



*International Journal of Humanities & Social Science Studies (IJHSSS)*  
*A Peer-Reviewed Bi-monthly Bi-lingual Research Journal*  
*ISSN: 2349-6959 (Online), ISSN: 2349-6711 (Print)*  
*Volume-III, Issue-II, September 2016, Page No. 319-334*  
*Published by Scholar Publications, Karimganj, Assam, India, 788711*  
*Website: <http://www.ijhsss.com>*

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## **The Nigerian Journalists' Knowledge and Perceptions of Brown Envelope Syndrome on Journalism Practice: A Study of Journalists' in Jalingo Metropolis**

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### **Abstract**

*This study examines Nigerian journalists' knowledge and perceptions of brown envelope on Journalism practice. A study of Journalists in Jalingo metropolis. Quantitative survey method was adopted for the study. The population comprised of 293 Journalists in Jalingo metropolis registered under NUJ. The study employed Taro Yame's formula to sample out 75 journalists. Questionnaires were used as the tool for data collection. The researcher administered questionnaires to 75 purposively selected Journalists, and 70 were dully filled and retrieved. The study was anchored on social responsibility theory. Data gathered were analysed with SPSS version 20 and presented in tables, pie charts and bar charts with reference to frequency counts and simple percentages. Findings revealed that sourcing and reporting of news stories are the common journalism practice that brown envelope is more manifest. The study also revealed that brown envelope affects the social responsibility as well as objectivity and balance in journalism practice/reporting. In reversing the menace of brown envelope, the study recommends that the media professional bodies should be serious in maintaining ethics in the media industry by sanctioning defaulting journalists to ensure that journalism practitioners adhere to laid down codes of practice, Sound education and professional training of journalists should be provided in order to dissuade journalists from collecting bribe.*

***Keywords: Journalists, Nigeria, Jalingo metropolis, NUJ, Brown envelope***

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**Background to the study:** The peril of brown envelope syndrome has become a serious ethical challenge that poses threat to the image of journalism practice in Nigeria; thus deterring objectivity and balance in reporting. Nwabueze (2010:498) sees brown envelope practice as "accepting gratifications for performing journalistic task. Aiyetan (2002:33) describes this practice as a cankerworm eating deep into the journalism profession. By implication, brown envelope practice affects fairness, truth and objectivity in reporting. Due to the economic hardship Nigerian Journalist face a big ethical dilemma, making it difficult for journalism practice to thrive on truth, fairness and justice. Edeani (1990) in Ogbole (2012) reports that, "the Nigeria press is operating in a depressed economy and is barely managing to keep its head above water" this situation according to Ogbole (2012), "has led

to poor remuneration of journalist and neglect of their welfare, a situation which exposes them to ethical dilemmas in the field. Journalists are often faced with the quest to protect their “stomach” at the expense of journalistic ethics.” The adage “he who pays the piper dictates the tune” becomes practical in this case, a journalist who collects money on a report will definitely influence his reportage to suit the intention of the person he has sold his integrity, fairness, justice, and objectivity to. Asemah (2011) elaborates that “the most common type of bribe in journalism is the so-called ‘brown envelope’ which is monetary bribe handed out to the journalist to pressurize him or her into doing what the giver wants. Once accepted, monetary bribe and other gifts “tie the hands” of the journalist who then becomes incapable of being objective in reporting events and issues involving people who gave the gift”. Ekeanyanwu and Obianigwe (2012, p. 517) add that “monetary gifts could pressurize the 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. Thus, the news stories produced are likened to commercial products that have been paid for by the customer which should serve the need to which the product is expected, in favor of the customer”. Williams (2014) postulates that:

*since the brown envelope syndrome found its way into Nigerian journalism, it has refused all attempts to be curbed. In fact, it is now fast assuming a conventional status, as most journalists now demand and take bribe monies and other forms of bribery as a prerequisite for performing their traditional duties of providing information, education and entertainment to the society without demanding undue favour, making it little wonder that it is referred to as “the controversial brown envelope[sic]*

This implies that, Journalist now see brown envelope practice as a normal tradition, coining such practices as “chope” which means “collect money before you publish or broadcast anything” According to Ekerikevwe (2009), brown envelope is common in journalism practice in Nigeria. It is a situation whereby journalists demand for bribe or other forms of gratification before they cover any events or even publish stories from such events. This act has and is still eating deep into the fairness, objectivity and balance of daily news reporting. The implication of brown envelope causes huge threat to journalism practice Bello & Adejola (2010) elaborates that this implications ranges from “loss of public trust and confidence, loss of professional integrity and sense of duty and inability to uphold the six cardinal elements or canons of journalism – *truth, fairness, objectivity, accuracy, independence and responsibility*”. “This implies that, when a journalist engages in brown envelope practice he tends to lose his value, trust, confidence, loss of professionalism. He/She ought to play the role of gathering, analyzing and disseminating news and information about people, events and issues in society which could be in form of news, commentaries, editorials, advertorials, news analysis, profiles, columns, cartoons, pictures or magazine feature via mass communication medium such as radio, television news papers, magazine, digital TV, face book, you tube, 2go and other numerous social media to a heterogeneous audience simultaneously or about the same time” (Ogunkwo,

1999) in Suntai and Vakkai (2014). Suntai and Vakkai (2014) elaborate that, this huge task “imposes on journalists across the globe the need to be objective to ensure the survival and blossoming of the profession as well as retain the integrity of the profession and its practitioners. This calls for strict observance of professional ethics or codes of conduct by professionals. The ethics are the moral guide for practitioners to be truthful, objective and balanced (unbiased) in their practice to be able to positively affect the profession and society in which they practice.

By implication, a journalist ought to reject any form of bribe in order for him/her to be just/truthful in reporting event as it occurs, not manipulating facts/figures to please the person who has paid him but be firm and just; reporting occurrences as it happens, burrowing and unearthing social vices in the society, making in-depth and interpretative reporting in order to sensitized and enlighten the public.

The aim of this paper is to assess the knowledge and perception of Taraba State journalists' in relation to the issue of brown envelope syndrome.

**Statement of the Problem:** The issue of brown envelope syndrome has become a serious ethical challenge posing threat to the image of journalism practice in Nigeria; thus deterring objectivity and balance in reportage. In journalism, the ethical problem of materialism is manifested in the form of bribery and acceptance of gifts. In the course of their duties, some journalist accepts money and other non-monetary gifts which compromises their integrity and that of their respective media organization.

As Okunna (2001:74) puts it, “the ethical journalist is the defender of democracy who must stand out in the fight to sustain democracy and who should be indestructible, incorruptible, beyond change and decay, and ethical sound. But with the perennial problem of the brown envelope threatening the credibility of the journalism profession, it becomes difficult to dispassionately objectively regard the Nigerian journalist as an unbiased ethical umpire the bastion of democracy.”

A lot of factors have been outlined by various scholars as the reasons behind brown envelope practices among journalist in Nigeria and beyond. This paper seeks to unearth the Taraba State journalists' perception on brown envelope syndrome.

**Objectives of the study:** The aim of this paper is to examine the knowledge and perceptions of Taraba State Journalists' on the issue of brown envelope syndrome. The study is guided by the following objectives.

- i. To examine the perception of journalists on brown envelope syndrome.
- ii. To examine the effects of brown envelope on Journalism practice
- iii. To ascertain the areas brown envelope syndrome are manifest in Journalism practice.
- iv. To examine what journalists perceive as reasons responsible for the acceptance of brown envelope.

## **Research Questions**

The study is guided by the following research questions.

- i. What is the perception of Taraba State journalists on brown envelope syndrome?
- ii. What are the effects of brown envelope on Journalism practice
- iii. What are the areas brown envelope syndrome manifest in Journalism practice?
- iv. What are the possible reasons responsible for journalist acceptance of brown envelope?

**Conceptual /Empirical review:** Nkwocha (2004:68) sees *Brown Envelope* as the “money given to reporters or editors to persuade them to write positive stories or kill a negative story...” He further projects that this unethical practice is widely carried out by reporters who see brown envelope as the right thing to do. Therefore, projecting it as a commendable practice rather than a condemnable act. Contributing to the issue of brown envelope syndrome, Asemah (2009) says, “journalists often collect money to perform their normal responsibilities of information dissemination. The journalist is seen as the watchdog of the society. If the journalist is seen as the watchdog of the society, why will he have to collect money to carry out his duty”. By implication, when a journalist collects money from the source before publishing his story, it may likely affect how he will report the story. Facts may be distorted or suppressed. This, therefore, means that journalists receive bribe in order to twist stories.

For Okunna (1995:57), *brown envelope* is probably the commonest type of bribe in journalism, she sees it as “a monetary bribe handed out to an unethical journalist to pressurize him or her into doing what the bribe giver wants, once accepted, monetary bribes and other gifts tie the hands of journalists who then become incapable of being objective in reporting events and issues involving people who give the gifts.” Contributing to this, Akabogu (2005:202) says that “Brown envelope refers to the form of gifts, drinks, food or money [given] in order to influence the judgment of a journalist.” By implication, this practice holds journalistic freedom to ransom thereby affecting his professional judgment and objectivity.

Highlighting the existence of the brown envelope syndrome in journalism, Skjerdal (2010, p. 370) states that the term *brown envelope* is applied to denote a corrupt practice which involves transfer of various types of rewards from sources to journalists who are regarded as custodians of the truth. This, according to him, indicates neglect of ethical requirement of the journalism career as well as undermines the primary role of journalism. He further states, “the exact origin of brown envelope is somewhat uncertain, but it may be very well stem from west Africa”.

Adeyemi and Okorie (2010) in Okoro, and Chinweobo-Onuoha (2013) agree that “the euphemism, *Brown Envelope*, originated from the practice among Ghanaians to discreetly enclose bribe money in envelope, not necessarily brown ones, rather than exposing it. While in the Nigerian perspective, Nwabueze (2010, p. 495) says “it has its root in the culture of presenting kolanuts to visitors, a hospitality practice common in many African societies.

However, with the advent of modernization, this originally well-meaning practice, with other values in society deteriorated”.

Omenugha and Oji (2010) in Okoro, & Chinweobo-Onuoha (2013) narrates that:

*The issue of ethical conduct of journalists came up in a workshop that was organized for working journalists in Anambra State of Nigeria by the State Ministry of information. The journalists made no pretence about their receiving forms of payment for themselves or for their media houses to publish stories. According to them, how could they do otherwise when they receive poor and irregular salaries; some media houses do not have salary system at all. According to them, a journalist's chances of survival depend on how much she/he gets from news sources. They said that the harsh economic situation has a telling effect on their job. The Nigerian society, they noted, is corrupt thereby increasing their difficulty in being ethical in an „unethical world“ such as Nigeria. In addition, publishers, they said, complain of high cost of production and as such use that as an excuse to deny them their due wages.*

From the above perspective, it is clear that journalists who often collect brown envelope defend their actions, saying their salaries are meager, and most times they are not being paid at the appropriate time. There are instances where some journalist stay months without salaries and their organization will want them to go out and cover stories. Situations like this could prompt them into longing for “chope” in order to sustain them. Whatever the case may be, collecting money, gifts, and other forms of brown envelope is not advisable and does not show any sense of ethics. As Akinfeleye (2007) puts it, “journalists have the sacred duty to guard and guide the society on the path of equity and fairness, and expose acts of injustice and their perpetrators”.

Therefore a journalist who engages in such act is canning his conscience, as well as selling his pen at a “plata of gold”, which leads him into twisted, mendacity and indistinct form of reporting. This syndrome has canned the inviolability of the canons of journalism. Okoye (2007, p.143) states, “by canons of journalism, we mean the fundamental principles on which journalism is built. They are the ethical lights which guide the journalistic enterprise.”

By implication, brown ‘envelope journalism’ has hindered the practice of truth, fairness, objectivity, balance, neutrality on which the journalistic practice is based. Just like a cankerworm, it has eating deep into the virtuous aspect of journalism, which agitates for fairness and balance in every story projected to the public. All aspect of journalism practice is now affected, from advertising, public relations, news reporting, interviewing etc. Contributing to this, Okoro, & Chinweobo-Onuoha (2013) adds “Brown envelope syndrome manifests itself in all areas of journalistic practices. For instance, getting journalists to cover events has long required an informal payment of some sort. In addition, getting them to publish stories appears to be no different, with envelope journalism. The reach of the brown envelope syndrome in journalism seems undeniable, even if it has now

taken on new forms". Ekeanyanwu and Obianigwe (2012) view it as a new form of news commercialization.

In some Nigerian cities like Lagos, Abuja, Kaduna, Port-Harcourt, Jos, Makurdi and Kano, it is expressed in catchy phrases such as *chope, kua, keske, egunje, partikola, kola, gbemu, golden handshake, communiqa, communiqué, family support, transport, Ghana Must Go, the boys are going, last question, last line* (Oshunkeye, 2011, p. 7). In Cameroon, it is known as *Gombo* or *Qua*. South Africa knows it as *Cheque Book* while across many developed countries in the Europe; it is called *Hospitality* (Skjerdal, 2010;) Nwabueze, (2010) elaborates that, others terms associated with this are: *Press Release, Appreciation, Welfare, Freebies*, etc.

Kasoma (2008) in Okoro, & Chinweobo-Onuoha (2013) studied the Zambian public relations (PR) practitioner's perspectives on "brown envelope" and freebies with the main objective of examining the phenomenon from the perspective of PR practitioners. In-depth interviews conducted with 15 PR practitioners in Zambia showed that while they perceived "brown envelope" as unethical, unprofessional and detested any association with them, they were surprisingly responsive to freebies. The reason for their responsiveness was threefold: (1) PR practitioners perceived freebies as an inevitable offshoot of the interdependent relationship they shared with journalists; (2) PR practitioners' perceived freebies as part of their news management function; and (3) PR practitioners' perceived freebies as instrumental in achieving their boundary spanning role.

Ogbole (2012) on the contrary, studied perception of Benue media practitioners on brown envelope syndrome and found that "majority of the respondents see brown envelope as a gift from news sources, rather than bribe and that acceptance of brown envelope do not make them less objective in news coverage. As far as these groups of journalists are concern brown envelope is not bribe and does not deter their objectivity, but rather is a gift a news source wishes to give out in appreciation of journalistic work. In the same study, He found out that even if Journalist salaries are improved they will still partake in brown envelope journalism as they see it as a normal routine.

Nwabueze (2010) studied the perception of Nigerian journalists about brown envelope and the need for ethical re-orientation. Findings of the study revealed that, the major reason behind the continued existence of brown envelope syndrome in journalism is the orientation of journalists. Most of the journalists see nothing wrong with the acceptance of brown envelopes. The study recommended that the welfare of professionals should be improved to incite a change in the perception and attitude towards the acceptance of brown envelopes.

Okoro and Ugwuanyi (2006) in Okoro, & Chinweobo-Onuoha (2013) conducted a study on brown envelope syndrome and mass media objectivity in Nigeria. Using the survey research method, they sought to find out if journalists in Nigeria accept brown envelope and if such action affects journalists' social responsibility and objectivity in reporting. Findings revealed that journalists in Nigeria accept brown envelope because of poor conditions of

service and lack of adherence to ethical standards. They also found out that such actions affect mass media objectivity negatively. The study recommended, among others, that the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) and other relevant agencies should ensure that journalists apply and comply strictly to the professional ethics and standards.

Ekeanyanwu and Obianigwe (2010) carried out a related study on the "Perception of Lagos-based journalists on brown envelope syndrome in the coverage of news events in Nigeria" findings reveal that issue of brown envelope has become institutionalized within the Nigerian media circles. Findings of this study also revealed reasons why brown envelope syndrome has eaten deep into journalistic practice such as poor remuneration, lack of welfare package for journalists in the industry to Government and media proprietors. Other reasons were "lack of interest in the industry" which hinders the tackling of the menace of brown envelope syndrome. The journalists in the study proposed that a healthy/competitive rewards system and welfare packages should be established as well, the existing Code of Journalistic Practice should be strengthened to tackle the menace. Williams (2014) elaborates on additional ways by which brown envelope syndrome could be curbed, such as, providing sound education and professional training of journalists, Okunna (1995:73-74) submits that "A high status could ultimately make a journalist a more ethical professional because the visibility arising from this attribute could engender in the journalist the conviction that he/she has a name to protect." Improving the pay package for journalists, and providing favorable working environment for journalist, Akabogu (2005:204), citing Okunna writes that "Media employers should be encouraged to create good working environment that will enable the journalists to function as ethical professionals. To create such working environment, employers should not force newspaper journalists to produce copy that serves their ideologies and prejudices, to 'hype' their copy by spicing it with rumours and innuendoes." Regular seminars, lectures and workshops for journalists should also be organized, Akabogu (2005:204), citing Okunna, notes that through "the organization of regular workshops, seminars and public lectures by the Nigerian Press Council, NPC, and other bodies such as Proprietors' Association of Nigeria, NPAN, the journalists would be sensitized into maintaining ethical conducts in the discharge of their duties."

Those venturing into journalism practice are strongly advised to be committed to the ethics of precision, neutrality, accuracy, justice, independence and accountability and observe them thoroughly at all times.

**Theoretical framework :** This study is anchored on the social responsibility theory of the press propounded by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm in 1956. The theory postulates that, the press is attached with freedom but must act responsible in carrying out fundamental functions of mass communication. McQuail (2005:172) encapsulates the basic tenets of the theory as follows: (i) the media have obligations to society, and media ownership is a public trust. (ii) News from the media should be free but self regulated. (iii) the media should adhere to certain stipulated codes/ethics in order to guide its practices (iv) and in

some circumstances, government could intervene to defend the public interest. Juxtaposing this study with the theory, a journalist is expected to shield himself away from gratification as this could disrupt his sense of social responsibility which calls for objectivity, fairness and adherence to codes of ethics guiding his practices. He ought to play the watchdog roles, rather than a pet dog who accepts whatever is given to him in order to entwine a story. Ogbole (2012) agrees that, "brown envelope could turn the press into lapdogs or pet dogs that dance to the whims and caprices of the 'fingers' that feed and pet them (news sources) instead of using their liberty in the interest of the society".

An ideal journalist must be socially accountable to the audience. As Asemah (2011) puts it, "when journalist enjoys press freedom, he should also remember that freedom goes hand in hand with responsibility. He should use his position as a journalist to inform, educate and socialize the audience and not using the media to cause problems. The ideal journalist, according to Okoye (2007), "must not use his power or that of his organization for selfish interest or unworthy interest. The journalist should not act irresponsibly in the course of carrying out his assignments. He should exercise caution to ensure that he does use the medium to further interest other than public good".

**Material and Methods:** The survey research method was used for this study. Hardy and Bryman (2004) note that the survey research design is used for observing the social and behavioral characteristics, attitudes values and beliefs of a large population using only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group".

The population comprised of 293 journalists registered under Nigerian union of Journalist (NUJ) Taraba state chapter who work with the three media houses in Taraba namely: NTA Jalingo, Taraba State Broadcasting Service Jalingo, and Taraba Television (TTV) respectively. (*Source: NUJ Taraba state chapter* ).

The researcher employed questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. The sample comprised of 75 purposively selected Journalists in Taraba State. The researcher used purposive sampling because he had certain characteristics observed such as on the job experience of the various selected journalists. That is, the respondents were selected base on years of experience. Data gathered were presented in pie charts, bar charts and tables. SPSS version 22 was used for the analysis with reference to frequency counts and simple percentages.

### **Presentation and Analysis:**

#### *Demography of Respondents*

75 questionnaires were distributed and 70 were duly filled and retrieved given a response rate of 93% and a mortality rate of 7%. This implies that, there is high response rate.

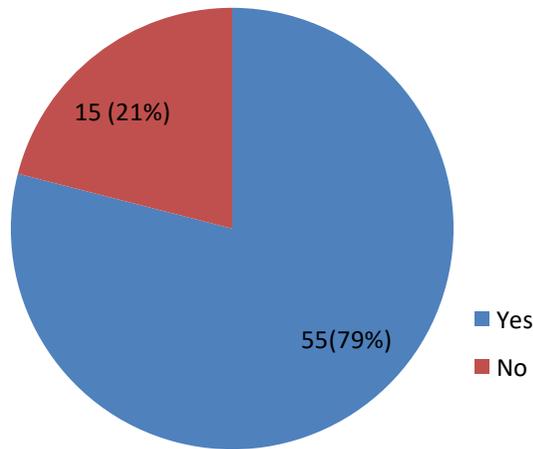
Data gathered and analysed revealed that 56 (80%) of the respondents hold a National Diploma, 7 (10%) hold either a degree or Higher National Diploma, and 7 (10%) hold a Masters degree. Majority of the respondents 55 (79%) work for the government media, 10 (14%) work for different private media, while 5 (7%) are freelancers. The data gathered

also revealed that 50 (71.4%) respondents out of the 70 respondents are male, while 20 respondents (28.6%) are female. This implies that, majority of the respondents are male.

**Answering research question one:**

**What is the perception of journalists on brown envelope syndrome?**

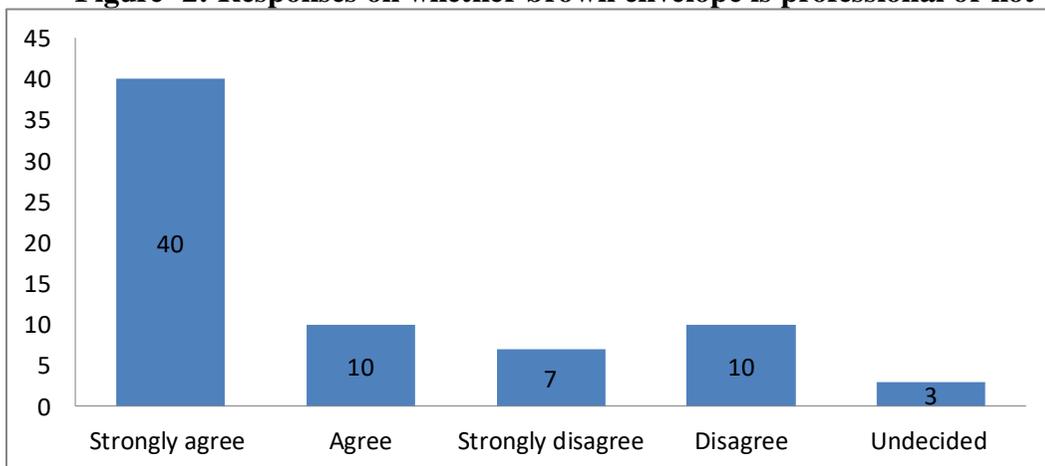
Figure-1: Respondents' awareness of the existence of brown enveloping in journalism practice



Field Survey, 2016.

Figure-1: above sought to find out respondents awareness on the existence of brown envelope in Journalism practice. In response to this, 55 (79%) are aware of the existence of brown envelope in Journalism practice whereas, 15 said they are not aware of its existence. By implication, most of the journalists in Jalingo metropolis are fully aware that brown envelope exists among journalists and journalism practice at large.

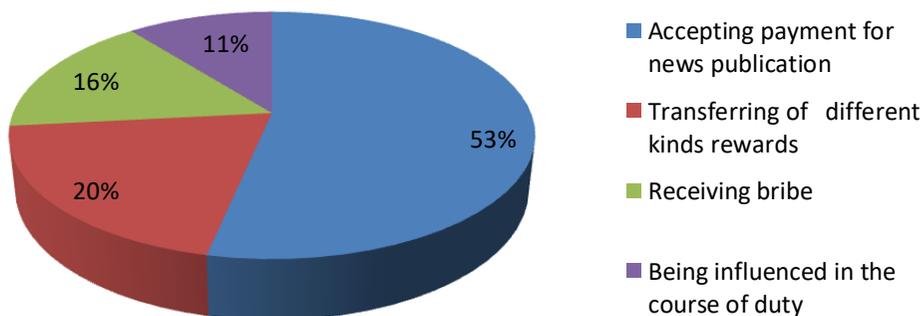
**Figure -2: Responses on whether brown envelope is professional or not**



Source: Field, Survey 2016

Figure-2: above sought to find out respondent’s perception as to whether brown envelope is unprofessional. 40 (51.4%) out of the 70 respondents strongly agreed that brown envelope is unprofessional, 10(14.3%) agreed to the same assertion, on the contrary 10 (14.3%) disagreed that brown envelope is unprofessional, and 7(10%) strongly disagreed that brown envelope is unprofessional. Whereas only 3 (4.3%) remained undecided. This response implies that most of the respondents believe that brown envelope is unprofessional and this tramples journalists professionalism.

**Figure 3: Perception of respondents on what brown envelope is all about**



Source: Field, Survey 2016

Figure-3: above revealed respondents’ perception of what brown envelope is all about. From the findings, 40(57.1%) see brown envelope as accepting payment for news publication, 15 (21.4%) agreed that brown envelope transferring of different kinds of rewards. Whereas, 12 (17.1%) respondents out of the 70 opine that brown envelope is

receiving bribe while only 8(11.4%) were with the opinion that brown envelope is being influenced in the course of duty. This findings proves that majority of the respondents believe that brown envelope is the acceptance of money for news publication.

**Answering research question two:**

**What are the effects of brown envelope on Journalism practice?**

**Table 1: Brown envelope affects objectivity and balance in reporting**

| <b>Responses</b>      | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| (a) Strongly agree    | 45               | 64.3%             |
| (b) Agree             | 8                | 11.4.%            |
| (c) Strongly disagree | 10               | 14.3%             |
| (d) Disagree          | 7                | 10%               |
| (e) Undecided         | -                | -                 |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>70</b>        | <b>100</b>        |

Source: Field, Survey 2016

The Table above revealed the effect of brown envelope on journalism practice. 45(64.3%) out of 70 of the respondents strongly agreed that brown envelope affects objectivity and balance in reporting, 8 (11.4%) agreed to the same assertion, 10(14.3%) on the other hand, strongly disagreed that brown envelope affects objectivity and balance in reporting , while 7 (10%) disagreed that brown envelope affects objectivity and balance in reporting . By implication, majority of the respondents are with the opinion that brown envelope affects objectivity and balance in reporting.

**Table-2: Brown envelope affects the social responsibility of the media.**

| <b>Responses</b>      | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| (a) Strongly agree    | 43               | 61.4%             |
| (b) Agree             | 10               | 14.3.%            |
| (c) Strongly disagree | 10               | 14.3%             |
| (d) Disagree          | 7                | 10%               |
| (e) Undecided         | -                | -                 |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>70</b>        | <b>100</b>        |

Source: Field, Survey 2016

The Table above sought to find out the effect of brown envelope on the social responsibility of the media. 43(61.4%) out of 70 of the respondents strongly agreed that brown envelope conflicts with the social responsibility of the media, 10 (14.3%) agreed to the same assertion, 10(14.3%) on the other hand, strongly disagreed that brown envelope conflicts with the social responsibility of the media, while 7 (10%) disagreed that brown envelope conflicts with the social responsibility of the media. By implication, majority of the respondents are with the opinion that brown envelope conflicts the social responsibility of the media. In the real sense, the media ought to be socially responsible by disseminating news free rather than selling them. As Udomosor and Kenneth, (2013) put it “the mass

media are tools for mass communication which have unique responsibilities to keep members of the society informed, educated and entertained, It is through the mass media that the society gets to know what is happening within and around the country and react to them.

**Answering Research Question 3:**

**What is the areas brown envelope syndrome manifests in Journalism practice?**

**Table-3: Common name for brown envelope among journalists in Jalingo**

| <b>Responses</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| (a) Chope        | 8                | 11.4%             |
| (b) Keske        | -                | -                 |
| (c) Goro         | -                | -                 |
| (d) Kua          | 15               | 21.4%             |
| (e) A & B        | 5                | 7.1%              |
| (f) A&C          | 3                | 4.2%              |
| (g) A & D        | 39               | 56%               |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>70</b>        | <b>100</b>        |

Source: Field Survey 2016

Table-3 seeks to find out the common name used by journalists in Jalingo metropolis when referring to brown envelope. The findings revealed that 39(56%) out of 70 of the respondents agreed to using ‘Chope and Kua’ when referring to brown envelope, 15(21.4%) agreed to using only Kua, 5 (7.1%) agreed to chope and Keske, 8 (11.4%) agreed to chope, whereas only 3 (4.2%) agreed to the use of chope and goro. The implication of these findings is that, the most common name used when referring to brown envelope among Journalists in Jalingo metropolis is “Chope and Kua.”

**Table-4: Areas of Journalism practice the brown envelope thrives**

| <b>Responses</b>                           | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|--|------------------|-------------------|
| (a) Public Relations                       | 5                | 7.1%              |
| (b) Sourcing and reporting of news stories | 40               | 57.1%             |
| (c) Press Conference                       | 10               | 14.3%             |
| (d) Interview                              | 11               | 15.7%             |
| (e) Documentary                            | 4                | 5.7%              |
| <b>Total</b>                               | <b>70</b>        | <b>100</b>        |

Source: Field Survey 2016

Table-4: above reveals that brown envelope is manifests in all aspects of journalism. However, majority of the respondents 40 (57.1%) believe that it is more manifest in sourcing and reporting of news stories. While 11 (15.7%) agreed that it is manifest in interview, 10(14.3%) agreed to press conference, 5 (7.1%) on the other hand, opine that it

more manifest in public relations while 4 (5.7%) agreed that it is more manifest in documentaries.

#### **Answering Research question 4:**

##### **What are the possible reasons for journalists' acceptance of brown envelope?**

Majority of the journalists (85%) did not accept that brown envelope was caused by poor remuneration or economic hardship. Instead, they insisted that journalism is not a poor man's job, and that well-trained journalists are getting enough to get by. Most of the journalists saw those engaging in brown envelope as those who were not well trained. These crops of journalists argue that people do not necessarily get involved in corruption as a result of poverty. They argue that some people accept bribes even while financially comfortable, noting that character weakness, lack of professionalism and adequate training as the major factors fanning the embers of this corrupt practice. The journalists in this group insisted that poverty should not be used as an excuse for being corrupt as the final choice lies with the journalists to defend the integrity of the profession and maintain individual integrity.

**Discussions of findings:** Several issues were revealed in the course of this study. This is evident from the responses to the research questions by the respondents which formed the basis on which the study is embedded on.

Based on the data gathered and analyzed in relation to the literature reviewed in this study, it could be concluded that brown envelope affects the professionalism in journalism practice.

Findings reveals that, 79% of the respondents are aware of the existence of brown envelope while 21% said they are not aware of the existence of brown envelope.

The study also revealed that majority of the respondents see brown envelope as accepting payment for news publication. This is in related to Nkwocha (2004:68) encapsulating the position of Waziri Adio which state that ... "It is an open secret today that Nigerian journalists openly demand bribes known variously as brown envelope, keske, qua, gbalamu, chope, better life, the-journalists-are-going etc. Reporters and editors seek sponsored trips. Editors and publishers unabashedly sell their pages, becoming megaphones of their sponsors, framing individual struggles in public-spirited terms"

Exploring the areas that brown envelope is more manifest in journalism practice, the study revealed that sourcing and reporting of news stories are the commonest areas in which brown envelope thrive, other areas are interview, public relations and press conference among others. This findings is related to Okoro, & Chinweobo-Onuoha (2013) findings that revealed that brown envelope syndrome manifests itself in all areas of journalistic practices.

Findings also shows that brown envelope conflicts the social responsibility of the media. That is, the media ought to be socially responsible by disseminating news free rather than selling them. This is in line with Ekeanyanwu and Obianigwe (2012) findings that shows

that “monetary gifts could pressurize the 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”.

The common name given to brown envelope by Journalists in Jalingo metropolis as revealed by this study is “Kua and chope.” This is related to Ekeanyanwu and Obianigwe (2012) findings which revealed the different names attached to brown envelope in some Nigerian cities like Lagos, Abuja, Kaduna, Port-Harcourt, Jos, Makurdi and Kano, such as *chope, kua, keske, egunje, partikola, kola, gbemu, golden handshake, communiqua, communiqué, family support, transport, Ghana Must Go, the boys are going, last question, last line.*

Lastly, the study unveiled the reasons behind brown envelope, base on this study, people do not necessarily get involved in corruption as a result of poverty but rather some people accept bribes even while financially comfortable, therefore, character weakness, lack of professionalism and adequate training are the major factors fanning the embers of this corrupt practice.

**Summary and Conclusion:** So far in this study, it has been seen that brown envelope poses huge threat to Journalism practice. It is a cankerworm eating deep into the fairness and objectivity of reporting. Brown envelope is an unethical and unprofessional practice that damages the reputation of both media and journalists in general.

The findings of this study shows that majority of the Journalists in Jalingo metropolis are aware of the existence of brown envelope but do not support the payment of news

Brown envelope is seen in this study as the acceptance of money for news publication.

In conclusion, professional bodies within the media industry should improve on the implementation of the various ethical codes in the industry and efforts should be geared towards an improved welfare package for members. Subsequent professional misconduct by members should be squarely dealt with and erring members adequately sanctioned. This is the way to go in curbing the ill effects of brown envelope syndrome in the Nigerian media industry.

**5.3 Recommendations:** In the light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are suggested as a way forward in dealing with negative consequences of brown envelope.

- (i) Media professional bodies should be serious in maintaining ethics in the media industry by sanctioning defaulting journalists to ensure that journalism practitioners adhere to laid down codes of practice.
- (ii) The Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) and other media professional bodies should ensure that there is real unionism in the profession by ensuring that journalists' rights are not trampled upon. These bodies should also put in place a mechanism for the negotiation of a better pay package for journalists.

- (iii). Sound education and professional training of journalists should be provided this will serve as a good antidote for solving the problem of brown envelope. The acquisition of sound education has a way of giving the journalist a self-worth, which makes him look beyond unlawful avenues of getting gratifications. Ethically-oriented training and socialization of the journalists will readily expose them to the inherent pitfalls that are associated with the acceptance of bribe and the need to resist the urge.
- (iv) Improved pay package for journalists: It is a common knowledge that a great percentage of journalists fall prey to monetary inducements because they are not well paid, even when their job is a daunting and risky one. This makes them susceptible to easy lobby by members of the society. Should media owners increase the pay package of the journalists, starting with the cub reporters, the incidence of brown envelope will be reduced.

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