



# Journal of Media, Journalism & Mass Communication (JMJMC)

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 1 (2026)



PUBLISHED BY  
E-PALLI PUBLISHERS, DELAWARE, USA

## Effects of News Commercialisation on News Credibility in Cameroon: A Survey of Journalists and Audience

Kingsley L. Ngange<sup>1</sup>, Stone Mira Enjema<sup>1</sup>, Stephen N. Ndode<sup>1\*</sup>

### Article Information

**Received:** July 20, 2025

**Accepted:** September 24, 2025

**Published:** February 17, 2026

### Keywords

*Cameroon, Journalists, News Commercialisation, News Credibility, Poverty*

### ABSTRACT

News commercialisation is geometrically increasing in the Cameroon media landscape. Its rise dampens journalists' credibility because it is inextricably linked to media corruption, control, and unethical practices. Accountability and transparency - key factors of media performance and credibility - cannot be guaranteed. This research examines the implications of this worrying phenomenon on news credibility in Buea, Cameroon. The study is anchored on Social Responsibility and Framing theories. Data were collected from 73 respondents out of 97 sampled (75.3%) and 384 media audiences in the metropolis to respond to the two research questions: to what extent does poverty influence the practice of news commercialisation? and by how much does news commercialisation affect news credibility? The journalists assert that news commercialisation is largely due to various forms of poverty: situational (80.8%), absolute (79.5%), rural (61.7%), psychological (61.6%) and generational (58.9%). Parametric analysis confirms that poverty significantly influences ( $t(df = 72) = 17.6, p < .05 (p=0.000)$ ) news commercialisation. Journalists admitted that they engage in this corrupt practice due to low remuneration, a lack of professional training, pressure from donors, peer pressure, greed, poor working conditions, and a lack of understanding of journalism ethics. This corrupt practice significantly ( $p=0.000$ ) affects audience perception of news credibility and the canons of journalism (accuracy, objectivity, balance, and impartiality). The study beckons media owners to improve working conditions of journalists, especially their wages. This could contribute to ameliorating journalists' financial situation and limit their involvement in commercialising news.

### INTRODUCTION

Journalists are instrumental in society. They provide the public with the necessary information needed to make critical and informed decisions. Achalefac (2020) argues that journalists serve as lenses through which individuals perceive their societies. She further notes that for these lenses to reflect societal activities, journalists must uplift professionalism and shun domineering influences from news sources such as advertisers, government officials and powerful elite. The influences often come in the form of freebies, cash, and unmerited favours. These forms are embodied in the concept of news commercialisation. Nnorom (1994) conceptualises news commercialisation as a phenomenon whereby the media report as news or news analysis a commercial message by an unidentifiable sponsor, giving the audience the impression that news is fair, objective and socially responsible. It is equally "the deliberate presentation of sponsored information to unsuspecting media audience who perceive this information as conventional public interest-oriented news" (Nwodu, 2006, p.28). Onoja (2009) provides a different interpretation of news commercialisation. He reveals that it is a situation where media organs begin to raise revenue by charging fees for news reports they should normally do for free. This means that without financial compensation, journalists will not cover certain news events or stories for their institutions. They can give

the event a blackout. Atabong's (2013) findings confirm this when he realised that most of the news stories that were not financially motivated are given media blackout. This deprives the public of their right to be informed about societal happenings. It makes media audiences passive and retards their involvement and decision-making in development projects in the society.

News commercialisation is found in the commercial laissez-faire model of the press (Watson, 1998). The model explains that media activities are driven by moneymaking instincts. Their primary purpose is to generate revenue. One way of doing this is to commercialise news in exchange for monetary reward. Two levels of news commercialisation exist: individual and institutional (Omenugh & Oji, 2008). At the institutional level, charges are officially placed for sponsored news programmes. At the individual level, Chioma (2013) explains that "journalists or group of journalists make monetary demands to cover an event or report the event." She referred to this act as 'brown envelope' syndrome. Brown envelope denotes any "journalistic activity which involves transfer of various types of rewards from sources to the reporter" (Skjerdal, 2010, p.370-371).

The practice of news commercialisation is spreading across nations and journalists due to certain factors. These include: poverty, pressure, poor remuneration, greed, expectations from society, pressure from donors,

<sup>1</sup> Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Buea, Cameroon

\* Corresponding author's e-mail: [stephenndode@yahoo.com](mailto:stephenndode@yahoo.com)

pressure from colleagues, unprofessionalism, and lack of principles (Asemah, 2009). Tanjong (2012) explains that poverty is not only a threat, but has succeeded to subvert ethical journalism practices. In Cameroon and Nigeria, for example, it is common for journalists to go unpaid for months. Sometimes, payment is inconsistent. To meet up with economic demands, some journalists trade news. They accept payment to cover news and transform publicities and commercials into news (Ndangam, 2009). The Media Sustainability Index (2012) notes that professional media outlets in Cameroon are working to professionalise journalists by way of capacity-building training through a variety of methods, including with donor partner organisations. Standards of ethics and conduct are taught to enable journalists provide objective and balanced information that is free from abuse, bias, and groundless accusations. The report further reveals that a Code of Conduct has already been drawn up by the Cameroon Union of Journalists and the Ministry of Communications to support the profession with a view to substantial self-regulation. Nonetheless, the economic poverty of the profession puts the independence of journalists to test, making them vulnerable to bribery and throws the profession into disrepute (Media Sustainability Index, 2012).

Salaries are non-existent in most private-sector media outlets because employment contracts (where they are given) are often not executed in accordance with the law. The absence of material and financial compensation largely supplants the independence of journalists to their sources, who are often political and social elites with their agendas. This has left journalists at the mercy of corruption and manipulation (Media Sustainability Index, 2012). The report further notes that politicians often own media outlets and arrange their editorials not to objectively inform and educate the population, but to sell their political image. Owners are more likely to influence editorial positions and reporters than the editors themselves, and owners often dictate their 'standards' of practice. As the saying goes "he who pays the piper calls the tune."

Censorship and self-censorship are also evident in the Cameroonian media, where journalists suppress news and submit to self-imposed restrictions, for fear of being brought before the courts or physically attacked. The press covers a broad range of events, including national and international issues, and sensitive issues such as national security. Their exact treatment of these topics may be influenced by self-censorship (Media Sustainability Index, 2012).

Other factors that favour news commercialisation in Cameroon are poor sponsorship, listenership and circulation of newspapers that render the media poor. Advertising agencies, cellular communications, and breweries are the most reliable advertisement buyers. They operate in an anarchical market that does not favour the press. Given that the advertising market is not yet subject to rigorous regulations, advertisers negotiate the markets and impose the terms of engagement. Media

firms, because of this informal and unregulated system, receive little income from ads and little revenue with which to remain afloat. Low listener numbers and weak circulation figures are noted in the Cameroonian media. The weak purchasing power of the population and the poor distribution of electricity are further elements that prejudice the media, which want to maximise their audience and enlarge their readership (Media Sustainability Index, 2012).

Asemah (2011) enumerates the negative implications of news commercialisation on the media and society. He reveals that news commercialisation has given birth to a situation whereby news is narrowly defined against the weight of the news source's pocket. Okoro and Chinweobo-onuoha (2013) declare that commercialisation has an adverse effect on the profession and its practitioners in varying degrees across the world. Positively, Kenneth and Odorume (2015) state that news commercialisation generates revenue for stations to enable the management run their media institutions on a day-to-day basis and even beyond; it serves to check unnecessary demands by individuals or even organisations of the media to publish what is not in the interest of the public; it gives the station some form of autonomy, and it earns legitimate income to journalists who take 10% of any money they attract to the station. Negatively, the damage of news commercialisation is huge and irreparable on media ethics, journalism canons, journalists' reputation and news credibility.

Despite the nature of news commercialisation in Cameroon, information paucity exists on its repercussion on news credibility. Most news commercialisation studies were carried out in Nigeria. For instance, Oberiri (2016), Udomisor and Kenneth (2013), Ismail, Pali, and Shem (2021) have conducted different studies that focused on news commercialisation. Some of the studies examined the relationship between news commercialisation and media credibility (Oberiri, 2016), others focused on the extent to which news commercialisation affects radio programming (Lwanga, 2002).

In Cameroon, few studies have been conducted and this contemporary study intends to fill the gap by looking at the repercussions of news commercialisation on news credibility. The central issue builds around the argument that news commercialisation is becoming a normal phenomenon in journalism practice in Cameroon. It is a common practice for some journalists to request financial rewards before covering news events which they would normally cover for free or to see commercial articles transformed into news articles and given preferential treatment over hard news stories. In some cases, news stories are replaced with commercial news stories, simply because the latter carries a financial reward. It is on this basis that the following research questions are addressed:

1. To what extent does poverty influence the practice of news commercialisation?
2. By how much does news commercialisation affect news credibility?

The main objective of this chapter is to examine the effect of news commercialisation on news credibility. Specifically, it seeks to:

1. Investigate the extent to which journalists and audience perceive poverty as an influence on news commercialisation.

2. Measure the extent to which journalists and audience perceive that news commercialisation affects news credibility.

The research is limited to Buea metropolis in Cameroon. Buea is located on the eastern slope of Mount Cameroon; the highest mountain in West Africa and the 2nd highest in Africa. Buea is located on latitude 49°33.984' N and longitude 914°12.012' E. It is one of the oldest and most influential administrative, political, academic, economic and media-rich metropolis in Cameroon. Journalists and audience in the Buea constitute the population of this study.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### News Commercialisation

News commercialisation is multifaceted and can be understood from different dimensions. Nnorom (1994) argues that it is “a phenomenon whereby the media report as news or news analysis a commercial message by an unidentifiable sponsor, giving the audience the impression that news is fair, objective and socially responsible” (cited in Ekwo, 1996, p.63). Similarly, Nwodu (2006, p.28) describes news commercialization as “the deliberate presentation of sponsored information to unsuspecting media audience who perceive this information as conventional public interest-oriented news”.

These definitions illustrate that news commercialisation involves packaging commercial content in the form of news and making the audience feel that the ‘news story’ has been professionally treated. This phenomenon is common with many media organisations in Cameroon. Journalists sometimes transform commercial and publicity messages like adverts to news stories. Sometimes, the transformed stories are given preferential treatment more than news articles. In print media outlets, the stories are placed on the front page, inner front pages, or central spread sheet to give it maximum exposure. For broadcast media outlets, they are part of headline stories.

Onoja (2009) provides a different interpretation of news commercialisation. He reveals that news commercialisation is a situation where media organs begin to raise revenue by charging fees for news reports they should normally do for free. This means that without financial compensation, journalists will not cover certain news events or stories for their institutions. They can give such unpaid for events a blackout. This affirms Chioma’s (2013) definition of news commercialisation. She saw news commercialisation as a tactful strategy through which the media relegates its responsibility of surveying the society. In the same vein, McManus (2009, pp. 219-220), sees news commercialisation as “any action intended to boost profit that interferes with a journalist’s

or news organisation’s best effort to maximise public understanding of those issues and events that shape the community they claim to serve”. Despite this deviation, Kenneth and Odorume (2015) maintain that broadcast media organisations should exist to serve public interest and reverse from commercialising news stories. This is because commercialising news, sometimes, promotes less important stories at the expense of important ones. The Sean McBride Commission in their final reports in 1980 confirmed that important news items are put aside because of sponsored stories (Udomisor & Kenneth, 2013).

Oberiri (2016, p.65) summarises that “news commercialisation could be a packaged, produced and disseminated information by a sponsor who pays a media organisation. It could also be message/information/idea/thoughts paid for by an unidentified sponsor whose idea is trumpeted via a media organisation to a large heterogeneous audience to influence or modify their thinking” This act of commercialising news by journalists and media organisations greatly affects the objectivity and balance of reporting. Ekeanyanwu and Obianigwe (2012, p. 517) put it thus: “monetary gifts could pressurise a journalist into doing what the giver wants, and this makes the journalist unable to be objective in his reporting of events and issues involving the people who give such gifts.” This means that “a journalist who sells his conscience for money will end up deterring his reportage to suit the buyer of his conscience. He who pays the piper dictates the tune” (Oberiri, 2016, p.65) comes to play here.

Lacy in McManus (2009, p.221) states that “the growth of alternative information and advertising sources in the form of cable television and the internet”, and “the growth of public (stock) ownership of news media” are factors that have boosted commercialisation of news. Hence, the primary determinant of news worthiness becomes the ability to pay a media organisation a certain amount of money rather than the presence of the classic elements of the news. In Nigeria, for instance, Ogbuoshi (2005) enlists the commercial news rates of Radio Nigeria Enugu as follows: Commercial news – N47, 000; News commentary/political news – N52, 000; Special news commentary/political – N60, 000. Omenughha and Orji (2008) disclose that the Delta Broadcasting Service, Warri, charges N20, 000 for religious programmes, N36, 000 for corporate coverage and N25, 000 for social events. Chioma (2013) explains that news commercialisation at the institutional level is thriving because editors, publishers and owners of the broadcast stations see their organisations and their investment as a profit-making venture that should yield the required financial return.

At the individual level, Chioma (2013) regrets the ‘brown envelope’ syndrome in which journalists out rightly request for money before covering a news event. Okunna (1995, p.57) defines brown envelop succinctly as “a monetary bribe handed out to an unethical journalist to pressurise him into doing what the briber wants. Once accepted, monetary bribes and other gifts tie the hands of the

journalists who then become incapable of being objective in reporting events and issues involving people who give the gift". Brown envelope has the power of influencing the judgement of a reporter to distort the definition of news (Onyisi, 1996; Akabogu, 2005; Nwabueze, 2010). Brown envelope journalism is venomous to best journalistic practices especially in democratic societies as it influences editorial decision-making processes (Quansah, Ko-gyima & Boateng, 2012).

### News Credibility

Credibility refers to "judgments made by a perceiver (e.g., a message recipient) concerning the believability of a communicator" (O'Keefe, 1990, pp. 130-131). It is one of the criteria used to filter untrue information (Wathen & Burkell, 2002). Credibility has been a contentious issue in journalism (Hovland & Weiss, 1951), and authors make a distinction between source credibility and message credibility (Loveth & Igwenagu, 2025); both of which share a salient relationship. Bucy (2003) holds that media credibility can be conceptualised as the audience perception of news channel believability, as distinct from the believability of the news content. Oyediji (2005) defines two constructs of credibility scale: accuracy and trustworthiness.

News credibility measures the trustworthiness and believability of news articles. The concept of credibility first appeared in the Yale Studies, a series of psychological experiments conducted by Carl Hovland and his colleagues in the 1940s and 1950s. Credibility was conceptualised as a composition of several (perceived) communicator characteristics – especially the communicator's expertness and trustworthiness. Later, researchers have tried to identify additional characteristics like qualification, fairness, similarity, physical attractiveness, and dynamism (Berlo, Lemert & Mertz, 1969). Idowu (2001 p.4) asserts that "for news to be useful, it has to be credible; for it to be trusted, it must measure up to some exacting standard of assessment such as: accuracy (when in doubt, leave out), balance (reflect all sides of the story), fairness (impartiality to all parties involved), human angle (people- minded), depth (well researched/investigated), presentation (telling the story rightly), and reward (be of social relevance to audience)."

### Objectivity

This principle advocates for journalists to present the facts as they are, not as they want them to be. It requires the suppression of personal biases and idiosyncrasies in news presentation. Olumuyiwa (in Obianigwe, 2009) discloses that objectivity is not a myth, nor a mere philosophical abstraction, but an attainable media goal which a journalist must strive for even in the face of opposing realities. Despite the ongoing competition among media organs to increase readership, listenership and viewership, journalists must ensure that their reports are objective. That is what sustain the medium in the minds of the audience.

### Balance

Tanjong (2012, p.31) explains that the "idea of balance as a journalism concept revolves around two salient features: the first is impartiality - that journalism adopts a neutral approach to news reporting and secondly, the journalist presents facts rather than their interpretation." Tuchman (1978) reveals that balance can be attained by applying objectivity in the presentation of opposing claims without the attempt to evaluate. In case of a controversy, journalists should provide the facts from both direction and allow their audiences to be judges.

### Accuracy

Accuracy requires journalists to disseminate the right information to their audiences. Journalists are expected to check and recheck their facts to be sure that they are accurate. Wrong facts can mislead media audiences as well as cause chaos in society. In the case of dates and names, the reporter should not rely on his or her memory. He should check reference material for accurate spelling of names, titles, positions, office. Journalists should continue checking and rechecking till they are sure that they are accurate.

### Truth

Siebert *et al.* (1956) as cited by McNair (1998) explain that the purpose of the media is to help discover truth, to assist in the process of solving political and social problems by presenting evidences and opinion as the basis for decision" (p. 65). The media should always stand for the truth and shun all forms of lies or manipulated information. With the rise of fake news on social media, truth is farfetched. Fake news is the deliberate spread of misinformation or disinformation through traditional or social media outlets (Stahl, 2018). Journalists should continue to distinguish themselves from quacks by propagating truthful and verifiable information.

### Effects of News Commercialisation on News Credibility

Studies have been conducted on the effects of news commercialisation on news credibility. Greg and Aladi (2018) investigated the influence of news commercialisation on the credibility of broadcast news content. The results reveal that, 39.9% of respondents strongly agreed that news commercialisation crumbles credibility of news since only the views of the rich and powerful are reported. Similarly, Oberiri (2016) examined journalists' perception towards news commercialisation and the effect of news commercialisation on media credibility in Nigeria. The result showed that news commercialisation adversely affects objectivity (86.6%), media trust and credibility (73.4%) and media professionalism (73.3%). The results revealed that 73.3% of the journalists asserted that commercialisation of news has become disguised advertisement. Also, Achalefac (2020) examined the implication of brown envelope on news credibility. Results revealed that journalists (47.8%) do not report objectively after collecting brown envelopes from news sources.

The implications of news commercialisation on news credibility and journalism practice are devastating. Udomisor and Kenneth (2013) investigated the impact of news commercialisation on the communication policy of the Nigeria broadcasting commission. The researchers explained that journalists reduced their credibility by requesting for monetary payment or compensation to perform their informative and educative role. Also, Ayonghe (2020) examined the implication of collecting money from news sources on journalism practice. Findings revealed that the unethical practice has led to the death of quality journalism practice, promoted corruption and mediocrity in the media industry, made journalists accomplices with looters, made journalists toothless bulldogs, trampled professionalism and ethical principles.

Inobemhe *et al.* (2025) summarize the effects of news commercialization as follows:

news commercialisation remains unabated in the industry as it is mainly about the need for financial gains in order to keep the medium afloat. Motivated by this consideration, journalists sacrifice the principles of fairness, objectivity, independence at the altar of pecuniary gain for their organisation. The practice poses great threat to individuals and communities often neglected in pursuit of financial gains just as much as the watchdog role of the media is diminished in the process (p.94).

### Theoretical Perspective

This research is premised on two theoretical perspectives: social responsibility theory and framing theory.

#### Social Responsibility Theory

The Social Responsibility theory is one of the four normative theories of the press (Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm, 1956). The theory, instituted due to the lapses of the libertarian theory, advocates for media freedom guided by a sense of responsibility. A free press should guarantee the objective flow of information, which gives citizens the avenue and opportunity to express themselves. But due to sensationalism and yellow journalism, this free flow of information is abused in libertarian systems (Oberiri, 2016).

Social responsibility emphasises that journalists should strive to maintain certain journalistic standards in the exercise of their duties (Udomisor & Kenneth, 2013). McQuail (2000, p.150) sums this up by stating that “the media have an obligation to the wider society and media ownership is a public trust; news media should be truthful, accurate, fair, objective and relevant and the media should follow agreed codes of ethics and professional conduct.” By this treatise, media ownership is a form of stewardship and never an unlimited private franchise. That is to say, the media are set up to serve the intent of the public rather than personal interest.

Adonoo (2011) in Quansah, Ako-Gyima and Boateng (2012) notes that journalists have the final judgement to situate if the act of commercialising news stories has

an adverse repercussion on news credibility. The scholar based his argument on grounds that some financial rewards are motivational tips to journalists. He argued that the money given to journalists is a show of appreciation and a way of ensuring wide news coverage rather than trying to influence how stories are written. Nonetheless, the researcher concludes that journalists should be able to situate if the practice of commercialising news adversely affects ethical principles in journalism practice.

#### Framing Theory

Frames depict the words, images, phrases, and presentation styles that media use when relaying information about an issue or event to an audience (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). Framing was first posited by Gregory Bateson (1972). It describes the practice of thinking about news items and story content within familiar contexts. It is this context that determines reporters’ and editors’ choice of word when writing or editing stories.

The theory rests on the premise that the way something is presented to the audience (called “the frame”) determines audience interpretation and understanding of the message. It is for this reason that reporters and editors are cautious of their words when writing news articles for the print, broadcast, or online media. Framing focuses on how media draws the public’s eye to specific topics – setting agenda, and then it takes a step further to create a frame, through which the audience will comprehend such information. Creating frames for stories is commonly a mindful choice by sources, reporters, journalists and/or editors (Arowolo, 2017).

Contextually, poverty in the journalism practice and desire to accumulate wealth have triggered journalists to commercialise news items. In commercialising news items, journalists bury the ethical principle like objectivity, accuracy and fairness required in treating news stories. Stories treatment is controlled by the amount of money a journalist has received from a news source. When a journalist is highly motivated financially, the journalist treats and disseminates the news stories in a manner that meets the interest of the news payer. In other cases, the payment is meant to prevent journalists from reporting an investigative or sensitive story that may adversely affect the reputation of a news payer. The phenomenon of framing news stories based on financial reward, instead of professional principle is flourishing in the private sector than in the public sector. Atabong (2013) reveals that private journalists are more determined than journalists working for public media outlets to commercialise news. In summary, the framing of news stories is influenced by the financial package received from a news source. Financially motivated stories, sometimes even without their relevance to audience, tend to receive good treatment than those without motivation.

#### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The approach of the research is quantitative and the specific research method used is survey. Journalists and

media audiences in the Buea Metropolis, a media-rich city in Cameroon and seat of one of the main journalism training institutions in Cameroon – the University of Buea, constituted the population of the study. Journalists were randomly selected from different broadcasting and print media outlets in the city. News consumers were equally selected randomly from different communities in Buea, mainly from media-rich areas. The sampling technique used was simple random sampling in order to allow every journalist and news consumer to participate, based on a population size of 122 journalists and over 200.000 inhabitants. As we have observed in the Cameroon media landscape and as established in the rationale for this research, news commercialisation is widespread and has gained considerable grounds in Cameroon. Journalists of both public and private media institutions are involved. The Krejcie and Morgan’s (1970) table for determining sample size for research activities was used to deduce a representative sample of 97 journalists (out of which 73 completed the questionnaire, making a response rate of 75.3%) and 384 audiences completed questionnaires of news consumers. Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

#### Demographic Analysis

##### Journalists

Findings reveal that 50.7% (37) of the journalists were male and 49.3% (36) were female. Age-wise, 32.9% (24) of the journalists were between 20 and 25 years, 35.6% (26) aged between 26 and 30 years, 21.9% (16) were between 31 and 35 years, 5.5% (4) were aged between 36 and 40 years and 4.1% (3) were between 41 and 45 years. Regarding marital status, 83.5% (61) of the journalists were single, 15.1% (11) were married and 1.4% (1) was co-habiting. In addition, 82.1% (60) of respondents had formal University education/degrees in journalism. Also,

16.4% (12) respondents work for public media and the rest work for private and religious media. Equally, trends in work experience reveal: 67.1% (49) = <5 years; 24.7% (18) = between 6 and 10 years; 5.5% (4) = 10 to 15 years; 2.7% (2) =>16 years. Results also reveal that 31.5% (23) of the journalists do not have monthly remunerations, 11% (8) receive less than 30,000 FCFA monthly, 16.4% (12) receive 40.000 to 50.000 FCFA monthly, 5.5% (4) receive 60.000 to 70.000 FCFA monthly, 5.5% (4) receive more than 100.000 FCFA monthly, and 30.1% (22) did not disclose their salaries. Hence, most journalists do not receive a monthly salary from their employers. This makes it possible for the compromise journalism ethics to obtain financial compensation from news sources.

##### Media Audiences

Results reveal that 57.8% (222) are female and 40.6% (156) are male. Also, most audiences were between 26 and 30 years old. 28.6% (110) are between 20 and 25 years, 36.5% (140) are between 26 and 30 years, 24.7% (95) are aged between 31 and 35 years, 7% (27) are between 36 and 40 years, and 1.6% (6) fall between 41 and 45 years. More so, 366 have formal education. Most are either students or workers. Most 50.8% (195) are single, 36.7% (141) are married, 6.8% (26) are divorced and 4.4% (17) are co-habiting.

Differences exist between the demographic characteristics of journalists and audiences. While most of the journalists are males, most of the media audience are females. Also, the highest qualification for journalists is a master’s degree meanwhile the highest qualification for the audience is a doctoral degree. Despite these differences, there exist some similarities. For instance, singles dominated in both populations sampled for this study.

##### Research Question One

To what extent does poverty influence the practice of news commercialisation?

**Table 1:** Influence of Poverty on news commercialisation

Forms of poverty	Measurement of Frequency					Total
	Strongly agree	Agree (75%)	Neutral (50%)	Disagree (25%)	Strongly disagree	
Situational poverty	17.8%	63%	13.7%	4.1%	1.4%	100%
	(13)	(46)	(10)	(3)	(1)	(73)
Absolute poverty	9.6%	69.9%	16.5%	4.1%	0%	100%
	(7)	(51)	(12)	(3)	(0)	(73)
Rural poverty	11%	50.7%	32.8%	5.5%	0%	100%
	(8)	(37)	(24)	(4)	(0)	(73)
Psychological Poverty	8.2%	53.4%	30.1%	8.2%	0%	100%
	(6)	(39)	(22)	(6)	(0)	(73)
Generational poverty	11%	47.9%	30.1%	11%	0%	100%
	(8)	(35)	(22)	(8)	(0)	(73)

Findings in table 1 reveal that poverty influences the practice of news commercialisation in Buea metropolis. Based on the results, 80.8% (17.8% strongly agreed and

63% agreed) of journalists affirmed that situational poverty favours the practice of news commercialisation as opposed to 5.5% (4.2% disagreed and 1.4% strongly

agreed) who refuted the statement and 13.7% neutral. Also, 79.5% of the journalists (9.6% strongly agreed and 69.9% agreed) admitted that absolute poverty encourages the practice of news commercialisation as opposed to 4.1% of the journalists who refuted the statement and 16.5% neutral. Equally, 61.7% of the journalists (11% strongly agreed and 50.7% agreed) disclosed that rural poverty triggers the practice of news commercialisation as opposed to 5.5% of the journalists who contested the statement and 32.8% who were neutral. Furthermore, 61.6% of the journalists (53.4% strongly agreed and 8.2% agreed) said psychological poverty

favours the practice of news commercialisation as opposed to 8.2% of the journalists who disagreed with the statement and 30.1% neutral. In addition, 58.9% of the journalists (11% strongly agreed and 47.9% agreed) acknowledged that generational poverty leads to the practice of news commercialisation as opposed to 11% of the journalists who refuted the statement and 30.1% neutral.

**Hypothesis One**

Poverty has significantly influenced the practice of news commercialisation

**Table 2:** Poverty significantly influences news commercialisation

One-Sample Statistics		One-Sample Test (CI: 95%)	
N	73	Df	72
Mean	18.5	T	17.6
Std. Deviation	2.9	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		Test Value	12.5
		Mean Difference	6

The One-Sample t-test (df = 72) = 17.6, p < .05 (p=0.000) reveals that poverty significantly influences news commercialisation in Buea metropolis. The result was statistically significant at 0.05 level with a 95%

confidence interval. Also, the mean of the sample (18.5) was significantly higher than the probable test mean of 12.5 (average agreement response).

**Table 3:** Journalists' assessment of the factors contributing to news commercialisation

Factors	Measurement of Agreement					Total
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
Low remuneration of journalists	15.1%	53.4%	28.8%	1.4%	1.4%	100%
	(11)	(39)	(21)	(1)	(1)	(73)
Lack of professional training	5.5%	32.9%	57.5%	4.1%	0%	100%
	(4)	(24)	(42)	(3)	(0)	(73)
Pressure from donors in journalism	5.5%	54.8%	30.1%	9.6%	0%	100%
	(4)	(40)	(22)	(7)	(0)	(73)
Pressure from journalism colleagues	2.7%	31.5%	56.2%	6.8%	2.7%	100%
	(2)	(23)	(41)	(5)	(2)	(73)
Greedy attitude and behaviour	9.6%	35.6%	43.8%	8.2%	2.8%	100%
	(7)	(26)	(32)	(6)	(2)	(73)
Poor working conditions of journalists	8.2%	42.5%	43.8%	5.5%	0%	100%
	(6)	(31)	(32)	(4)	(0)	(73)
Ignorance of ethical principles in journalism	6.8%	39.7%	47.9%	5.5%	0%	100%
	(5)	(29)	(35)	(4)	(0)	(73)

Based on the results, 68.5% (15.1% strongly agreed and 53.4% agreed) disclosed that low remuneration favours the practice of news commercialisation as opposed to 2.8% (1.4% disagreed and 1.4% strongly disagreed) of the journalists who refuted the statement and 28.8% were neutral. Also, 60.3% of the journalists (5.5% strongly agreed and 54.8% agreed) said pressure from donors encourages the practice of news commercialisation as opposed to 9.6% of the journalists who refuted the statement and 30.1%

neutral. Consequently, pressure from donors encourages the practice of news commercialisation. Equally, 50.7% of the journalists (8.2% strongly agreed and 42.5% agreed) affirmed that poor working conditions of journalists encourage the practice of news commercialisation as opposed to 5.5% of the journalists who refuted the statement and 43.8% were neutral. Furthermore, 46.5% of the journalists (6.8% strongly agreed and 39.7% agreed) revealed that ignorance of ethical principles in journalism favours the practices

of news commercialisation as opposed to 5.5% of the journalists who disapproved the statement and 47.9% neutral.

In addition, 45.2% (9.6% strongly agreed and 35.6% agreed) affirmed that greed encourages the practice of news commercialisation as opposed to 11% (8.2% disagreed and 2.8% strongly disagreed) who rejected the statement and 43.8% neutral.

The findings equally demonstrate that 38.4% of the journalists (5.5% strongly agreed and 32.9% agreed) say professional training stimulates the practice of news

commercialisation as opposed to 4.1% who refused the statement and 57.5% neutral. So, inadequate professional training has a minimal influence on the practice of news commercialisation.

In addition, 34.2% of the journalists (2.7% strongly agreed and 31.5% agreed) admit that pressure from journalism colleagues favours the practice of news commercialisation as opposed to 9.5% (6.8% disagreed and 2.7% strongly disagreed) who disapprove the statement and 56.2% neutral. Thus, pressure from journalism colleagues has a minimal effect in promoting news commercialisation.

**Table 4:** Audiences' assessment of the factors contributing to news commercialisation

Factors contributing to the practice of news commercialisation	Measurement of Agreement					Total
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
Poor salary of journalists	5.2%	17.7%	29.7%	37.5%	9.9%	100%
	(20)	(68)	(114)	(144)	(38)	(384)
Lack of professional training	3.4%	19.3%	52.1%	16.9%	8.3%	100%
	(13)	(74)	(200)	(65)	(32)	(384)
Pressure from donors in journalism	3.1%	16.9%	34.6%	38.3%	7%	100%
	(12)	(65)	(133)	(147)	(27)	(384)
Pressure from journalism colleagues	4.4%	19.5%	50.8%	17.4%	7.8%	100%
	(17)	(75)	(195)	(67)	(30)	(384)
Greedy attitude and behaviour	6.5%	14.1%	35.4%	37%	7%	100%
	(25)	(54)	(136)	(142)	(27)	(384)
Poor working conditions	7.3%	16.9%	52.1%	16.4%	7.3%	100%
	(28)	(65)	(200)	(63)	(28)	(384)
Ignorance of ethical principles in journalism	6%	15.9%	34.9%	35.2%	8.1%	100%
	(23)	(61)	(134)	(135)	(31)	(384)
Blasphemy	4.4%	11.5%	57.3%	20.3%	6.5%	100%
	(17)	(44)	(220)	(78)	(25)	(384)

The audience equally assessed the causes of news commercialisation in journalism practice. Results indicate that 22.9% of the audience (5.2% strongly agreed and 17.7% agreed) revealed that low remuneration contributes to the practice of news commercialisation as opposed to 47.4% (37.5% disagreed and 9.9% strongly disagreed) who disapproved the statement and 29.7% neutral.

Also, 22.7% of the audience (3.4% strongly agreed and 19.3% agreed) disclosed that the lack of professional training favours the practice of news commercialisation as oppose to 25.2% (16.9% disagreed and 8.3% strongly disagreed) who refute the statement meanwhile 52.1% are neutral. This finding suggests that most audiences are indifferent to the influence of professional training on news commercialisation.

Equally, 20% of the audience (3.1% strongly agreed and 16.9% agreed) assert that pressure from donors in journalism triggers the practice of news commercialisation as opposed to 45.3% (38.3% disagreed and 7% strongly disagreed) who negate the statement and 34.6% neutral. Therefore, the audience think, pressure from donors has a minute influence in encouraging the practice of news commercialisation.

Furthermore, 23.9% of the audience (4.4% strongly agreed and 19.5% agreed) admitted that pressure from journalism colleagues encourages the practice of news commercialisation as opposed to 25.2% (17.4% disagreed and 7.8% strongly disagreed) who rejected the statement and 50.8% neutral. Thus, most news consumers were neutral on the influence of pressure from journalism colleagues on the practice of news commercialisation.

Also, 20.6% of news consumers (6.5% strongly agreed and 14.1% agreed) revealed that greed influences the practice of news commercialisation as oppose to 44% (37% disagreed and 7% strongly disagreed) who contested the statement and 35.4% neutral. This finding indicates that greed has a minor influence on the practice of news commercialisation.

The findings also show that 24.2% of the audience (7.3% strongly agreed and 16.9% agreed) affirmed that poor working conditions of journalists favour the practice of news commercialisation as opposed to 23.7% (16.4% disagreed and 7.3% strongly disagreed) who disagreed the statement and 52.1% neutral. Consequently, of the audiences were indifferent to the influence of poor working

conditions of journalists on news commercialisation. Furthermore, 21.9% (6% strongly agreed and 15.9% agreed) of the audience disclose that the ignorance of ethical principles of journalism encourages the practice of news commercialisation as opposed to 43.3% (35.2% disagreed and 8.1% strongly disagreed) who disputed the statement and 34.9% neutral. As a result, the lack of ethical principles in journalism has a minor influence on the practice of news commercialisation. In addition, 15.9% of news consumers (4.4% strongly agreed and 11.5% agreed) affirmed that blasphemy stimulates the practice of news commercialisation as opposed to 26.8% (20.3% disagreed and 6.5% strongly disagreed) who negate the statement and 57.3% neutral. Summarily, the results from the journalists differ from that of the audience on the factors contributing to the practice of news commercialisation. While most of the journalists affirmed that low remuneration (68.5%), pressure from donors (60.3%), poor working conditions (50.7%) and greed (45.2%) favour the practice of news

commercialisation; the majority of the audience refute that low remuneration (47.4%), pressure from donors (45.3%), greed (44%), and lack of ethical principles in journalism (43.3%) favour the practice of news commercialisation. Despite the variation, the views of journalists are more authentic than the views of the media audience. This is because the aforementioned factors (low remuneration, poor working conditions of journalists, greed, lack of professional journalism training, pressure from donors, pressure from journalism colleagues, and lack of ethical principles in journalism) directly involve and affect journalists not the media audience. Based on this argument, low remuneration (68.5%), pressure from donors (60.3%), poor working conditions (50.7%) and greed (45.2%) have a major influence on the practice of news commercialisation in Cameroon.

**Research Question Two**

By how much does news commercialisation affect news credibility?

**Table 5:** News commercialisation has a negative impact on news credibility

Agreement scale	Respondents' assessment	
	Journalists	Audiences
Strongly agree	35.6% (26)	14.1% (54)
Agree	32.9% (24)	24.5% (94)
Neutral	17.8% (13)	49.2% (189)
Disagree	6.8% (05)	9.4% (36)
Strongly disagree	6.8% (05)	2.9% (11)
Total	(73) 100.0%	(384) 100.0%

Respondents (journalists and media audiences) rated the negative impact of news commercialisation on news credibility. Based on journalists, 68.5% (35.6% strongly agreed and 32.9% agreed) affirm that news commercialisation adversely affects news credibility as opposed to 13.6% (6.8% disagreed and 6.8% strongly disagreed) who refuted the statement and 17.8% neutral. As regards media audience, 38.5% (14.1% strongly agreed and 24.5% agreed) admit that news commercialisation

negatively affects news credibility as opposed to 12.3% (9.4% disagreed and 2.9% strongly disagreed) who refuted the statement and 49.2% of neutral. Therefore, most of the media audiences were neutral on the negative influence of news commercialisation on news credibility. Summarily, most of the journalists (68.5%) affirmed that news commercialisation negatively affects news credibility while most of the audience (49.2%) were neutral.

**Table 6:** Effects of news commercialisation on media credibility

Variables	Gender			Total
	Male	Female	No response	
Very negative	4.7% (18)	4.4% (17)	0.3% (1)	9.4% (36)
Negative	12.2% (47)	19% (73)	0.3% (1)	31.5% (121)
Neutral	19% (73)	25% (96)	0.8% (3)	44.8% (172)
Positive	2.6% (10)	7.6% (29)	0% (0)	10.2% (39)
Very positive	1.6% (6)	1% (4)	0% (0)	2.6% (10)
No response	0.5% (2)	0.8% (3)	0.3% (1)	1.6% (6)
Total	40.6% (156)	57.8% (222)	1.6% (6)	100% (384)

Findings in table 6 reveal that news commercialisation has an adverse implication on the credibility of media organs. Here, 40.9% of the audience (9.4% very negative

and 31.5% negative) affirm that news commercialisation has a negative image on the credibility of media organs as opposed to 12.8% (10.2% positive and 2.6% very

positive) who refute the statement. Meanwhile, 44.8% are neutral. It is therefore advisable for journalists to shun

news commercialisation to redeem the image of their media organisations.

**Table 7:** Rank order of diverse effects of news commercialisation on audience

Effects	Frequency	Percentage	Ranking
I lost interest in the media organ	91	23.7%	1
Reduces the credibility I have for the media	56	14.6%	2
Leaves me with a negative impression of the station	53	13.8%	3
I switch channel/ stop watching channel	52	13.5%	4
I realised that journalists are money minded	47	12.2%	5
Journalists lack skills and professional training	35	9.1%	6
The media organ is not accurate in its report	13	3.4%	8
The media organ is not balance in its reports	12	3.1%	9
I know that the media organ is not objective	8	2.1%	10
It has no effect on me	8	2.1%	11
No response	9	2.3%	12
Total	384	100.0%	13

Findings show that news commercialisation has a negative influence on the audience. It makes the audience lose interest in the media 23.7% (91), reduces the media’s credibility 14.6% (56), leaves the audience with a negative impression of the media house 13.8% (53), makes the audience switch or stop watching the channel 13.5% (52), makes the audience to realise journalists are money-minded 12.2% (47), makes the audience to know that some journalists lack skills and professional training 9.1%

(35), makes the audience to assume that the media outlet is not accurate 3.4% (12 ), not balanced 3.1% (12) and not objective 2.1% (8). Also, 2.1% (8) of the audience disclosed that news commercialisation has no effect on their attitude and behaviour toward a media organisation.

**Hypothesis Two**

News commercialisation has a significant negative effect on news credibility.

**Table 8:** News commercialisation has a significant negative effect on news credibility

One-Sample Statistics		One-Sample Test (CI: 95%)	
N	73	Df	72
Mean	3.8	T	8.5
Std. Deviation	1.3	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		Test Value	2.5
		Mean Difference	1.3

A One-Sample T-test was conducted to determine whether news commercialisation negatively affects news credibility. The result of the test,  $t(df = 72) = 8.5, p < .05 (p=0.000)$  reveals that news commercialisation has a significant negative effect on news credibility. The result was statistically significant at 0.05 levels with a 95% confidence interval. Also, the mean of the sample (3.8) was significantly higher than the probable test mean of 2.5 (average agreement response).

**Discussion**

**Research Question One**

To what extent does poverty influence the practice of news commercialisation?

Findings revealed that poverty has a significant influence ( $t(df = 72) = 17.6, p < .05 (p=0.000)$ ) on the practice of news commercialisation in Buea municipality. Descriptively, most of the journalists affirmed that situational poverty (80.8%), absolute poverty (79.5%),

rural poverty (61.7%), psychological poverty (61.6%) and generational poverty (58.9%) encourage the practice of news commercialisation. In line with the findings, Tanjong (2012) revealed that poverty is one of the primordial factors responsible for the “legalisation” of gombo (brown envelope syndrome) journalism in Cameroon. He further disclosed that poverty is not only a threat but has succeeded to subvert ethical journalism practices. A firm takeaway from this study, therefore, is that the socio-economic media landscape and news commercialisation share a symbiotic relationship. The implication is that individual journalists, media houses, employers of journalists are advised to take financial remuneration of journalists seriously. Journalists cannot work satisfactorily when their pockets are empty and when their stomachs are hungry. A hungry man, they say, is an angry man. The time has come for journalists to be well paid so that they are not toasted left and right by forces outside their control. This will, in turn, help

to stabilize the journalism profession and increase the professionalism and output of reporters. Journalists will be more accountable to society.

Tanjong (2012, p. 9) stipulates that a journalist that earns twenty thousand francs CFA “will not hesitate to publish a story regardless of its degree of newsworthiness when the news provider gives him or her one hundred thousand (100,000) francs CFA (about 200 US Dollars). Media Sustainability Index report (2012) supports Tanjong (2012) pointing out that the economic poverty of the journalism profession puts the independence of journalists to the test, making them vulnerable to bribery and putting the profession into disrepute.

Research question Two: By how much does news commercialisation affect news credibility?

In line with the findings that news commercialisation has a significant negative effect on news credibility, Murtala (2018) found that news commercialisation is a form of bribe which has the potency to influence a journalist’s sense of credibility. Equally, Quansah, Ko-gyima and Boateng (2012) disclosed that news commercialisation is venomous to journalism practice. It has the power to influence the judgement of journalists and to distort facts (Akabogu, 2005; Mwabueze, 2010; Onyisi, 1996).

The findings disclose that the practice of news commercialisation in Buea metropolis has made some media audiences lose interest in media organisations, switch or stop watching some television stations, see journalists as money-minded, and developed a negative impression of the credibility of journalists in society. Contrarily, Kenneth and Odorume (2015) asserted that news commercialisation is a good practice because it generates revenue for media organisations to run the day-to-day activities, it gives autonomy to media institutions and this reduces their reliance on government subvention, and it earns legitimate income to journalists who take a given proportion of any money they attract to the station. However, since news commercialisation affects news credibility, which is paramount in the profession, journalists should shun the practice.

## CONCLUSION

Findings reveal that poverty is a germ that enhance news commercialisation. Besides poverty, the results show that low remuneration of journalists, pressure from donors, poor working conditions of journalists and greedy attitude and behaviour of journalists have a major influence on news commercialisation. Journalists should be well paid so that they can escape from the poverty trap. Most journalists and media audience affirmed that news commercialisation adversely affects news credibility. Journalists sometimes blur the truth and substitute it with inaccurate and manipulated information. Inadvertently, this practice reduces the power of media organisations and their ability to check the excesses of government officials, individuals, and corporate bodies.

## Recommendations

Media should function as businesses (for economic survival and editorial independence). Media owners should properly remunerate journalists. Low remuneration makes it difficult for journalists to meet up with financial demands, especially with the increase in the standard of living and prices of basic commodities. The result of low remuneration is poverty, psychological trauma, depression, and stress. This stimulates some journalists to accept financial compensations, favours, and gifts from news sources to manipulate news stories and publish damaging articles.

Also, government’s effort in setting up a minimum wage range for workers (example, journalists) in Cameroon should be reinforced. The government should create a commission to monitor the welfare of journalists, especially in private media organisations. The minimum wage range, if supervised by journalism organisations and regulatory bodies, will deter unethical journalism. However, an increase in journalists’ remuneration may not automatically stop news commercialisation due to the influence of other factors (greed, lack of professional training and indiscipline); but it could reduce the chances of journalists sacrificing ethics for offers from news sources.

## REFERENCES

- Achalefac, S. (2020). *Journalists’ perceptions of the brown envelope syndrome and its effects on news credibility in Cameroon* [Master’s dissertation, University of Buea].
- Akabogu, C. E. (2005). The ethical journalist and brown envelope syndrome: The way forward. *International Journal of Communication*, 3, 201–206.
- Arowolo, O. S. (2017). *Understanding framing theory*. Lagos State University.
- Asemah, E. A. (2011). *Selected mass media themes*. Great Future Press.
- Asemah, E. S. (2011). *Principles and practice of mass communication*. Great Future Press.
- Atabong, B. A. (2013). *The gombo bug: Elements and implications on the Cameroon media landscape, the case of South West media organs* [Master’s dissertation, University of Buea].
- Ayonghe, I. M. N. (2020). *Journalists’ perception of gombo syndrome and its implication on journalism practice in Fako Division* [Master’s dissertation, University of Buea].
- Berlo, D. K., Lemert, J. B., & Mertz, R. J. (1969). Dimensions for evaluating the acceptability of communication sources. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 33, 563–576.
- Chioma, P. E. (2013). News commercialization in Nigeria: Undermining issues in public interest for financial gains. *International Journal of Innovation Research and Development*, 2(13), 172–176.
- Ekeanyanwu, N. T., & Obianigwe, N. O. (2012). The Nigerian press, brown envelope syndrome (BES) and media professionalism: The missing link. *Journalism and Mass Communication*, 2(4), 514–529.

- Ekwo, U. (1996). Commercialisation of the news in Nigeria media: An impediment to information flow. In I. Nwosu & U. Ekwo (Eds.), *Mass media and marketing communications: Principles, practice, perspectives. Thought Communications*.
- Gamson, W., & Modigliani, A. (1989). Media discourse and public opinion on nuclear power: A constructionist approach. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 95(1), 1–37.
- Greg, E., & Aladi, A. J. (2018). Appraising audience views of the influence of news commercialization on credibility of broadcast news content: A study of residents of Minna Metropolis, Niger State. *Journal of Advertising and Public Relations*, 1(1), 1–9.
- Hovland, C. I., & Weiss, W. (1951). The influence of source credibility on communication effectiveness. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 15, 635–650.
- Idowu, L. (Ed.). (2001). *News in the public interest in watching the watchdogs*. Diamond Publication Ltd.
- Inobemhe, K., Modeyin, O. E., Ugber, F., & Udeh, N. S. (2025). Journalists' perception of news commercialization as a recurring ethical question in the Nigerian "mediasphere." *Contemporary Research: An Interdisciplinary Academic Journal*, 8(1), 94–113.
- Kenneth, T. A., & Odorume, A. (2015). Commercialization of news content in Nigerian broadcast media industry. *Journal of African Studies*, 5(1), 1–9.
- Krejcie, V. R., & Morgan, W. D. (1970). Determining sample size for research activities. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 30, 607–610.
- Loveth, I. O., & Igwenagu, E. (2025). Information verification and source credibility in user-generated crisis content: A comparative analysis of citizen journalism during disasters vs. human-made emergencies. *Journal of Media, Journalism and Mass Communication*, 1(1), 30–45.\* <https://journals.e-palli.com/home/index.php/jmjmc>
- Lwanga, M. J. (2002). *The impact of media commercialization: A study of Radio Uganda* [Master's thesis, Rhodes University]
- McManus, J. H. (2009). The commercialization of news. In W. K. Jorgensen & T. Hanitzsch (Eds.), *The handbook of journalism studies*. Routledge.
- Media Sustainability Index. (2012). With these weaknesses built into the system, journalists and their employers have become more likely to market their news content to bidders, or engage in blackmail and other perversions of the practice. IREX. <https://www.irex.org>
- Ndangam, L. (2009). All of us have taken gombo: Media pluralism and patronage in Cameroonian journalism. *Journalism*, 10(6), 819–842.
- Nwabueze, C. (2010). Brown envelopes and the need for ethical reorientation: Perceptions of Nigerian journalists. *African Communication Research*, 3(3), 497–521.
- Nwodu, L. (2006). *Journalism practice: News, aesthetics, ethics and law*. Rhyce Kerex Publishers.
- Oberiri, A. D. (2016). Journalists' perception of news commercialization and its implication on media credibility in Nigeria. *World Scientific News*, 55, 63–76.
- Obianigwe, N. (2009). *Perception of Lagos-based journalists on brown envelope syndrome in the coverage of news events in Nigeria* [Unpublished manuscript].
- O'Keefe, D. J. (1990). *Persuasion: Theory and research*. Sage.
- Okoro, N., & Chinweobo-Onuoha, B. (2013). Journalists' perception of brown envelope syndrome and its implications for journalism practice in Nigeria. *Covenant Journal of Communication*, 1(2), 130–144.
- Omenugha, K. A., & Oji, M. (2008). News commercialization, ethics and objectivity in journalism practice in Nigeria: Strange bedfellows? *Estudos em Comunicação*, 3, 13–28.
- Onoja, I. (2009). The impact of commercialization on news selection by three broadcast stations in Nigeria. *Maiduguri Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, 7(2), 17–29.
- Quansah, J., Ako-Gyima, E., & Boating, A. D. (2012). Brown envelope journalism in Ghana: Perceptions of some media practitioners in Kumasi. <http://localhost:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/1017>
- Siebert, F., Peterson, T., & Schramm, W. (1956). *Four theories of the press*. University of Illinois Press.
- Skjerdal, T. S. (2010). Research on brown envelope journalism in the African media. *African Communication Research*, 3(3), 92–118.
- Stahl, K. (2018). *Fake news detection in social media* [Master's thesis, California State University, Stanislaus].
- Tanjong, E. (2012). *Media balance in sub-Saharan Africa's fragile democracy: Analysis of journalism practice in Cameroon*. Design House.
- Tuchman, G. (1978). *Making news: A study of the construction of reality*. The Free Press.
- Udomisor, I., & Kenneth, A. (2013). Impact of news commercialization on Nigeria Broadcasting Commission communication policy. *New Media and Mass Communication*, 13, 27–30.
- Wathen, C. N., & Burkell, J. (2002). Believe it or not: Factors influencing credibility on the web. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 53(2), 134–144.
- Watson, J. (Ed.). (1998). *Media communication: An introduction to theory and process*. Palgrave Macmillan.