongoing professional development and ethical reinforcement. This highlights the need for more robust educational programs that not only teach ethics but also prepare journalists for the economic and social pressures they will face in the field. The responses feature the decline of investigative journalism and rise of “Ingratiation”, questioning the blame on universities and the role of capacity building and the

impact of digital media to the shifting of journalistic priorities. The first interviewee highlights a troubling shift in the priorities of journalism. Instead of investigative journalism, which involves a balanced and thorough examination of issues, there has been a rise in one-sided reporting, often influenced by directives from powerful figures – which of course comes in form of brown envelopes or promises for favour. Journalists are pressuring editors to publish stories that lack objectivity, indicating that the profession is being manipulated to serve the interests of the powerful rather than inform the public as advocated by the utilitarianism's theory. The term "ingratiation" (translated as "uchawa") underscores the idea that some journalists are now more focused on pleasing those in authority rather than maintaining professional integrity, lack of emphasis on ethics in journalism education, criticism of the media council for its lack of support for journalists. This trend therefore undermines the watchdog role of the media and raises serious concerns about the quality of journalism being produced. The interviewee's lament that "things have changed" suggests that the media landscape has become more corrupt and less committed to truth and accountability.

The second interviewee, a journalist, admits to having little or no knowledge of media ethics, believing that ethics is a subject reserved for philosophy students. This reveals a potential gap in journalism education, where technical skills like writing scripts, presentations and capturing attention are prioritized over ethical principles. The lack of formal training in ethics may contribute to the moral decline observed in the field, as journalists may not fully grasp the importance of balancing stories, avoiding conflicts of interest, or resisting external pressures. The quotation also

implies a disconnect between journalism training and the real-world ethical challenges journalists face in their profession, particularly regarding objectivity and integrity – hence culminating into corrupt practices.

The third interviewee, a reporter, critiques the role of the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT) and the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA). They argue that the council is "toothless," failing to protect journalists or address their concerns in a meaningful way. Instead, the council is seen as merely documenting incidents rather than actively safeguarding the well-being of journalists. The analogy of a "father complaining" without taking action suggests that journalists are left vulnerable, with no real protection or support from the bodies that are supposed to advocate for them. This lack of protection pushes journalists to align themselves with the "powerful side," compromising their independence and integrity in order to secure their own safety. This reinforces the idea that the media environment has become increasingly compromised by external pressures. Another respondent argues that universities and the media council should not be blamed for the ethical shortcomings of journalists. They point out that ethics is taught in universities and that the MCT and organizations like TAMWA (Tanzania Media Women's Association) organize capacity-building programs, particularly for women. However, despite these efforts, incidents such as sexual harassment continue to occur. This response suggests that ethical training is available, but the persistent issues in the industry may stem from a broader cultural or systemic problem that cannot be resolved through education alone. In this sense, it is problematic to associate education/ethics and corruption without looking at human beings as social actors.

They are good (creative) in stretching societal/professional limits to meet their interests. There are no binary/dichotomy actions from human beings. The most educated and 'ethical' individuals can be the one leading in soliciting bribe. The mention of women using sexual harassment as a tool to gain favour hints at the corrupt and complex power dynamics within the industry, where some individuals may exploit the system to their advantage.

The final interviewee, a veteran journalist with 26 years of experience, laments the negative impact of digital media on journalism. They argue that journalism has shifted from its traditional investigative roots to a focus on content creation for social media, where the primary goal is to attract public attention, gain endorsements, and generate engagement through likes and comments. This shift is seen as a corruption of the profession, where financial incentives from advertising and social media popularity have become more important than truth-telling or holding power accountable. Additionally, the interviewee criticises the Media Council for prioritizing membership and revenue over scrutiny of its members. The implication is that the council is more interested in expanding its base for financial gain than in upholding journalistic standards, contributing to the overall decline in the profession. It can therefore be argued that responses shade a picture of a journalistic field in crisis, where ethical standards are eroding, investigative journalism is disappearing, and external influences are increasingly dictating what gets published. The lack of emphasis on ethics in education, weak regulatory bodies, and the rise of digital media-driven content creation are all contributing factors to the decline of the industry. Journalists are left with an option that allows them to navigate in a complex

environment whereas aligning with powerful interests is often the only way to survive. This has led to a widespread culture of "uchawa" (ingratiation) and compromised integrity in the wave of a brown envelope.

4.3.6.1 The Influence of Political Climate and Elections

In this regard, respondents informed that the political environment in Tanzania has significant impacts on the prolongation of corrupt practices among journalists. One event noted the most was during political rallies that sought wider media coverage. Also, elections were identified as a time when corruption is particularly prevalent, with journalists often facing pressure or financial incentives to sway their reporting in favour of certain political interests. During interviews, editors, radio and TV reporters, newspaper story writers and journalists in general expressed their deep concerns about political pressure on their professional effects when answering the follow-up question 'How does politics influence the continuation of corrupt practices among journalists' as evidenced below;

The editor said;

"There is no time we enjoy life like during election periods. Every politician must have a group of supporters to ensure they are spoken about positively so that the public gets to know them, even if they aren't like that. Do you know why? The public has no other way to know them apart from the media. Therefore, they have to seek us out, talk to us nicely, and we market them, invite them for interviews on the radio, and TV, or even feature an article about them in our newspapers. Anyway, it's business!"

[Source: an interview with the editor on 3r April 2024]

The editor's statement above reveals several important dynamics in the relationship between politics, media, and business, particularly during election periods. His commentary offers a candid reflection on how media operates as both a political tool and a business enterprise, especially during critical times like elections. The statement reveals that media are used as a marketing tool for politicians because they depend heavily on the media to shape their public image. The statement that *"every politician must have a group of supporters to ensure they are spoken about positively"* implies that the media is instrumental in framing politicians in a favourable light, regardless of whether the portrayal reflects the politician's true nature. This shows how the media is used strategically to manage and manufacture a politician's image, suggesting that the public's perception of politicians is often mediated through tailored stories rather than objective facts. In this case, the media becomes a gatekeeper of information, deciding what the public sees and hears about politicians, which can heavily influence election outcomes.

The editor's blunt remark *"Anyway, it's business!"* indicates that election periods are highly profitable for media outlets. This suggests that during elections, the media's role extends beyond its responsibility to inform the public—it also becomes a lucrative business opportunity though the problem extends throughout. The transactional nature of this relationship highlights the commercialization of political coverage, where media outlets prioritize content that generates profit over impartiality or truth. The fact that politicians must *"seek us out" and "talk to us nicely"* implies that the media control and manage the narrative and political access. This reflects a power dynamic where politicians are at the mercy of the media to help

them reach the public, reinforcing the media's significant influence during elections. The statement further notes ethical concerns in journalism. While the editor is speaking in a light-hearted tone, his remarks raise ethical concerns about media objectivity and independence. The fact that media outlets engage in "marketing" politicians, as opposed to reporting impartially on their policies or actions, suggests a conflict of interest. The media's role should be to inform and provide balanced coverage, but in this scenario, the business aspect takes precedence over the journalistic duty to hold politicians accountable. The absence of critical journalism and the focus on boosting politicians' profiles indicate that media integrity might be compromised in favour of financial gain. Democracy, the media, instead of providing an unbiased platform for public discourse, is co-opted into the machinery of political campaigns. If the media only showcases politicians in a favourable light due to business interests, it limits the public's ability to make informed decisions, undermining the transparency needed for a healthy democracy which is a tendency of corrupt journalism practices.

Cementing on the same issue another editor said;

"As the election period approaches, especially the general election, each political party has its media outlets. For example, you will never find TBC (Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation) broadcasting Chadema, ACT, or CUF meetings—not even once. You'll see them accompanying the CCM presidential candidate because that's the ruling party, and this is the time when politicians decide who will be appointed to which position. I mean, it's impossible—I appoint you to be the director of all media in the country, and you don't praise

me? You must give me mileage for you to continue in your position."

[Source: an interview with the editor on 3rd April 2024]

The caption above exposes how media in Tanzania is closely tied to political interests, particularly during election periods. Each political party aligns itself with certain media outlets, with state-owned media like TBC primarily supporting the ruling party (CCM) while ignoring opposition parties. This relationship limits the public's access to diverse political viewpoints, undermining media pluralism and impartiality. The media plays a key role in promoting the ruling party's candidates, ensuring their visibility and dominance, while opposition parties struggle to receive equal coverage.

Furthermore, media leaders are often appointed based on their loyalty to the ruling party, resulting in a system where favourable coverage is expected in exchange for political patronage. This erodes media independence, as journalists and editors feel pressured to conform to political agendas rather than pursue balanced, critical reporting. Ultimately, the media becomes a tool for political power consolidation, weakening its role as a watchdog and harming democratic processes by restricting the public's access to unbiased information.

Another noted perpetuating corruption was seeking appointments as evidenced in a television presenter said:

"Nowadays, there are appointments! Haven't you noticed something? Many of our fellow presenters who were with us in the studio are now driving V8s, they've gotten appointed to positions."

That's why nowadays many journalists and media personnel are focused on how they speak about the ruling party. If you speak well about it, appointments come flooding in! As for the other parties, we just cover them to fulfil our duties or to prevent backlash, though our colleagues at TBC, Uhuru, and other government-owned media only focus on the government. That's why the heads of those institutions are appointed by the government."

[Source: an interview with a TV presenter on 15th April 2024]

The television presenter's statement highlights how political influence affects career progression within the Tanzanian media industry. Journalists and media personnel who express favourable opinions about the ruling party (CCM) are often rewarded with high-level appointments and perks, such as luxury vehicles, creating a system where loyalty to the government is incentivized. These dynamics lead many in the media to focus on praising the ruling party to secure personal benefits, while coverage of opposition parties is minimal, done only to fulfil formal obligations or avoid criticism. Additionally, government-owned media like TBC and Uhuru are singled out as being particularly aligned with the ruling party, with leadership positions within these outlets being directly controlled by the government. This reinforces the lack of media independence and the role of patronage in shaping media coverage.

The problem was noted spread across media to online outlets as stated by a social media influencer;

A social media influencer said:

"I'm not kidding, if it weren't for politics, I wouldn't have made it! So, I don't see anything wrong with it because if you don't do it, others will, and you'll be left behind with a tough life. So yes, politics truly dictates what we write and how we write it!"

[Source: an interview with a social media pundit on 16th April 2024]

The social media influencer's statement above reflects the corrupt relationship between media and politics, where content is shaped by political agendas rather than journalistic integrity. This suggests a form of "survival corruption," where media figures compromise their values to align with political powers for personal gain. From the lens of utilitarianism, which advocates for actions that maximize overall happiness or benefit, the influencer justifies their behaviour as necessary for survival in a competitive environment. By following political directives to secure financial stability and career progression, the influencer believes they are simply doing what others would, aiming to avoid the personal hardship that might result from independent or critical reporting. This reflects a pragmatic, albeit ethically questionable, approach to media practice, where personal benefit outweighs public good, contributing to the broader issue of corruption in the media industry.

Another media blogger added;

"Haven't you seen people travelling with the government without even a valid reason? Now, how can you criticize a government that takes you abroad, pays for everything, and gives you allowances and perks? You have to praise them to keep getting these benefits, even if they're wrong—you find a way to tell the public that the leaders are doing a good job. I personally haven't had that opportunity yet, but if it comes, why would I turn it down, hahahaha! Politics is life, if

you want to make it, the politicians, especially from the ruling party, need to like you."

[Source: An interview with a blogger on 16th April 2024]

The media blogger's statement above illustrates corrupt practices within the media, where journalists are incentivized with government-funded perks like travel and allowances in exchange for favourable coverage. This practice aligns with Gatekeeping Theory, which posits that media gatekeepers (like journalists and editors) control the flow of information and decide what the public sees. In this case, the blogger admits that journalists are compelled to present the government positively, regardless of its shortcomings, to continue receiving these personal benefits. The blogger's acceptance of these incentives reflects a broader issue of compromised journalistic integrity, where the gatekeepers are influenced by political powers, shaping public perception to maintain access to perks rather than reporting the truth. This corrupt relationship distorts the role of the media as an objective information provider, turning it into a vehicle for political propaganda.

Highlighting the severity of corruption in media, another journalist alleged:

"And these days, if they forgive you, they give you a case to get you imprisoned! Do you remember what happened to Kabendera or our colleague in Iringa? Honestly, we are dictated on what to write or feed the public about the government and the ruling party. Sometimes our lives are at risk for writing the truth. We have no freedom!"

[Source: an interview with a journalist on 13th April 2024]

The journalist's statement underscores the coercive pressures faced by media houses, where the threat of legal action or imprisonment is used to control the content, they produce. This reflects corrupt practices in which the government dictates what can be reported, particularly about itself and the ruling party. Journalists who attempt to publish critical or truthful accounts, such as Kabendera or others, risk severe consequences, including imprisonment, creating a climate of fear and self-censorship. In such an environment, media houses are compelled to align with the government's narrative, undermining journalistic independence and integrity. This manipulation of the media fosters a culture where press freedom is stifled, and corruption thrives, as journalists are unable to hold the government accountable without risking their safety or freedom.

All in all, the interview responses above collectively highlight the deep entanglement of media and politics in Tanzania, where corrupt practices significantly undermine journalistic integrity and independence. Media houses and personnel are pressured to align with political agendas, especially those of the ruling party, in exchange for financial benefits, appointments, or to avoid legal repercussions. The threat of imprisonment, coercion, and personal incentives, such as travel perks and promotions, lead to self-censorship and biased reporting, with gatekeepers controlling information to favour those in power. This corrupt environment erodes the media's role as a watchdog, compromises press freedom, and distorts public perception, ultimately allowing political interests to dominate the flow of information and weaken democratic processes.

4.3.6.2 Attitudes Toward Whistleblowing and Internal Reporting

It was further discovered that a general reluctance among journalists to engage in whistleblowing or report corruption within their ranks was another perpetuating factor of corruption. There is a perception that doing so could have negative personal consequences or that it is not worth the risk. In other words, this refers to the journalists' views and behaviours regarding reporting corruption or unethical practices within their profession. The description highlights that many journalists are hesitant to engage in whistleblowing or internal reporting, primarily due to concerns about personal repercussions, such as retaliation, loss of job security, or damage to their reputation. Additionally, some may feel that the risks associated with whistleblowing outweigh any potential benefits, leading to a reluctance to expose corruption within their organisations. This reflects an environment where fear or lack of protection discourages transparency and accountability as a journalist stated during the interview;

"If it becomes known that you're the one being outspoken, they silence you. You'll be framed with all kinds of charges, even by your colleagues at the same workplace. We live in fear of each other. Trust is minimal because you never know who is behind someone else and how much power they have!"

[Source: interview with a journalist on 18th April 2024]

This statement reflects the culture of fear and mistrust within media organizations where corruption thrives. Journalists who attempt to speak out against unethical practices or corruption are often silenced through intimidation or false accusations, sometimes even from their colleagues. This environment discourages transparency

and accountability, as those who try to expose wrongdoing are met with retaliation. The minimal trust among media professionals further perpetuates corruption, as individuals are unsure of their colleagues' allegiances or the extent of their influence, leading to a culture where loyalty to powerful figures overrides journalistic integrity. This suppression of dissent allows corrupt practices to continue unchecked, eroding both media freedom and public trust.

4.3.7 The Benefits Journalists Accrue from Corruption Practices in Tanzania

The study was further meant to explore the benefits that journalists accrue from corruption in Tanzania and the influence they have on the prolongation of the practice. It was therefore envisioned to respond to the question: What benefits do journalists accumulate from corruption practices in Tanzania? The assumption was that journalists must be getting something worth their unethical practices – a benefit they can use to justify unprofessional conduct just like the Utilitarianism theory that appeals to the choice that yields the greatest benefit to the most people is the ethically correct one. According to this theory, a person performing the acts that benefit the most people, regardless of personal feelings or societal constraints such as laws is righteous. The theory takes into account the law and is concerned with fairness. It seeks to benefit the most people but through the fairest and most just means available. Therefore, utilitarianism values justice and includes beneficence at the same time. To ascertain this research objective, several methods of inquiry: interviews and FDG were used to uncover the unseen side of corrupt practices in journalism. Below are themes discovered as benefits that journalists accrue from

corrupt practices and how they potentially influence the prolongation of such unprofessional practices.

4.3.8 Financial Gains

One of the most prominent benefits was financial gain, as journalists receive monetary compensation in exchange for favourable coverage or suppressing negative stories. This extra income helps them cope with low salaries. In other words, the issue of financial gain as a benefit from corrupt practices in journalism in Tanzania is rooted in the economic realities facing journalists. Low salaries and lack of recognition within media institutions create significant financial pressures, pushing journalists to seek alternative means of income. As mentioned in the interview response, journalists frequently receive monetary compensation, often in the form of bribes or payments, in exchange for providing favourable coverage to political figures or businesses, or for withholding negative stories. This is evident from the following interviewee responses during FGD when answering the two alike questions: Have you personally observed or been aware of instances where journalists in Tanzania have benefited from engaging in corrupt practices? And what are some common forms of benefits that journalists may receive as a result of corruption practices in Tanzania?

One of them said;

"Yes, a lot. Low income to journalists is the main reason... and whatsoever some journalists efforts are not recognized by their institutions. No incentives to cater for the job issue and personal life. It is from such extra incentives we survive at least seen and respected in the society"

Another one said;

"It's true, I've seen a lot especially recently in digital journalism. This technology is exposing corruption as some of the journalists get a lot of money from what they call labour charge to publicize your story. People are driving heavy duty cars, suits and luxury life. But if you complicate yes, you live a common life"

Another one added;

"I have never eye witnessed one but the kind of life of our fellow colleagues with the same salaries to ours is questionable" As for me, what I see is transport and meals allowance that I do not consider as corruption because I think it is a normal thing, right?"

Adding on others' claims, a legend said;

"How can you leave home saying you're going to work, then come back with stories to publish for tomorrow while just waiting for the end-of-month salary? Do you think that makes sense? We have houses, cars and take our children to school because we supplement our salaries with those extra allowances"

The last one in the group alleged;

As my colleagues have said, it's an entrepreneurial thing we work to earn something. And, remember we were taught entrepreneurship in colleges to monetise our professional otherwise it couldn't be meaningless"

[Source: FDG with radio presenters on 18th April 2024]

The first response highlights the central role that low income plays in motivating journalists to engage in corrupt practices. The respondent points out that journalists'

efforts are often unrecognised by their institutions, and the lack of financial incentives or rewards makes it difficult to balance personal and professional responsibilities. The mention of "extra incentives" underscores that journalists turn to corruption, such as accepting bribes or other financial perks, as a means of survival and to gain societal respect. This reflects how the economic vulnerability of journalists creates an environment conducive to corruption, where they rely on unethical financial gains to maintain their livelihood and social standing.

The second response draws attention to the influence of digital journalism on corruption practices. The respondent observes that technology has made corruption more visible, with journalists receiving payments for publicising stories, referred to as a "labour charge." The benefits from this corruption manifest in a lavish lifestyle, as evidenced by luxury cars and clothing, suggesting a stark contrast between journalists who engage in corrupt practices and those who do not. This statement indicates that digital platforms not only expose corruption but also facilitate it, allowing journalists to monetize their work beyond their formal salaries. The contrast between "complicating" one's life and living a "common life" reinforces the idea that journalists are pressured to engage in corruption to achieve financial success.

The third response expresses uncertainty about witnessing direct corruption but raises questions about the disparities in lifestyle among colleagues earning the same salaries. This response reveals an underlying recognition that something beyond official pay is influencing the financial well-being of some journalists. While the respondent downplays transport and meal allowances as normal, their remarks reflect a blurred line between what is considered necessary support for the job and what

constitutes corruption. This indicates that even seemingly small allowances can be rationalised as acceptable, reflecting a normalisation of corruption within the profession. The fourth response provides a direct justification for engaging in corrupt practices by emphasising the impracticality of relying solely on monthly salaries. The respondent suggests that journalists must supplement their income through "extra allowances" to afford basic needs such as housing, transportation, and education for their children. This response highlights the economic pressure that journalists face and how they justify corruption as a necessary means to achieve financial stability and support their families. The statement reflects a mindset where corruption is normalised as an essential part of maintaining a sustainable livelihood in the face of inadequate institutional support. The final response frames corruption within the context of entrepreneurship, suggesting that monetizing journalism is a skill taught in colleges. The respondent justifies corrupt practices as part of an entrepreneurial mindset, implying that journalism is a business where one must earn additional income beyond their net pay. This perspective indicates that corruption is seen not only as survival but also as a legitimate extension of professional practice, blurring the ethical boundaries between entrepreneurship and corruption. This response reflects how the normalisation of corrupt practices is rationalised as a form of business acumen, further entrenching corruption within the profession.

To sum up, the discussion in the group demonstrates how journalists accrue money, cars, and houses, pay school fees for their children, maintain their status quo, and meet their family needs and other luxuries at the expense of economic pressures, institutional shortcomings, and the changing landscape of digital journalism that have

contributed to the normalisation of corrupt practices among journalists in Tanzania. Financial insecurity is a recurring theme, with many journalists justifying their involvement in corruption as a necessary means to achieve economic stability and social recognition. The responses also reflect a blurred line between legitimate financial incentives and corrupt practices, with many seeing such incentives as part of their professional survival strategy. Additionally, framing corruption as a form of entrepreneurship underscores how deeply ingrained these practices have become within journalism. The normalization of corruption as both an economic necessity and a professional skill highlights the urgent need for structural reforms to address the root causes of corruption and restore ethical standards in the media industry.

4.3.11 Career Advancement

Although not widely emphasised, some journalists reported to have benefited from career progression through corrupt practices by aligning with powerful individuals or political entities providing leverage in their professional standing. Iterating from an interview with a television presenter as illustrated in 4.3.1.5 above.

"...there are appointments! Haven't you noticed something? Many of our fellow presenters who were with us here have been appointed to positions... That's why the government appoints the heads of those institutions."

[Source: an interview with a TV presenter on 15th April 2024]

This caption indicates that journalists chase after appointments thus, being appointed in certain positions is a reward of the acceptance by the political class. The respondent was moved by the fact that his fellow journalists were being appointed to different positions as a motivation for him to work, write and present a positive

impression of the people in higher positions. This type of career progression, driven by corrupt practices, can create a culture of patronage within the media industry, where success is determined not by journalistic skill or integrity but by one's willingness to serve the interests of influential individuals. Over time, this diminishes the quality of journalism, as ethical standards are sacrificed in favour of career growth and personal gain. Moreover, this dynamic exacerbates the power imbalance between journalists and their institutions, as those who engage in corruption may gain undue influence within their organizations, further alienating those who adhere to ethical reporting standards as acknowledged by the social media influencer in 4.3.1.5 above that;

"I'm not kidding, if it weren't for politics, I wouldn't have made it! So, I don't see anything wrong with it because if you don't do it, others will, and you'll be left behind with a tough life. So yes, politics truly dictates what we write and how we write it!"

This caption indicates that the social media influencer has made it to the position he is now because of his roles in politics. The fact is that while career advancement through corrupt practices may offer immediate professional benefits, it ultimately undermines the integrity of journalism as the statement *"So yes, politics truly dictates what we write and how we write it!"* implied. The reliance on unethical means for career growth damages the credibility of the media, erodes public trust, and perpetuates a cycle of corruption within the industry.

In the same line, another respondent showed that their appointments to political positions like district commissioners, district executive directors and many more others are the recognition of their unwavering support to the ruling party when

answering the question of whether appointments influenced their decision to news report by saying;

“it is just the recognition of their professional achievements.”

[Source: an interview with the media reporter on the 15th of April 2024]

This implies that the path to journalists’ professional recognition was not based on merit and ethical reporting but on allegiance to powerful figures or participation in corrupt practices.

4.3.8.1 Access to Exclusive Information

It was discovered that journalists who involved themselves in corruption benefited from privileged access to exclusive information, interviews, or scoops that can enhance their reputation and the perceived value of their reporting than their counterparts. In an FGD with journalists on how they weigh the benefits of the impacts of unethical journalism, one of them said;

“To me, it’s nothing more than political issues; some journalists are biased and threatened by other parties” What do you expect?

Another one added;

“Though the benefits are a little bit enticing, the impacts are far-reaching. We create unresponsive generation”

The other two said;

The more you come closer to them, the more you access unique information to report every single day. You have a lot to write about; you are the first to be called whenever anything happens even before happening you know!

[Source: A FGD with journalists on 20th April 2024]

The responses above indicated that journalists who engaged in corrupt practices, such as aligning themselves with political elites, government officials, or influential business figures, received privileged access to exclusive information like political campaigns, business deals, or government policies – they always knew what was next. By receiving this information, journalists could publish stories that offered more detailed or behind-the-scenes insights than their peers, enhancing their professional reputation and increasing their visibility in the industry. These exclusive scoops help journalists build a public persona as well-connected and authoritative figures, making their work more appealing to audiences and boosting their career prospects.

However, this privileged access often comes at the cost of journalistic integrity. As the quote *"In political issues, some journalists are biased and threatened by other parties"* suggests, the price of gaining this insider information is often compliance with the agendas of those providing the information. Journalists may be pressured or outright threatened to shape their stories in ways that favour the interests of the powerful, rather than adhering to objective and unbiased reporting. In return for this access, journalists may ignore or downplay negative aspects of political figures or institutions, contributing to a biased media landscape. Over time, this dependence on insider access creates a form of mutual corruption—journalists gain exclusive information to advance their careers, while those in power use the media to protect their interests and shape public perception. This practice diminishes the watchdog role of journalism and compromises its independence, leading to a cycle of favouritism and propaganda rather than honest reporting.

The second respondent acknowledged the lens of utilitarianism by considering the long-term consequences of corrupt practices in journalism. While journalists may justify engaging in corruption for short-term benefits such as financial gain or career advancement, utilitarianism emphasises that the morality of an action is determined by its overall impact on the greatest number of people. In this case, the respondent acknowledges that, although the immediate benefits may seem appealing, the far-reaching impact is negative, as it leads to the creation of an *"unresponsive generation."* This denoted the generation of citizens who are disengaged or misinformed due to biased or incomplete reporting, which ultimately harms society. From a utilitarian perspective, the long-term harm caused by producing a disengaged, misinformed public outweighs the short-term personal gains, making the practice morally unjustifiable.

The last response reflected how journalists perceived the benefits of corruption as contributing to their professional success by gaining privileged access to information. From a utilitarian viewpoint, journalists justified these actions by focusing on the perceived positive outcomes, such as having exclusive stories that engage and inform the public. By being the first to report on events, journalists enhance their reputation, potentially increasing public interest and engagement with the news, which could be seen as contributing to the greater good. However, utilitarianism would also require weighing this benefit against the potential harm caused by biased or selective reporting. If privileged access is granted in exchange for favourable coverage, the information presented may be skewed, misleading the public. In this case, while the journalist personally benefits, the overall impact on society may be negative, as the

public is deprived of objective and truthful reporting, making the practice ethically questionable from a utilitarian perspective.

4.3.8.2 Protection and Influence

It was further noted that corruption in Tanzania offered journalists protection and influence within their professional networks by ensuring they remained on good terms with influential figures or political powers. Evidence from an interview with the editor suggested that;

"The truth is that your pen is your security. Your life, your well-being, and your family depend on what you write or tell the public. And in that sense, corruption practices have indeed influenced editorial content."

[Source: an interview with the radio editor on 17th April 2024]

The response above suggests that the content a journalist produces—whether written or spoken—can have significant consequences, both positive and negative. In environments where corruption is prevalent, journalists may feel pressured to adjust their reporting to align with the interests of powerful individuals or entities to ensure their safety and financial stability. The acknowledgement that "corruption practices have indeed influenced editorial content" reflects the reality that professional integrity is often compromised to protect one's livelihood. This underscores the broader impact of corruption on media independence, where editorial decisions are shaped more by self-preservation than by a commitment to objective, truthful reporting.

In the same vein, another editor said;

"Some journalists are biased because our safety is very limited; some of our colleagues have been beaten, killed in broad daylight, had their equipment confiscated, and others have disappeared—it's complete chaos. Our work as journalists puts us in danger, so we have to find ways to protect ourselves and ensure the safety of our families."

[Source: an interview with a newspaper editor on 17th April 2024]

The response above indicates that journalists facing threats and violence may justify biased reporting as a necessary means to protect their own and their families' safety. In the utilitarian context, the decision to prioritise personal security over objective reporting is seen as achieving the greatest good—preserving life and minimising harm. Given the extreme risks, such as beatings, killings, and disappearances, the potential harm of biased journalism is outweighed by the immediate need for survival. Thus, compromising journalistic integrity becomes a rational choice, as it maximises the well-being of the journalist and their family in a dangerous environment.

Therefore, corruption among journalists in Tanzania provided them with protection and influence by maintaining favourable relationships with powerful political or corporate figures. By engaging in biased reporting and aligning with influential individuals, journalists secure job security and avoid threats. This mutual arrangement benefited both the journalists, who received protection and influence, and the powerful figures, who enjoyed favourable media coverage. However, this practice undermines journalistic integrity, as editorial content becomes influenced by

these corrupt relationships, eroding public trust in the media and weakening its role as an independent watchdog while prolonging corrupt practices among journalists.

4.3.8.3 Perks and Favours

Perks and favours were also found to be one of the benefits that journalists accrued from engaging in unethical practices. Journalists engaging in corrupt practices often enjoy perks, such as paid travel, allowances, and material benefits. These benefits come from political figures or organisations seeking favourable media coverage. Refraining from the quote in 4.3.1.5 above;

"Haven't you seen people travelling with the government without even a valid reason? Now, how can you criticise a government that takes you abroad, pays for everything, gives you allowances and perks?"

The statement above indicates that one of the key benefits that journalists accrue from engaging in corrupt practices—access to luxurious perks and opportunities, such as government-sponsored travel, allowances, and other financial benefits. By aligning themselves with government interests and avoiding criticism, journalists are rewarded with these privileges, which can significantly enhance their lifestyle and professional opportunities. The allure of these perks creates a powerful incentive for journalists to continue engaging in biased reporting and avoiding critical coverage of government actions. This relationship fosters a cycle of corruption, where the benefits of financial gain and exclusive opportunities reinforce a pattern of favourable reporting, ensuring that journalists remain in good standing with those in power while perpetuating unethical practices.

4.3.9 Avoiding Professional Marginalisation

It was also observed that journalists who engaged in corrupt practices avoided marginalization within the industry and remained in the good graces of powerful actors, ensuring continued access to key opportunities. By aligning themselves with powerful figures or interests, journalists who participated in corruption avoided being side-lined or marginalized by influential actors who control key opportunities, such as exclusive stories, interviews, or career advancements. When responding to the question of whether corruption influences editorial content, the editor replied;

"It's true that there have been instances where corruption practices have influenced editorial content."

She added;

"If you want your media outlet to be accepted, involved, and grow, you need to be creative. You must know how to play the game, not just have modern equipment, no!"

[Source: an interview with the Television editor on 17th April 2024]

The editor's words *"There have indeed been instances where corruption practices have influenced editorial content"* illustrate how journalists alter their reporting to suit the needs of powerful individuals or institutions. In doing so, they ensure they remain in favour of those who hold influence, thereby protecting their careers and maintaining access to critical resources. This creates a system where journalists feel compelled to compromise their integrity to avoid being pushed out of the industry, further perpetuating the cycle of corruption and biased reporting.

The second statement emphasises the importance of creativity and strategic manoeuvring in ensuring the success and growth of a media outlet. It suggests that simply having modern equipment or technical resources is not enough; one must also be adept at navigating relationships and understanding the dynamics of the media industry. The phrase "*know how to play the game*" implies that media professionals need to align themselves with influential figures, make strategic decisions, and possibly engage in practices that ensure their outlet's relevance and acceptance. This highlights the complex and often competitive nature of the media industry, where success is not solely based on quality or technology, but also on one's ability to manage relationships and leverage opportunities effectively

4.4 The Impacts of Corruption Practices in Tanzania

The last objective this study sought to achieve was to examine the impacts of corrupt practices and to what extent they weigh with the benefits journalists accrue from this habit. To ascertain it, the research was envisaged to respond to the question of how the impacts of corruption practices weigh from the benefits journalists accrue. In this context, the assumption is that if the journalists are aware of the potential impacts of their unethical conduct that might outweigh the thought benefits, they could decide to stick to the rules and professional codes of conduct, but if they don't, then the continued pursuit of the perceived rewards outweigh the long-term harm could cause damage to the profession and society, entrenching a cycle of ethical compromise in among journalists. To arrive at reliable conclusions and generalisations about the impacts of corrupt practices, several methods of data collection were deployed, ranging from one-on-one to group interviews (FGD) as well as documentary reviews.

The collection and analysis were guided by the two complementary theories, as explained in chapter two above.

In this context, the gatekeeping theory focuses on the role of journalists, editors, and media institutions as "*gatekeepers*" who control the flow of information to the public. Corruption among journalists directly affected this process, as it influenced what information was selected, altered, or suppressed. It was noted that whenever journalists engaged in corrupt practices, they prioritised content that served the interests of those providing them with financial or professional benefits, thereby distorting the objective role of journalism. This undermined the public's access to unbiased, truthful information, leading to a misinformed society. It is through these GCT lenses that corruption skewed the gatekeeping process, as decisions about news coverage were made based on personal gain rather than public interest. This created a media environment where important issues could be overlooked or misrepresented, ultimately compromising the integrity of the press and weakening its role as a democratic watchdog.

On the other side, journalists justified their unethical behaviour by focusing on the personal benefits they received: financial stability, career advancement, or access to exclusive information. However, from a utilitarian perspective, the long-term impacts of corruption likely led to greater harm than good. The perceived short-term benefits for individual journalists were outweighed by the broader societal damage caused by a compromised media system. Therefore, while journalists rationalised their actions based on personal utility, the collective consequences—misinformation, public disillusionment, and a less accountable government—undermine the greater

good, making corruption morally unjustifiable. In the interviews and documentary reviews, which included online sources and focus group discussions, the following impacts of journalists' corrupt practices were exposed;

4.4.1 Limiting Objective Reporting

The interview responses from the editors, journalists, reporters, media presenters and social media influencers indicated that the prolongation of corrupt practices recently equated to a brown envelope relinquished into biased coverage of information, censorship, information manipulation, dependence on powerful sources, and conflict of interests. Responding to whether they understand the consequences of the corrupt practices among journalists, a social media influencer said;

Alright, I agree and I understand that there are significant consequences. But it's not easy at all to live by being truthful. Even people themselves don't want to hear the truth; you know!

A TV presenter said:

"The consequences are very serious; the problem is how to get rid of it when things are already messed up"

A radio reporter added:

"The situation is really not good. I wish things were different, but I feel like just a drop in the ocean. I can't change anything!"

A newspaper editor said:

"Even you know that this is undeniable, the issue is, who will bell the cat?"

The responses replicate a deep awareness among media practitioners of the negative consequences of corruption and biased reporting in journalism, but they also highlight a sense of helplessness and resignation. The TV presenter acknowledges the significant damage caused by corrupt practices but questions how to reverse the situation, given that the system is already entrenched. Similarly, the radio reporter expresses a desire for change but feels powerless, seeing themselves as just a small, insignificant voice in a larger, corrupted environment. The newspaper editor encapsulates this dilemma with the metaphor of "who will bell the cat," illustrating the widespread recognition of the problem but the lack of a clear solution or person willing to take action. Overall, these responses suggest that while journalists understand the harm caused by corruption, they are trapped in a system where change seems unattainable.

It was also discovered that objective reporting was compromised by the journalist's corrupt practices, as reported by the television presenters during the FGD;

One of them said;

"There are some media outlets that cannot publish or report on opposition parties."

Another said:

"Some television stations are exclusively for a particular party. This means that even the employees work with that same bias. There's no such thing as objective journalism."

Another added:

"I remember in 2020 election campaigns our TV station was reporting news about opposition parties, but the higher-ups were

displeased. After the election, a crackdown was launched, and we couldn't go back to the way things were. Many people have left."

The last two agreed, saying:

"Nowadays, balancing stories is very difficult because each side is pulling in its own direction. And honestly, it has become normal now for most news to be one-sided, especially those that concern the authorities and their well-being."

[Source: A FGD with Television Presenters on 28th April 2024]

These responses implied a lot in objective vs subjective reporting. In the sense that some media outlets could not publish or report on opposition parties. This statement highlighted the lack of media freedom and the political influence that restricted objective reporting in Tanzania. It also suggested that certain media outlets were either explicitly or implicitly prohibited from covering opposition parties, which compromised the public's right to access a diversity of political perspectives. The result is a media environment skewed in favour of those in power, limiting the democratic role of journalism as a neutral platform for all political voices.

It was also revealed that some television stations were exclusively for a particular party – meaning even the employees worked with that same bias. There was no such thing as objective journalism. This response reflects the deeply ingrained bias within certain media outlets, where journalism is aligned with the interests of a specific political party therefore diminishing the possibility of objective reporting. Such alignment of media with political interests undermined journalistic integrity, and objective reporting was replaced with propaganda, distorting the public's perception

of political reality. The dissatisfaction from higher authorities following the station's reporting on opposition parties led to a crackdown, suggesting censorship and intimidation as tools to suppress balanced coverage. The fact that many employees left the organisation underscores the atmosphere of fear and repression, where independent journalism is stifled by political pressure. Lastly, the responses illustrated the challenges of maintaining journalistic neutrality in a highly polarised media environment. The difficulties of balancing stories reflected the competing pressure from various political interests, which led to one-sided reporting that favoured those in power. This normalisation of biased reporting, particularly when it comes to the authorities, further weakens the media's role as an impartial source of information and reinforces a culture where journalism serves political interests rather than the public good.

4.4.2 Erosion of Journalistic Integrity

The gradual decline of ethical standards and professional objectivity among journalists, driven by corruption, political influence, and financial pressures, was discovered in this study. It was evidenced that journalists, instead of adhering to the principles of truth, fairness, and impartiality, were increasingly compromising their reporting to serve the interests of powerful entities, whether political or corporate. This erosion was characterised by biased reporting, suppression of critical stories, and the prioritisation of personal or organisational gain over public accountability. As journalistic integrity diminished, the media's role as a watchdog for democracy weakened as well, leading to a misinformed public and a compromised trust in journalism, as evidenced by the responses in 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 above quoted here as;

"We women go through so much hardship. Sometimes, you go to gather news or seek clarification to balance a story from someone. When you arrive, they start hitting on you... and if you go to a private setting, for example, their home, they might force you into having sex". (See 4.3.1.2 above).

This quote suggests that the editor would accept a non-professionally written article submitted by a woman journalist for publication for sex and reject the well-written, objective, and comprehensive one due to rejection for sex. This is how morally decayed journalism has become! More importantly, journalists put forth their gain before society as evidenced in 4.3.1.5;

".....Therefore, they have to seek us out, talk to us nicely, and we market them, invite them for interviews on the radio, and TV, or even feature an article about them in our newspapers. Anyway, it's business!"

This statement emphasised how journalists and media outlets were engaging in transactional relationships with political figures or influential individuals, prioritizing profit and personal gain over ethical reporting. The phrase "*we market them*" suggests that rather than objectively reporting on these figures, journalists were promoting them in exchange for favours or financial rewards. This behaviour undermined the core principles of journalism, as it shifted the media's focus from serving the public interest to serving private or political interests. The phrase "*it's business!*" reflected how the commercialisation of media has led to the commodification of news, where journalists compromise their integrity to maintain relationships with those in power. This ultimately contributes to biased reporting and weakens the media's credibility as a source of truthful, impartial information.

4.4.3 Public Dis/Mis/Malinformation and Manipulation

The research respondents' views revealed the fact that the public has been misinformed, disinformed, malinformed and manipulated by the media, and social media and therefore susceptible to unformed decision-making. Dis/Mis/Malinformation and Manipulation² comes in when journalists engage in corruption, they often produce content that is biased, selectively framed, or manipulated to serve the interests of powerful figures, rather than conveying objective truths. The result is a misinformed public that cannot rely on the media for factual and balanced reporting, leading to skewed perceptions of political, social, and economic realities. This manipulation weakens the media's role in holding power accountable, erodes public trust, and can have long-term consequences for democratic engagement and decision-making.

One of the most notable forms of public feeding of fake news was the 2019 coronavirus outbreak. The results from the document review (online) indicated that stranded-minded citizens found themselves with no clear path to take to cope or fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, every media disseminated the information they collected from anywhere, leading to the infodemic. Understanding the cause or source of COVID-19, its transmission, and the most challenging part was treatments, whereas citizens were left in confusion as to

² The dis/mis and malformations in this context refer to the dissemination of inaccurate, misleading, or deliberately harmful information as a result of prolonged corrupt practices among journalists. Disinformation involves spreading false information intentionally, misinformation refers to the unintentional sharing of incorrect information, and malinformation involves using truthful information in a harmful or manipulative way (OECD, 2023).

whether they had to undergo vaccination or not. The evidence below indicates the situation;



Figure 4.1: Social media posts between 2019 and early 2021

UPDATE: Tanzania receives a donation
of Covid-19 'cure' from Madagascar.

Source:

<https://pbs.twimg.com/media/EXgQcMMXsAMAIYK?format=jpg&name=medium>



Leo TZ imepokea zaidi ya dozi milioni 1.6 ya chanjo ya UVIKO-19 ya Pfizer kutoka Serikali ya US kuokoa maisha na kutokomeza janga hili. Hadi sasa 🇺🇸 imeipatia 🇹🇿 zaidi ya dozi milioni 4.5 za chanjo na dozi milioni 365 duniani kote. Soma → bit.ly/355rHCQ #UjanjaKuchanja

Figure 4.3: Media posts from late 2021 to date

Source:

<https://pbs.twimg.com/media/EXgQcMMXsAMAIYK?format=jpg&name=medium>

Figures 1 and 2 above indicate the two different administrative phases with different approaches to handling the COVID-19 pandemic, while Figure 1 portrays the bundle of herbal medicine from Madagascar to Tanzania as a sign that the Tanzania government did not approve the use of the vaccines advocated and recommended by World Health Organization (WHO) but instead approved herbals and local approaches to combating the pandemic famously called 'kujifukiza' translated as steaming or 'inhaling steam' which was the practice of using steam, often infused with herbs or other substances, for therapeutic purposes, typically to clear the respiratory system or for general health benefits. The media promoted and even hyped the then government over the said giant step and firmness against the said external influence. On the other hand, Figure 2 illustrates a range of public opinions on the acceptance or refusal of the COVID-19 vaccine in Tanzania, reflecting a broader societal debate. The debate showed skepticism and resistance over the vaccination: many of the commenters expressed resistance to the COVID-19 vaccine, reflecting distrust in the vaccine importation and the government's role. For instance, one individual sarcastically suggests that the person advocating for the vaccine should be vaccinated first with their family to see the results before others follow, indicating a lack of trust in the vaccine's safety. It also showed some perception of tribalism and accusations of favouritism: one comment refers to "Chato boy" and mentions "ukabila" (tribalism), suggesting that some people believed that the vaccine push was being supported for personal or tribal reasons rather than for public health benefits. This reflects a distrust in the authorities, perhaps viewing their motives as

biased or politically driven which no media could clear. Some responses advocated for the government to follow global health protocols in handling the pandemic, recognizing the importance of scientific guidance. On the other hand, there was evidence of dismissal and strong/offensive language such as calling others "Mataga" (which can be interpreted as an insult or derogatory term), that showed the tension and strong emotional reactions within the debate. The dismissal of opposing viewpoints shows how polarising the vaccine conversation was in Tanzania. Where were the media, television, radio and magazines and social media? The lack of media challenge to the government's stance on COVID-19 and vaccines in Tanzania contributed to the spread of misinformation and fake news. Without independent journalism presenting credible scientific evidence or fact-checking government statements, the public was left vulnerable to false narratives, rumours, and fear-based reactions. This vacuum of accurate information allowed scepticism and conspiracy theories to flourish, as seen in the public debate, where many resisted vaccines and questioned the government's motives. The media's failure to fulfil its role as an objective watchdog left the public with little access to reliable information, thus prolonging confusion and mistrust during a critical public health crisis. This reflects the broader impact of a media system constrained by political influence, where essential scientific discourse is silenced or neglected, leaving the population without the tools to make informed decisions.

Conversely, figure 3 shows the change in the governments and health practitioners to WHO approach to COVID-19 pandemic handling, indicating the Tanzania government is now receiving COVID-19, one of the vaccines. The same media

turned back on the previous regime that discouraged vaccination over steaming. This is the result of the corrupt media that cannot research any critique of the government, but instead, they were covered in cowardice and ingratiation or seeking favour from the government. No investigative journalism or fact-checking measures were evidenced anywhere during this period, hence subjecting the public to disinformation, misinformation and malinformation.

4.4.4 Loss of Public Trust in the Media

It was also uncovered that corrupt practices within the media in Tanzania significantly contributed to the loss of public trust in various ways. When journalists and media outlets align with political figures, corporations, or influential individuals for financial gain or favours, they compromise the integrity of their reporting. Biassed and one-sided news coverage became common, with the media acting as a mouthpiece for those in power rather than as an objective source of truth. This was evidenced during FGD with news writers of magazines/newspapers when answering the question as to whether they think the public still trusts their works, one of them argued that; Do you think we don't know? We know very well that nowadays, even with our important newspapers, people don't read them anymore; they just look at sports news because many of them are tired and only want something that entertains them."

Another said:

"I don't know if they even read at all. That's why we've moved online, where we also have to attach images to capture their attention."

A journalist with nearly 20+ years of experience added:

"Yes, but not everyone. A few, like the elderly, still read our newspapers, but many others don't even watch the news at all. They see it as mere illusions. They don't trust leaders or what they say anymore, nor do they trust us who speak for them, because they've been fed lies for so many years that now they realise they are being played. Even my kids don't watch the news at all; for them, it's only sports. When you ask them about the news, they respond, 'It's all hypocrisy, old man!'"

[Source: FGD with newspaper writers on 2nd May 2024]

The first response above indicates that there is a massive loss of public trust in media and journalism, where people have become disillusioned with traditional news sources. The fact that readers now prioritise entertainment, such as sports, over important news suggests that the public no longer finds value or credibility in the content provided by newspapers. Years of biased reporting, misinformation, and alignment with powerful interests have caused the public to disengage from serious news, perceiving it as untrustworthy or irrelevant. This shift toward entertainment indicates a broader rejection of media outlets as credible sources of information, leading to a situation where journalism fails to fulfil its role in informing and engaging the public on critical issues. Consequently, the media's influence diminishes as it loses its audience's confidence and attention.

The second statement underscores the shift in media consumption patterns as a result of the public's declining interest in traditional news formats. The speaker highlights how the loss of public trust has forced media outlets to move online and rely heavily

on visual elements, like images, to capture the attention of an audience that no longer engages with text-heavy news. This reflects how journalists are now struggling to retain readership, resorting to entertainment-like strategies to compete for attention in the digital age, suggesting that the public no longer perceives news as essential or trustworthy, but merely as another form of content to be consumed.

The last assertion from a seasoned journalist delves deeper into the root causes of public distrust in the media. The comment reflects how years of perceived deception and biased reporting by both leaders and the media have led the public to view the news as "illusions," something no longer credible. The fact that younger generations have disengaged entirely, focusing only on entertainment like sports, shows the long-term damage to the media's credibility. This detachment reveals that trust in both political leaders and journalists has been eroded to the point where the public feels they are being misled, resulting in widespread apathy and scepticism. The generational divide in media consumption further highlights the media's failure to regain trust.

Generally, the erosion of public trust in the media fuelled by years of biased reporting and misinformation, has shifted audience engagement toward entertainment and away from credible news. This trend highlights the urgent need for media outlets to restore their integrity and reconnect with the public through transparency and objective journalism.

4.4.5 Weakening of Democratic Accountability

The findings indicate that corrupt practices within journalism have significantly weakened democratic accountability by compromising the media's role as a

watchdog that holds power in check. The journalists' habit of accepting bribes, aligning with political interests, or prioritising personal gain over truth made them fail to provide objective, critical coverage of government actions and policies. This has limited the public's ability to make informed decisions and prevented the exposure of corruption, abuse of power, and social injustices. As a result, leaders and institutions have been operating with less scrutiny, reducing transparency and hence weakening the democratic process where citizens rely on the media to hold the authorities accountable. Validating this trend, the editor said;

“Democracy means equal competition grounds for all political parties. Now, if only one party dominates all, how do we expand to see fair competition and strong democracy? If only one part has it all, how do you expect to hold it accountable? Anyway, as the media we cannot excuse ourselves from blame.”

[Source: Interview with the digital media editor, 27th April 2024]

The statement highlighted how the unequal competition among political parties undermined the principles of democracy. The speaker pointed out that when one party dominated the political landscape, it created an environment where fair competition could not flourish, weakening the democratic process. This dominance made it difficult to hold the ruling party accountable, as their control over resources and influence remained unchecked. The speaker also acknowledged that the media shared some responsibility for this situation, implying that the media, through biased reporting or failing to challenge the dominant party, contributed to the erosion of democratic accountability. This statement reflected the broader issues within the political and media systems that compromised democratic fairness and

transparency. In other words, the absence of a free, independent press, and democracy is undermined as those in power evade accountability for their actions.

4.4.6 Perpetuation of Corrupt Practices

The informants showed that journalists' corrupt practices perpetuated corruption by creating a cycle where unethical behaviour became normalised within the media industry. When journalists accepted bribes or compromised their integrity for personal gain, they encouraged a culture where these actions were seen as standard practice rather than exceptions. Refraining from his previous response, the television editor restated;

"Mmh, do you remember? I asked you, who will bell the cat? Once you all start behaving recklessly, going back and starting afresh becomes difficult because you're afraid of each other. No one reports their colleague, so you all stay that way, and it becomes your norm. I could call it the media's vicious cycle of corruption, and I wouldn't be wrong."

[Source: an interview with the television editor, on 17th April 2024]

This statement highlights the deeply ingrained nature of corruption within the media, where unethical practices have become normalised and self-reinforcing. The metaphor *"who will bell the cat"* suggests that while journalists recognized the problem, no one was willing to take the risk or responsibility to address it. Fear of retaliation or ostracism prevented journalists from holding each other accountable, creating an environment where corrupt behaviour goes unchecked. As a result, corruption has become cyclical, with each participant reinforcing the system by refusing to challenge it. This cycle is difficult to break because, over time, it becomes

a standard operating procedure within the media, making reform efforts more complex. The statement points to the collective complicity in perpetuating corruption and the need for systemic change to break the cycle.

4.4.6.1 Suppression of Investigative Journalism

The research found that the prolongation of corrupt practices among journalists has suppressed investigative journalism by shifting the focus away from in-depth, critical reporting toward serving the interests of powerful figures who provided financial or other incentives. Journalists, motivated by personal gain, avoided uncovering or exposing sensitive issues that could jeopardise their relationships with influential entities. As a result, resources and attention that should have been directed toward investigating corruption, social injustices, or governmental wrongdoing were instead used to perpetuate biased reporting. This environment discouraged journalists from pursuing truth-seeking efforts, effectively silencing critical voices and weakening the role of the media as a watchdog. This was evidenced by the social media influencer when responding to the extent to which they perform investigative journalism, claiming that;

“To investigate, you must be free, do you think we are free?”

She added.

"To do investigative journalism, you must have the funds to be independent, do you think we journalists in Tanzania have the money to investigate without being funded? Nowadays, that is just a vocabulary."

She concluded by saying,

"Young people want to write today and get money tomorrow, not for the recognition of 'oh, so-and-so did this and that.' No, not at all.

[Source: Interview with social media influencer on 3rd May 2024]

From the interview response above, the speaker highlighted how the lack of freedom and financial independence among Tanzanian journalists hindered investigative journalism. They pointed out that to conduct thorough investigations, journalists needed to operate freely and without fear, a condition that they felt was not present in their environment. Additionally, the absence of financial resources meant that journalists could not independently pursue investigative work, as they were often reliant on external funding, which could compromise their objectivity and limit their ability to report on sensitive issues. This lack of financial autonomy made investigative journalism nearly impossible, turning it into an abstract concept or "vocabulary" in their profession.

Moreover, the speaker emphasised the shift in priorities among younger journalists, who, instead of valuing the professional recognition gained through investigative work, were more focused on the immediate financial rewards. This short-term mindset led to a decline in in-depth reporting, as the pursuit of quick financial gains took precedence over the commitment to producing investigative pieces that could contribute to public discourse and accountability. The result was a media environment where investigative journalism became rare, as the necessary conditions for it—freedom, independence, and commitment—were lacking.

4.5 Discussion of Findings

The findings from this study revealed significant insights into the root cause, benefits and impacts of the prolonged corrupt practices among journalists in Tanzania on the media landscape. This chapter discusses the findings based on the objectives of the study, focusing on the causes, benefits accrued and the impacts of the prolonged corrupt practices among journalists in Tanzania. It therefore presents the discussion of these findings in relation to the theoretical frameworks of Gatekeeping Theory (GCT) and Utilitarianism, as well as other existing literature.

4.5.1 Reasons for the Perpetuation of Corrupt Practices Among Journalists

The first objective sought to explore the factors that contribute to the perpetuation of corrupt practices among journalists in Tanzania. The findings revealed that the economic challenges faced by journalists were a primary driver of unethical behaviour as researchers such as Skejerdal (2018), Mpagaze (2011) and Makoye (2013) concluded that Low salaries, lack of institutional recognition, and insufficient professional support created a climate where journalists were compelled to seek alternative income sources, often through corrupt means. As noted by Lugongo (2018), the financial pressures on Tanzanian journalists have been aggravated by the growing commercialization of media outlets, where the pursuit of profit overshadowed the principles of ethical journalism. This situation is aligned with Gatekeeping Theory, which posits those gatekeepers — journalists and editors (in this context) — control the information reaching the public, but their decisions are heavily influenced by external pressures, including financial incentives.

The findings also demonstrated how political influence further entrenched corruption, as journalists often aligned with political figures to secure their financial and professional survival, contributing to a biased media landscape as evidenced in Nyalusi, (2019).

From a Utilitarianism perspective, journalists justified their involvement in corruption by focusing on the immediate personal benefits, such as financial stability and career advancement, while disregarding the broader negative impact on society, just like the Utilitarianism theory stated by Julia, D. (2022) claiming that the choice that yields the greatest benefit to the most people is the ethically correct one. The long-term harm to public trust, media credibility, and democratic accountability was overshadowed by the need for short-term survival, as seen in many responses from the journalists interviewed. This echoed research by Kessy (2020), which highlighted how journalists in Tanzania often prioritised their personal gains over their ethical responsibilities to society.

On the other hand, cultural and societal influences were observed to cause the prolongation of the corrupt practices in Tanzania. Women journalists were more vulnerable to institutional, cultural and societal grievances such that working in such a wicked environment required them to tolerate some disrespect from men. These findings concur with The Chanzo (2024) report that the 28-year-old ambitious radio journalist found herself resigning too early in the job of her dream of the toxic milieu that left her with no other option.

The report asserted that her editor was not open with her concerning his intent, sending the message by declining stories she submitted under the vindication that

they were poorly done. Only to find out that he was interested sexually with her the environment became toxic to work. She then stated;

“This incident significantly impacted me and fostered a perception that journalism [for women] requires tolerance of inappropriate behaviour”

[Source: The Chanzo Jan, 17th 2024 accessed on 30th May 2024]

As stated in this study, editors could accept a poorly written story based on a romantic relationship with a woman journalist and reject a professionally written one as a way to force intimacy with a woman journalist. This is dangerous for the prosperity of the journalism profession.

4.5.2 Benefits Journalists Accrue from Corrupt Practices

The second objective investigated the benefits that journalists derived from engaging in corrupt practices and how these benefits reinforced their continued involvement in unethical behaviour. The study found that journalists received several benefits, including financial gain, career progression, access to exclusive information, and protection from powerful figures. These benefits created a cycle in which corrupt practices were not only normalised but also incentivized.

Respondents admitted that financial incentives were the most common benefit, as journalists, struggling with low wages, were tempted by bribes and payments for favourable coverage. This finding aligned with research by Mfaume (2020), who pointed out that many journalists in Tanzania relied on these extra incomes to meet their basic needs. Additionally, access to exclusive information allowed journalists to build their reputations by reporting on politically sensitive issues in a manner that

favoured powerful individuals or entities. This, in turn, reinforced the relationship between journalists and their benefactors, making them dependent on such interactions for professional success (Ngasongwa, 2019). Nevertheless, these studies did not dive into the influence that these perceived benefits could yield into the prolongation of corrupt practices.

From a GCT perspective, these benefits influenced how journalists chose and framed stories. The media was no longer acting as a neutral observer but rather as a tool manipulated by powerful actors. Journalists became gatekeepers who filtered information based on what would benefit them personally, rather than what served the public interest. Utilitarianism provides further insights, as the journalists' decisions were driven by the desire to maximize their personal utility, even if it meant sacrificing journalistic integrity. Although these benefits helped individual journalists in the short term, they ultimately contributed to the degradation of the media's role in promoting democratic discourse and holding power accountable (Othman, 2021).

4.5.3 Impacts of the Prolongation of Corrupt Practices among Journalists

The third and last objective examined the long-term consequences of prolonged corrupt practices in Tanzanian journalism. These practices have had far-reaching effects, including the erosion of journalistic integrity, public loss of trust, suppression of investigative journalism, and weakening of democratic accountability. The study revealed that corrupt practices compromised journalistic integrity as journalists consistently altered their reports to align with the interests of powerful political and corporate entities. This is in line with Gatekeeping Theory, where the flow of

information is filtered to serve external interests. As a result, biased and selective reporting became the norm, further undermining the media's role as an independent entity. The findings also showed that younger journalists, motivated by quick financial rewards, were increasingly disinclined to engage in investigative journalism, further weakening the media's capacity to act as a watchdog for society (Muganda, 2020).

Public trust in the media was a major casualty of these corrupt practices. The findings revealed that the Tanzanian public had grown disillusioned with traditional media outlets, perceiving them as mouthpieces for powerful interests rather than as credible sources of information. This decline in trust is consistent with Nyalusi (2018), who found that the Tanzanian public increasingly turned to entertainment or social media for information, as they no longer viewed the mainstream media as trustworthy. From a Utilitarianism perspective, while journalists may have gained short-term financial and professional benefits from their corrupt practices, the overall harm caused by the loss of public trust and weakening of democratic processes far outweighed these individual gains.

The suppression of investigative journalism was another key impact of these practices. Investigative journalism requires both financial resources and editorial independence, but the study revealed that many journalists lacked both. Fear of retaliation and the need for financial survival discouraged journalists from pursuing in-depth investigations, leading to a media landscape that favoured superficial reporting. As noted by Mkombozi Centre for Human Rights (2016), this suppression

of investigative journalism has weakened the ability of the media to expose corruption, human rights abuses, and government inefficiency.

Lastly, the findings demonstrated that corrupt practices contributed to the weakening of democratic accountability. The media, often seen as the "fourth estate," plays a crucial role in holding political and corporate power accountable. However, the study found that journalists, motivated by the benefits of corruption, failed to perform this function effectively. Instead, they often aligned with the interests of powerful figures, further entrenching corruption within the political system. This finding echoes Twaweza (2021), which highlighted how the media's failure to hold the government accountable during election cycles contributed to the weakening of democratic processes.

4.6 Conclusion of the Discussion of the Findings

The findings of this study illustrate how the prolonged corrupt practices among journalists in Tanzania have had detrimental effects on both the media and society at large. The economic challenges faced by journalists, coupled with the benefits they accrue from corruption, have led to the erosion of journalistic integrity, the suppression of investigative journalism, and the weakening of public trust and democratic accountability. Through the lenses of Gatekeeping Theory and

Utilitarianism, it becomes clear that while journalists may have justified their unethical practices for short-term personal gain, the long-term consequences for media credibility and democratic governance have been overwhelmingly negative. Structural reforms are needed to break this cycle of corruption and restore the media's role as an independent and trustworthy source of information.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study aimed to uncover the reasons why corrupt practices are still accepted among journalists in Tanzanian contexts. In this case, the study presents the identified reasons behind the prolongation of corruption among journalists, the benefits that journalists accrue from the practice and the underlying impacts it bears on the journalists themselves, society and the profession in particular. In other words, questions like why have corruption practices been prolonged among journalists in Tanzania, what benefits journalists accumulate from corruption practices in Tanzania and how the impacts of corruption practices relates to the benefits journalists accrue have been extensively explored and resolved. The study's findings were analysed using Gatekeeping Theory (GCT) and Utilitarianism.

5.1.1 Summary of the Analysis of the Factors Behind Journalism Corrupt Practices

The analysis reveals that the persistence of corrupt practices among journalists in Tanzania is driven by several interrelated factors, including economic pressures, cultural and societal norms, institutional weaknesses, and the overarching political climate. Economic challenges, such as low salaries and financial insecurity, compel journalists to seek alternative income sources, often resulting in compromised ethical standards. Cultural and societal expectations, along with hierarchical power dynamics within media organisations, further perpetuate a culture of ingratiation, where loyalty to powerful figures takes precedence over journalistic integrity.

Institutional weaknesses, such as ineffective oversight and lack of protection for whistle-blowers, contribute to an environment where corruption goes unchecked. The political climate also plays a significant role, as media organisations are often aligned with political interests, particularly the ruling party, influencing the content that is published.

As the GCT theory suggests, media gatekeepers—editors and journalists—control the flow of information and are influenced by political and financial pressures, leading to biased reporting and selective coverage. This manipulation of content reflects a system where economic survival, political loyalty, and institutional failures all intersect, creating an environment that allows corruption to thrive. Understanding these themes provides a comprehensive view of the factors perpetuating corruption in Tanzania media and highlights the need for reforms to strengthen media independence and integrity.

5.1.2 Summary of the benefits accrued

In summary, the findings in the second objective on the benefits that journalists accrue from their corrupt practices and their influence on its prolongation revealed that journalists often justified their engagement in corrupt practices based on the immediate personal and professional benefits they receive: financial gains, career advancement, access to exclusive information, and the avoidance of professional marginalisation. From a utilitarian perspective, journalists rationalised these actions as necessary for their survival and success, believing that the benefits they derived—such as maintaining relevance, financial stability, and career growth—outweighed

the ethical costs. Conversely, these benefits also played a significant role in the prolongation of corrupt practices, as they reinforced a system where short-term individual gains were prioritised over the long-term integrity and trustworthiness of journalism. This cycle of corruption continued as journalists aligned with powerful figures to protect their interests, undermining the media's role as an objective and independent institution.

5.1.3 Summary of the Impacts

The prolongation of corrupt practices among journalists in Tanzania had far-reaching impacts, largely driven by the immediate benefits they accrued, such as financial gain, career advancement, and access to exclusive information. Through the lens of Gatekeeping Theory (GCT), these corrupt practices influenced the selection and shaping of news content, as journalists prioritised serving the interests of powerful figures over delivering unbiased information to the public. This compromised the media's gatekeeping role, allowing only selective narratives to reach the public, which weakened democratic accountability and transparency.

From a Utilitarianism perspective, journalists may have justified their unethical behaviour based on the perceived personal benefits, such as job security and financial stability. However, the long-term societal harm—such as the erosion of public trust, the suppression of investigative journalism, and the perpetuation of biased reporting—outweighed these short-term individual gains. The overall negative consequences to the integrity of the media and the quality of public information proved detrimental to society as a whole, undermining the core function of journalism as a democratic safeguard.

5.2 Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, several key conclusions were drawn:

- i. **Economic Vulnerability Drives Corruption:** The low financial compensation and lack of recognition within media institutions in Tanzania make journalists highly susceptible to corrupt practices. These conditions push them to engage in unethical behaviours to secure financial stability and professional survival.
- ii. **Corruption has Become Normalised:** The benefits journalists derive from engaging in corrupt practices—such as financial rewards, access to exclusive information, and professional security—have led to the normalisation of unethical conduct within the media industry. Corruption has become ingrained in the journalistic culture, making it difficult to reform.
- iii. **Media's Role as a Democratic Watchdog Is Compromised:** The continued engagement in corrupt practices has severely undermined the media's ability to act as an independent watchdog. Journalists have failed to hold political and corporate power accountable, resulting in biased reporting and suppression of critical issues. This has weakened democratic processes and limited public access to accurate and objective information.
- iv. **Public Trust in the Media is Eroded:** The public's trust in the Tanzanian media has been significantly eroded due to the biased and selective reporting driven by corruption. As a result, the media has lost credibility,

and many citizens no longer rely on traditional news sources for information, turning instead to entertainment or social media platforms.

- v. Investigative Journalism Is Suppressed: Due to a lack of financial resources and fear of retaliation, journalists have largely abandoned investigative journalism. The focus has shifted from exposing corruption and holding power accountable to reporting superficial news that aligns with the interests of influential figures. This has diminished the quality and depth of media reporting in Tanzania.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to address the challenges identified and promote ethical journalism in Tanzania:

- i. Improve Journalist Compensation and Working Conditions: Media institutions and relevant authorities should work together to improve the financial compensation and working conditions for journalists. Adequate pay and professional recognition will reduce journalists' vulnerability to corruption and help restore integrity in the profession.
- ii. Strengthen Media Regulatory Frameworks: Stronger regulations and oversight mechanisms are needed to ensure that journalists adhere to ethical standards. Independent regulatory bodies should be empowered to monitor and address corruption in the media, ensuring that journalists maintain objectivity and independence in their reporting.
- iii. Promote Ethical Journalism Training: Ongoing training and capacity-building programs should be provided to journalists, emphasising the

importance of ethical journalism, investigative reporting, and media independence. These programs should focus on encouraging journalists to prioritise public interest and accountability over personal gain.

- iv. **Encourage Media Ownership Diversity:** To reduce political and corporate influence on journalistic content, efforts should be made to diversify media ownership in Tanzania. Supporting independent and alternative media outlets will promote a more pluralistic media environment that is less susceptible to corruption.
- v. **Increase Public Engagement with Ethical Media:** Public awareness campaigns should be conducted to encourage citizens to engage with ethical and independent media outlets. Educating the public on the importance of supporting unbiased journalism can create demand for more objective reporting and reduce reliance on entertainment-driven content.
- vi. **Support Investigative Journalism:** Dedicated funds and resources should be allocated to support investigative journalism. Grants, scholarships, and other financial incentives can help journalists pursue in-depth investigations into corruption, human rights abuses, and other critical social issues without fear of financial insecurity or retaliation.

5.4 Areas for Further Research

Further research is recommended to explore the following areas:

- i. **The effectiveness of media regulatory frameworks in curbing corrupt practices among journalists in Tanzania.**

- ii. The role of digital media platforms in promoting or mitigating corruption in journalism.
- iii. The impact of media ownership structures on journalistic integrity and independence, and/ or
- iv. The long-term effects of public disengagement with traditional media and its implications for democratic accountability.

Convincingly, the contribution of this work lies in uncovering the systemic and institutional factors that drive the persistence of corrupt practices among journalists in Tanzania, particularly how economic hardship and weak regulatory frameworks create an environment where unethical behaviours, such as the brown envelope practice, become ingrained in media culture. This study shifts the focus from individual moral failings to a broader, structural understanding of corruption in journalism, offering a fresh perspective that links the issue to socioeconomic conditions and industry-wide challenges. This insight adds a critical layer to the ongoing debate about media ethics and corruption, suggesting that tackling the problem requires addressing both economic incentives and institutional weaknesses.

5.5 General Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that economic pressures, personal benefits, and a lack of institutional support drive the perpetuation of corrupt practices among journalists in Tanzania. While these practices may provide short-term advantages for individual journalists, they have devastated the integrity of the media, public trust, and democratic governance. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach, including improving working conditions for journalists, strengthening

regulatory frameworks, and promoting a culture of ethical journalism. Only by addressing these systemic issues can Tanzania's media regain its role as an independent, credible source of information that serves the public good.

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APPENDIXES

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX D