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## **Evaluating the Effectiveness of Ethical Journalism Practice in Zambia: A Case Study of ZNBC TV and Radio**

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### **Abstract**

This study evaluated the effectiveness of ethical journalism practice at the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC), focusing on journalists' awareness of ethical principles, application of these principles in news production, and challenges faced in adhering to ethical standards. Guided by Social Responsibility Theory, the research employed an exploratory mixed-methods design involving surveys and semi-structured interviews with 44 ZNBC journalists and five key informants from media regulatory bodies. Findings revealed that ZNBC journalists possess moderate awareness of ethical journalism principles, with 83.72% identifying truth and accuracy as core principles, though understanding of independence, accountability, and digital ethics remained limited. While 97.67% reported always applying ethical principles, practical application was inconsistent, particularly in politically sensitive reporting. The study identified significant challenges including political pressure (reported by 97.67% of respondents as affecting editorial independence), resource constraints (inadequate equipment, transport, and digital tools), insufficient continuous training,

low remuneration creating vulnerability to inducements, and absence of clear digital ethics guidelines. The research concluded that ethical journalism practice at ZNBC is constrained more by structural and institutional factors than by individual awareness deficits. Political interference, inadequate funding, and organizational weaknesses systematically undermine journalists' ability to consistently apply ethical standards despite basic awareness. The study recommends strengthening ZNBC's editorial independence through legislative reform, implementing continuous ethics training programs, establishing internal ethics committees, improving resource allocation, developing comprehensive digital journalism guidelines, and creating secure funding mechanisms independent of government discretion. This research contributes original empirical evidence on post-2021 ethical journalism practice at ZNBC, addresses gaps in understanding the relationship between ethical awareness and application, and provides actionable recommendations for strengthening ethical journalism in Zambian public broadcasting.

**Keywords:** Ethical Journalism, ZNBC, Media Ethics, Political Interference, Editorial Independence, Social Responsibility Theory, Zambia

### **1. Introduction**

#### **1.1 Overview**

This chapter presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives, research questions, theoretical/conceptual framework, scope of the study, and operational definitions of concepts. The study is aimed at Evaluating the Effectiveness of Ethical Journalism Practice in Zambia: A Case Study of ZNBC TV and Radio.

#### **1.2 Background**

Ethical journalism is widely accepted as the foundation of credible media and democratic communication. Globally, journalism depends on principles such as truth, accuracy, independence, fairness, and respect for human dignity. These principles help the public understand social, political, and economic issues. International bodies like UNESCO and the International Federation of Journalists emphasize that without ethical journalism, public trust declines and citizens cannot meaningfully participate in democracy. As misinformation and online manipulation increase worldwide, ethical journalism plays an even more important role in protecting the public.

In Africa, ethical journalism is especially important because media houses often face challenges such as political interference, weak regulation, and commercial pressure. Research shows that many journalists operate in environments with limited editorial independence, particularly in state-owned media, where governments may expect coverage that supports official narratives. Regional bodies such as the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights have repeatedly called for stronger accountability systems, protection for journalists, and consistent ethical standards. However, many African newsrooms lack the resources, technology, and professional training needed to maintain high ethical standards.

In Zambia, ethical journalism is a major national issue because the media plays a key role in shaping public opinion and supporting democratic participation. The Zambian media landscape has changed significantly, with the rise of private broadcasters, community radio, and online news platforms. This expansion offers more opportunities for public engagement but has also increased challenges such as sensationalism, political influence, and uneven ethical standards. Organizations like MISA Zambia and the Zambia Media Council often highlight problems such as biased reporting, weak fact-checking, and limited diversity of viewpoints.

ZNBC is the most influential broadcaster in the country. As the national public broadcaster, its radio and television services reach millions of citizens and form an important part of Zambia's information system. Because of its wide reach, ZNBC carries a major responsibility to provide credible and balanced information. However, debates about its ethical performance are long-standing. Civil society groups, media watchdogs, and academic studies have raised concerns about political influence, limited representation of opposition views, and a tendency to prioritize government voices. These concerns increase during elections or political conflict.

As Zambia's media environment becomes more competitive, ZNBC must maintain its credibility to remain relevant. Ethical journalism is therefore both a professional requirement and a strategic need. Understanding how well ZNBC applies ethical principles in its news reporting, editorial decisions, and daily newsroom practices is important for broader discussions about media reform and public accountability in the country.

### 1.3 Statement of Problem

Despite the existence of a national Code of Ethics for journalists in Zambia, breaches of ethical standards remain common in the media sector. ZNBC, as the state broadcaster, has repeatedly faced criticism for biased reporting and political influence, which undermines editorial independence and reduces public trust (MECOZ, 2020; MISA Zambia, 2022<sup>[16]</sup>).

However, there is limited empirical research assessing how well ethical principles such as fairness, truthfulness, and accountability are actually practiced within ZNBC's operations. This study therefore seeks to evaluate the extent of adherence to ethical journalism standards at ZNBC and to identify factors influencing ethical conducts in need room.

#### 1.3.1 General Objective

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Ethical Journalism Practice in Zambia: A Case Study of ZNBC TV and Radio.

### 1.3.2 Specific Research Objectives

1. To examine the awareness of ethical journalism principles among ZNBC Journalists.
2. To evaluate the application of ethical journalism practices in ZNBC news production.
3. To assess the challenges faced by ZNBC Journalists in adhering to ethical journalism practices.

### 1.4 Research Questions

1. What is the level of awareness of ethical principles among ZNBC journalists?
2. How do ZNBC journalists apply ethical journalism principles in their news production process?
3. What are the challenges First, confirm that you have the correct template for your paper size?

### 1.5 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by Social Responsibility Theory, a concept introduced by Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm in 1956. The theory argues that although the media should be free, this freedom must be paired with responsibility. It challenges the older libertarian idea that the press should operate without limits, noting that completely unrestricted media can easily spread misinformation, promote bias, or misuse its influence. Instead, Social Responsibility Theory emphasizes that journalists have both a moral and professional duty to provide accurate, fair, and balanced information that supports public participation in democracy (Christians *et al.*, 2009<sup>[7]</sup>; McQuail, 2010).

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Awareness of Ethical Journalism Principles

Globally, awareness and understanding of ethical journalism principles form the foundation of professional journalism. Ethical awareness means more than just knowing that ethical rules exist; it includes understanding their meaning, how they are applied, and why they matter to professional identity. Ward (2015)<sup>[26]</sup> explains how journalism ethics developed from informal work traditions into formal codes and principles. He argues that modern ethical awareness must include key commitments such as truth-telling, independence, accountability, and minimizing harm.

Research by Plaisance (2014)<sup>[22]</sup> in North America shows that formal journalism education strongly improves ethical awareness among journalists. His long-term study of 847 journalists found that those with university training in journalism or communication had 68% higher knowledge of ethical codes than those without formal training. Journalism graduates also showed better ethical reasoning, including identifying ethical problems, explaining conflicting values, and considering the views of different stakeholders.

A large Reuters Institute study across 38 countries found big differences in ethical awareness worldwide. While 73% of journalists could identify basic principles like accuracy, fairness, and independence, only 42% could explain how these principles apply to digital journalism, including social media verification, user-generated content, and algorithmic curation. Singer (2014)<sup>[24]</sup> calls this the "ethical awareness paradox," where journalists know the principles in theory but struggle to apply them in fast-changing digital environments.

In Africa, Berger's (2010)<sup>[4]</sup> research in 15 countries provides important evidence on awareness levels. His

survey of 1,247 journalists found that 61% knew about national press councils or media regulators, but only 28% had actually read their ethical codes. This shows a gap between basic recognition and deeper understanding. While 84% recognized accuracy as an ethical principle, only 52% could explain it in practice, and only 37% knew the steps involved in ensuring accuracy.

Kasoma's (1996) <sup>[9]</sup> influential work on "Afriethics" challenged the idea that African journalism ethics should copy Western models. He argued that African journalists need ethical awareness based on African philosophies such as Ubuntu, which emphasize community, dignity, and interconnectedness. His ideas have shaped ethics education in Southern Africa, including in Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Zambia, where Afriethics is taught alongside Western ethical approaches.

In Zambia, Kasoma's (2000) <sup>[10]</sup> early research provided baseline information on ethical awareness among Zambian journalists. His survey of 156 journalists across print, radio, and TV showed that although 72% expressed support for ethical principles, their understanding was often shallow. When asked to define accuracy, 58% simply equated it with "not lying," showing limited awareness of verification, source evaluation, or systematic fact-checking.

Phiri's (2016) <sup>[21]</sup> study of ZNBC offers the most detailed evidence on ethical awareness at the state broadcaster. Surveys of 84 journalists and interviews with 17 editors and managers showed that when presented with the Media Council of Zambia's five core ethical principles accuracy, fairness, independence, accountability, and minimizing harm only 53% could identify all five without help. Awareness dropped further when asked to explain their practical meaning, especially for minimizing harm, where only 29% demonstrated understanding.

## 2.2 Application of Ethical Journalism Practices in News Production

Applying ethical principles in news production involves putting ethical knowledge and commitments into daily journalistic work. Awareness is important, but many factors affect whether journalists can consistently apply ethical standards. These factors include institutional support, available resources, time pressure, technology, political conditions, economic challenges, and workplace culture.

Kovach and Rosenstiel (2014) <sup>[12]</sup> identified nine core practices of ethical journalism, such as commitment to truth, loyalty to citizens, discipline of verification, and independence from subjects of coverage. Their research in American newsrooms showed that structural conditions especially editorial support, time limits, and commercial pressures strongly affect whether ethical principles are applied. Awareness alone was not enough.

In African media environments, Nyamnjoh (2005) <sup>[18]</sup> argues that post-independence governments kept colonial-style broadcasting structures that prioritized government messaging instead of public service. He describes many state broadcasters as "captured public service broadcasting," where institutions have public service mandates on paper but face informal political control. This makes consistent ethical practice very difficult because journalists receive pressure to support government positions.

Mare (2014) <sup>[14]</sup> studied state broadcasters in Southern Africa and found widespread underfunding. Insufficient budgets led to problems such as limited equipment, poor

verification capacity, low salaries that encourage corruption, inadequate training, and dependence on government funds. These conditions weaken ethical practice.

In Zambia, Banda (2006) <sup>[2]</sup> describes the media environment as one of "negotiated press freedom," where journalists must balance ethical standards with political pressure and economic survival. His research found that 82% of Zambian journalists were familiar with international ethical standards, such as fairness and independence. However, only 47% could consistently apply these principles, especially at state institutions like ZNBC.

Phiri's (2008) <sup>[20]</sup> study of ZNBC's governance structure found that although laws guarantee independence, actual independence is weakened by government-appointed board members, funding from the treasury, and ministerial oversight. His analysis of ZNBC's 2006 election coverage showed strong bias toward the ruling party, which received 67% of coverage, compared to 23% for opposition parties.

Chirwa's (2015) <sup>[6]</sup> study of verification practices at ZNBC also found major weaknesses due to resource and time constraints. Reviewing 200 news stories, he found that only 34% used multiple independent sources, compared to 67% at private broadcaster MUVI TV. Verification challenges included pressure for fast reporting, limited access to research tools, lack of investigative capacity, and limited training in digital verification skills.

## 2.3 Challenges Faced in Adhering to Ethical Journalism Practices

Globally, journalists face increasing pressure from media owners, political actors, and the demands of digital speed. Newsroom downsizing, commercialization, and algorithm-driven content reduce accuracy, fairness, and independence. Digital journalism increases the risk of misinformation and pushes journalists to publish quickly, weakening verification. These challenges reflect Social Responsibility Theory, which requires journalists to serve the public interest even in competitive and politicized environments.

Across Africa, journalists face political interference, weak institutions, economic insecurity, and limited professional support. Many public broadcasters operate under strong influence from ruling parties, limiting journalists' independence and harming ethical principles such as balance and fairness. Journalists also face intimidation, censorship, and legal threats that encourage self-censorship. Inadequate funding and inconsistent training further reduce their ability to report accurately.

In Zambia, ZNBC journalists face several linked challenges. Political influence remains the top barrier. Because of its legal structure and government-linked appointments, ZNBC has limited editorial independence, leading to coverage that favors government viewpoints. This pressure encourages self-censorship.

Resource shortages such as outdated equipment, limited digital tools, understaffing, and low wages also weaken accuracy and fairness. Manda and Mkandawire's (2017) <sup>[13]</sup> assessment found serious problems including outdated cameras, few vehicles, limited fuel, low salaries (30–40% below private broadcasters), poor access to information tools, and limited training funds. "Brown envelope journalism," where journalists accept payments from sources, is another major challenge. Kasoma (2000) <sup>[10]</sup> found that 68% of Zambian journalists had been offered such payments, and 43% admitted accepting them

sometimes. At ZNBC, low salaries make this problem worse.

Weak regulation also contributes to poor ethical practice. Bodies like the Zambia Media Council (ZAMEC) and Media Ethics Council of Zambia (MECOZ) promote ethical codes, but enforcement is weak. Restrictive laws, such as the Cybersecurity and Cybercrimes Act, create fear and lead journalists to avoid reporting that could be seen as risky. Limited professional development means many journalists lack updated training in digital ethics, conflict-of-interest rules, and investigative verification.

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Design

The study used an exploratory mixed-methods design to examine the effectiveness of ethical journalism in Zambia. This design was appropriate because there is limited systematic research on ethical compliance in the country. The mixed-methods approach combined quantitative measurement with qualitative investigation, giving a more complete understanding of ethical practice.

#### 3.2 Sampling Design

The study used stratified purposive sampling and simple random sampling. Stratified purposive sampling selected five key respondents two from MISA Zambia and three from the Zambia Union of Journalists (ZUJ) because they have expert knowledge about ethical codes and enforcement. Simple random sampling was used to select journalists, editors, producers, presenters, and media owners at ZNBC Television in Lusaka to ensure equal chances of selection and reduce bias.

#### 3.3 Sample Size Determination

The accessible population included media professionals 43 respondents from ZNBC and 10 from MISA. The population included both men and women with different levels of experience to capture a range of views.

The sample size followed principles of data saturation for exploratory studies rather than statistical power. The target was 50 respondents (about half of ZNBC TV's estimated 100 eligible staff, plus 5 experts). A total of 44 participated, giving an 88% response rate. This allowed enough data for thematic saturation and reliable frequency counts.

#### 3.4 Data Collection Methods

Data were collected through a mixed-methods approach. Printed self-administered questionnaires included closed questions for quantitative data and open-ended questions for qualitative insights about editorial practice and professional behavior. This method reduced interviewer bias and improved convenience. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the five key informants. Questionnaires were pre-tested for clarity and reliability.

#### 3.5 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS (Version 26). Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages summarized demographics and perceptions. Qualitative data from open-ended responses and interviews were analyzed through thematic analysis. Codes were grouped into themes aligned with the research objectives, and representative quotes were used to explain major findings.

### 3.6 Triangulation

Triangulation increased reliability by combining different sources (questionnaires, interviews, literature), different methods (quantitative and qualitative), and different perspectives (journalists and experts). This improved accuracy and reduced bias.

### 3.7 Ethical Considerations

The study followed ethical principles by ensuring confidentiality, obtaining informed consent, and using the data only for academic purposes. Participants were informed about the study and their right to withdraw. Permission was obtained from ZNBC management. No names were recorded, and responses were anonymized to protect participants.

## 4. Results and Findings

### 4.1 Background Characteristics of Respondents

Table 4.1: Age group

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 25	4	9.30
25 – 34	26	60.47
35 – 44	10	23.26
45 and above	3	6.97
Total	43	100

Source: Field data (2025)

The figure shows that the majority of respondents fall within the 25–34 age group, indicating that most participants are young professionals in their early career stages. This demographic profile suggests that the findings largely reflect the views of journalists with moderate professional experience, which may influence both their awareness and application of ethical journalism principles.

Table 4.1.2: Highest academic qualification

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Diploma	29	67.44
Bachelor's Degree	14	32.56
Postgraduate Degree	0	0
Total	43	100

Source: Field data (2025)

The results indicate that most respondents hold diploma qualifications (67.44%), while 32.56% possess bachelor's degrees. This suggests that although respondents have post-secondary education, relatively few have advanced academic training in journalism or media studies, which may affect the depth of their understanding of complex ethical principles such as accountability, independence, and digital ethics.

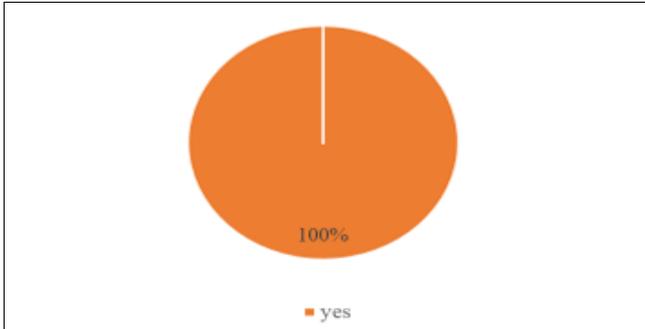
Table 4.1.3: Job description

Job Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Junior Staff	30	69.77
Middle Management	9	20.93
Producer	2	4.65
Camera Operator	1	2.33
Content Creator	1	2.33
On-Air Host	0	0
Total	43	100

Source: Field data (2025)

The figure shows that junior staff constitute the largest proportion of respondents (approximately 70%), followed by middle management (about 20%). Specialized roles such as on-air radio hosts, camera operators, content creators, and producers account for less than 10% each. This distribution indicates that the findings largely reflect the perceptions of frontline newsroom staff rather than senior editorial decision-makers.

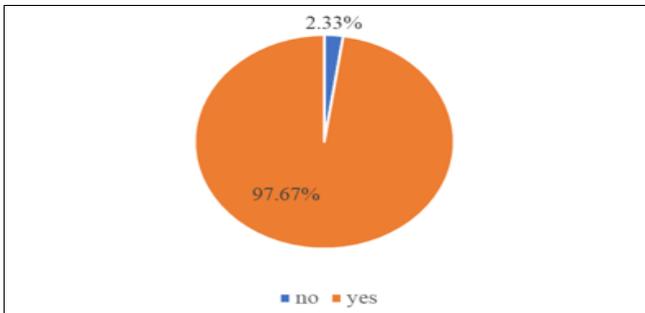
**4.2 Awareness of Ethical Journalism Principles**



Source: Field data (2025)

**Fig 4.2.1:** Experience

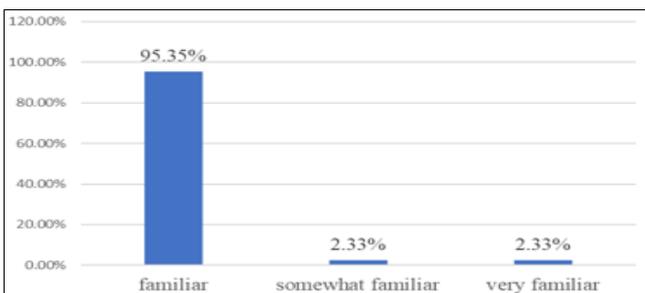
All respondents (100%) said they were aware of ethical journalism principles. However, when asked to identify specific principles, knowledge was uneven. Truth and accuracy were named by 83.72%, while all other principles independence, compassion, respect for privacy, fairness, impartiality, and accountability were each mentioned by only 2.33% of respondents.



Source: Field data (2025)

**Fig 4.2.2:** Training received

Regarding training, 97.67% said they had received training in ethical journalism, and only 2.33% said they had not. About 44% said their organization had a written code of ethics, while others either did not have one or were not aware of it.

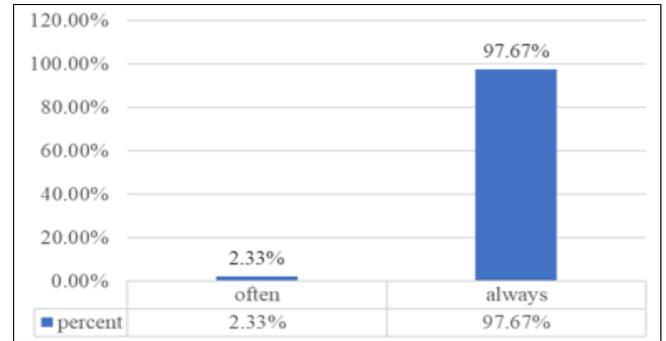


Source: Field data (2025)

**Fig 4.2.3:** Familiarity with code of ethics

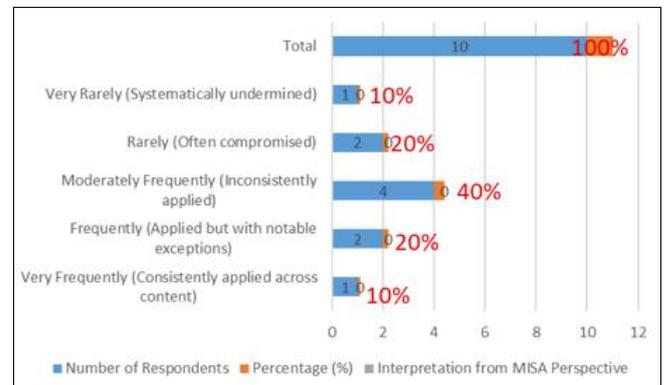
Although all respondents said they were familiar with ethical codes, the depth of understanding remains unclear. All (100%) also said ethical journalism is “very important,” showing strong positive attitudes toward ethics.

**4.3 Application of Ethical Journalism Practices**



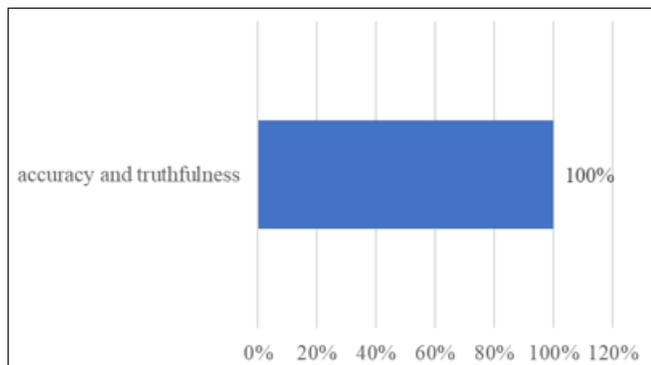
Source: Field data (2025)

**Fig 4.3.1:** Frequently application of ethical journalism principles (ZNBC Staff)



**Fig 4.3.2:** Frequently application of ethical journalism principles (MISA Staff)

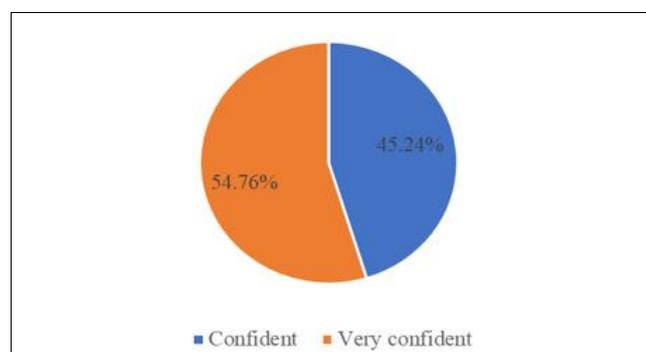
A comparison between ZNBC journalists’ self-assessment and MISA respondents’ external evaluation reveals a marked disparity in perceptions regarding ethical journalism practice at ZNBC. While an overwhelming 97% of ZNBC respondents reported that ethical journalism principles are frequently applied within the organisation, MISA respondents presented a more cautious and critical view. Only 30% of MISA respondents believed that ethical standards are applied frequently or very frequently, whereas 70% rated the application of ethical journalism as moderate to very rare. This contrast highlights a significant perception gap between internal newsroom actors and external media oversight bodies. The divergence may be attributed to institutional self-regulation, professional identity, and organisational loyalty on the part of ZNBC journalists, contrasted with MISA’s role as an independent watchdog that evaluates media performance based on observed output, public complaints, and broader governance concerns. The findings reinforce existing literature that suggests public broadcasters in Africa often demonstrate strong formal commitment to ethical standards while facing practical challenges in consistently implementing them, particularly under political and institutional pressure.



Source: Field data (2025)

Fig 4.3.3: Regularly applied ethical principals

All respondents (100%) said they regularly apply accuracy and truthfulness, again showing a narrow focus on only one ethical principle.



Source: Field data (2025)

Fig 4.3.4: Confidence in application of ethical journalism principles

Table 4.3.4: Pressure to Compromise Ethical Standards – ZNBC Respondents (internal perception)

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Never	42	97.67
Sometimes	1	2.33
Often	0	0
Total	43	100

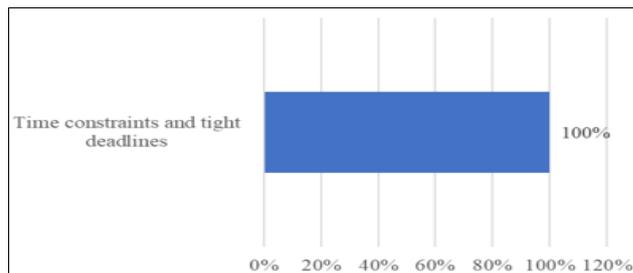
Table 4.3.5: Pressure to Compromise Ethical Standards – MISA Respondents

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Never	1	10
Sometimes	4	40
Often	3	30
Very Often	2	20
Total	10	100

**Pressure to Compromise Ethical Standards**

Although all respondents rated ethical journalism at ZNBC positively, this finding should be interpreted with caution. External evaluations by MISA and previous studies indicate inconsistencies in ethical practice, particularly in politically sensitive coverage. The uniformly positive internal rating may reflect social desirability bias, organisational loyalty, or limited recognition of indirect pressures affecting editorial independence.

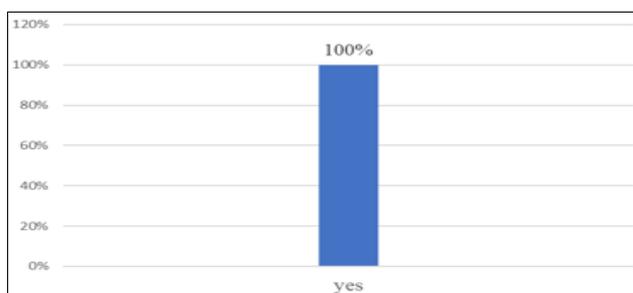
**4.4 Challenges Faced in Adhering to Ethical Journalism Practices**



Source: Field data (2025)

Fig 4.4.1: Common challenges faced

Even though respondents claimed high ethical application, they reported several challenges. All respondents (about 100%) identified time pressure and tight deadlines as major barriers, which is consistent with global research. When asked if their stories had ever been published differently from how they submitted them, 100% said “no.” Also, 97.67% said they had never been pressured to compromise ethics, while 2.33% said they had experienced such pressure “several times.”



Source: Field data (2025)

All respondents (100%) said they receive logistical support from ZNBC management during assignments.

**4.5 Discussion**

The findings show patterns that both support and differ from existing literature. In terms of awareness, ZNBC journalists showed strong recognition of accuracy, similar to findings by Phiri (2016) [21]. However, their weak understanding of independence, accountability, and harm minimization suggests only surface-level awareness, supporting McBride and Rosenstiel’s (2013) [15] argument that recognition is not the same as full understanding.

Although this study did not analyze generational differences, the concentration of respondents with 4–6 years of experience may influence patterns of ethical awareness. High training coverage (97.67%) indicates that initial ethics training is provided, but limited ongoing training remains a problem.

Self-reported ethical application (97.67% “always” apply ethics) does not match literature that shows bias and verification challenges at ZNBC. Reasons may include social desirability bias, genuine belief that they act ethically, changes after 2021, or a gap between intentions and the final news output influenced by the institution.

Both awareness and application show a strong focus on accuracy but little attention to independence and accountability. This suggests that journalists follow procedural ethics (verifying facts) but struggle with structural ethics (resisting external influence), similar to patterns across African state broadcasters.

The challenges data also shows contradictions. Most respondents reported no pressure to compromise ethics, although research shows political influence is common. This may be due to fear of reporting interference, misunderstanding what counts as pressure, or institutional changes. Time pressure was universally reported and aligns with global trends. Strong support for conflict-of-interest policies (69.77%) reflects continued concerns about financial inducements, similar to Kasoma's (2000) [10] findings.

Reporting of strong editorial support and no story alterations conflicts with literature showing editorial influence, suggesting either improvement, underreporting, or different interpretation of interference.

#### 4.6 Conclusion

This study examined the effectiveness of ethical journalism practice at ZNBC TV and Radio in terms of awareness, application, and challenges. The findings show that ZNBC journalists possess a basic understanding of ethical journalism principles, particularly accuracy and truthfulness. However, awareness of broader principles such as independence, accountability, and minimizing harm remains limited.

While ZNBC journalists report high levels of ethical compliance, external assessments by MISA reveal that the application of ethical journalism is inconsistent, especially in politically sensitive reporting. This discrepancy highlights a perception gap between internal self-evaluation and independent monitoring.

The study concludes that ethical journalism at ZNBC is only partially effective. Journalists demonstrate willingness and professional commitment to ethical practice, but their efforts are constrained by structural and institutional factors. Political influence, organisational expectations, limited resources, insufficient continuous training, and lack of clear digital ethics guidelines undermine consistent application of ethical standards.

Consistent with Social Responsibility Theory, the findings indicate that press freedom at ZNBC is not fully matched by the institutional conditions necessary to support responsible journalism. Strengthening ethical journalism therefore requires not only individual awareness but also systemic reforms that protect editorial independence and support professional accountability.

#### 5. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

##### 1. Strengthen Editorial Independence

ZNBC should establish and enforce policies that protect journalists from political and organisational interference, particularly in politically sensitive reporting. Independent editorial oversight committees should be introduced to ensure that ethical standards are upheld consistently across programmes.

##### 2. Continuous Professional Ethics Training

ZNBC should institutionalise regular and structured training

programmes on ethical journalism. These should go beyond basic principles to include independence, accountability, conflict of interest, and digital verification skills. Continuous training will help journalists adapt to emerging ethical challenges in digital media.

##### 3. Promote a Supportive Ethical Newsroom Culture

Management should foster a newsroom culture that prioritises ethical decision-making, rewards ethical behaviour, and encourages transparency. Journalists should feel safe to raise ethical concerns without fear of retaliation.

##### 4. Strengthen Collaboration with External Monitoring Bodies

ZNBC should enhance collaboration with independent media watchdogs such as MISA to enable regular evaluation and feedback on ethical journalism practices. This will help bridge the perception gap between internal staff and external observers and improve accountability.

##### 5. Improve Institutional Resources and Digital Tools

Investment should be made in modern reporting equipment, verification tools, and digital platforms to support accurate and ethical journalism. Adequate resources reduce reliance on shortcuts that may compromise ethical standards.

##### 6. Future Research

A longitudinal study is recommended to assess the long-term impact of institutional reforms and training programmes on ethical journalism practice at ZNBC. Future research should also include content analysis of news output to complement self-reported data.

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