

# The Environment and Journalists Challenges on Reporting Financial Corruption in Sudan

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***Abstract**---Media could have an effective role in curbing corruption, when there is access to information, having the freedom of expression and a professional and ethical code of investigative journalism hence, the present study aims to identify the challenges facing journalists in reporting financial corruption in Sudan. The present study adopted a qualitative research method using in-depth interviews to adequately probe the perceptions of the Sudanese journalists and editors to explore how the challenges facing journalists such as censorship restrictive laws, economic pressures, and press freedom affected the Sudanese newspapers' in framing the issues of corruption in Sudan. A purposeful sampling method was adopted in selecting 20 Sudanese journalists across both governmental and private newspapers operating in Sudan. In order to achieve clearer understandings of the journalists' perspectives, the study adequately supported with a theme generated by means of employing NVivo 8 software. The findings revealed that, theme working environment influence on corruption with its secondary theme, such as transportation and facilities, security threat, economic pressures and political pressures. Additionally, the findings also generated theme and its five sub-themes which were later analyzed in detail subsequently.*

***Keywords**---Financial Corruption, Journalists Challenges, newspapers framing*

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## I. Introduction

Corruption, a common phenomenon in both the developing and developed countries, is a threat to state efficiency (Delavallade, 2006; Fombad&Fombad, 2015). However, developing countries have the highest records of corruption and its effects are more in Africa, which is seen as the most corrupt continent in the world(Fombad & Fombad, 2015; Lawal, 2007). Africans are contented with all forms of corruptions ranging from misappropriation of fiscal recourses, nepotism and bribery (Abu & Karim, 2015; Saidu& Ahmad Zakuan, 2016). In Sudan, financial corruption is the most dominant type of corruption. According to US Department of State (2016), Sudan is ranked high in the list of the most corrupt nation in the world. Specifically, out of 183 countries, Sudan is ranked as the 177<sup>th</sup> most corrupt country and score 1.6 on a 10-point scale of highly corrupt nations in the world. In addition, out of a 100-point scale of the 2010 World Bank's worldwide governance indicators, Sudan score less than 10 points, which indicates a poor performance in governance and financial management? Similarly, Transformation Index (2016) report affirmed that Sudan has failed to confront corruption due to its lack of political will, weak administration and blurred distinction between the state and the ruling party.

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The available statistics on the level of corruption in Sudan is supported by the opinions of the Sudanese citizens. For instance, the Global Corruption Barometer conducted citizens' survey in 2011 and revealed that, 67% of Sudanese believed that there was increase in corruption in Sudan in the last three years. More so, Freedom House (2015) survey revealed that Sudanese ranked the country (Sudan) among the most corrupt countries in the world.

Considering the facts stated above, journalists, media personnel and mass media have critical roles to play in order to curb the negative effect of corruptions on the socio-economic development of Sudan. Hence, it is imperative to study the role of media and media personnel in curbing financial corruption in Sudan. Though, previous studies have highlighted suppression of press freedom as one of the major reasons why corruptions persist in Sudan, because it reduces citizens' right to information (Arya & Sharma, 2014; Bojanic & Madsen, 2014; Riak, 2013). This show that, framing of news reports that is related to the issues of financial corruption in the media can help in reducing issues of financial corruption through creation of awareness among Sudanese which can consequently triggers certain pressure on the government (Muzzatti & Featherstone, 2007). In addition, when the Sudanese media provide frequent media coverage and pay more attention on the issue of financial corruption and employ crime lexicon as understood by people in framing the rhetoric of corruption report, it will be difficult for the government to distract the Sudanese away from their financial shenanigans and economic mismanagements (Muzzatti & Featherstone, 2007).

Furthermore, there are established wisdoms on the news published by newspapers which are used to create social images and shape people's perceptions on corruption issues (Fadairo, Fadairo, & Aminu, 2014). Developed countries have highlighted the importance of media coverage on corruption related issues. An example was the extensive media coverage of corruption scandals in Italy and Germany which involved high-ranking politicians (Heidenheimer, 2000; Lashmar, 2001) and resulted in the reexamination of the legitimacy of the political parties and the political system. In addition, civil society activist group and the media are identified as the two most important weapons to fight corruption worldwide, however, the media is considered the strongest force in shaping public opinion on corruptions issues (Fadairo et al., 2014).

The watchdog for global corruption (Transparency International) reported that, one of the principal vehicles for informing the public about corrupt activity is a free and independent media (AFRICAW, 2012). However, there is arguably low and unnoticed role of media in curbing the negative effect of corruption in Sudan. A review of the historical reports of the emergence of media and press from the pre-colonial to the post-colonial era in Sudan revealed that, there is a limited level of freedom of press in Sudan. The performance of newspapers and journalists in Sudan are affected by the fact that, majority of newspapers is owned by strong politicians. The influences of media ownership are obvious in the partisan editorial policies of newspapers in Sudan (MICT, 2012).

In addition to ownership pattern, another concern that hinders the media performance and coverage of corruption issues in Sudan is the access to governmental information. In view of these issues, this study investigated the

coverage and framing of issues of corruption in newspapers in Sudan. Furthermore, this study is interested in exploring the challenges faced by editorial staffs in covering the issues of financial corruption in Sudan.

## **II. Literature Review**

### **Issues of Corruption and Media Reporting in Sudan**

Corruption is a threat to the development of a nation because of its ravaging effects. Corruption can be seen in numerous sectors or domains. The most popular type of corruption in governance is the financial corruption which is the focus of this study. According to Glaeser and Goldin (2007), corruption is the process by which a well-functioning system of the government fails to deliver services to its citizen, which affect them negatively. Dike (2005) defined corruption as the effort to secure power or wealth through illegal means at the expense of the public. Also, corruption is the abuse of public power for personal benefits of some people. Thus, financial corruption is the misappropriation of government resources to achieve personal gains (Svensson, 2005). This includes accepting bribes or kickbacks, embezzlement of government funds, selling of government assets, among others. This is a common practice in some Africa countries. Thus, Africa is regarded as the most corrupt continent in the world (Fombad & Fombad, 2015; Lawal, 2007). Despite the availability of mineral resources and oil in many African countries such as Nigeria, the democratic Republic of Congo, Chad, Angola and Sudan, the situations of the citizens in these countries are negatively complicated (Khan, 2007).

Specifically, Sudan is one of the most corrupt country in the world according to the report from the (USDepartmentofstate, 2016). Out of 183 countries, Sudan is ranked 177<sup>th</sup> and score 1.6 on a 10-point scale of highly corrupt countries. In addition, Global Corruption Barometer conducted a survey in 2011 and documented that, 67% of Sudanese believe that there is increase in corruption in the last three years before the survey. TransformationIndexBTI, (2016) report also affirm that, Sudan has failed to curb corruption due to its lack of political will, weak administration and the unclear difference between the ruling party and the state. For instance, a survey of nations that impart political and civil rights and freedoms, including freedom of the press, was conducted by Freedom House (2015). They survey classified Sudan as the “worst of worst” among the worst 12 countries of the whole world. Financial corruption is deeply rooted in the Sudanese governance to the extent that individual politicians have a high bribe rate (Mauro, 2004). Therefore, the objective of this study is to highlight the issues that are related to this phenomenon. However, it is important to know that the resultant widespread corruption leads to further rise in inequality and poor economic performance, and it subsequently leads to collapse of the government (Billion, 203; Mauro, 2004; Abu & Karim, 2015).

Hence, this explains why most studies focus on the challenges and issues relating to corruption in South Sudan. For instance, Smith (2011) highlighted several impact of political turmoil, unrest, and civil war on Sudan’s national prestige. The study discussed how corruptions and challenges of government affect the oil and mineral resources of the country. In addition, Smith (2011) calls Sudan state institutions as fragile, with ineffective financial control on revenues and expenditures and low administrative capacity, whereas the state and the ruling party keep their antagonistic relations. Equally, the threat to the internal security is imminent due to the corruption in the police and security forces, which abuse the civil and political rights of the citizens (USDepartmentofstate, 2016). Also, lack of transparency is obvious in the oil sector which has resulted in long term political instability between North and South

Sudan (USDepartmentofstate, 2016). As a result, there is negative effect of these corruptions on the life of the citizens which has attracted the interest of the researchers in order to examine the issue of corruption in media, specifically newspapers.

Meanwhile, newspapers contribute largely to the success of the democracy in the world nowadays. Newspapers communicate a large database of information, along with their content and analyses, which could be useful source for law makers to legislate laws and policies, and for voters to choose their governments wisely (Besley & Burgess, 2002; Dunaway, 2008; Lippmann, 1922). Furthermore, newspapers are famous in their role in helping people to resist corruption. Newspapers can educate people about corruption and develop awareness about its causes and suggest suitable solutions through countrywide anti-corruption campaigns. More so, they can assist agencies in the investigation of corruption incidents (Sowunmi, Raufu, Oketokun, Salako, & Usifoh, 2010). Therefore, newspapers can contribute greatly on the fight against corruption and promote good governance (Odugbemi & Norris, 2010).

Media coverage can easily turn people's hostile towards corrupted politicians, leading to such consequences in the form of an electoral defeat of a single politician or even crumbling the whole government (Nogara, 2009). More so, media coverage can force people to put pressure on the government in order to achieve reforms in law and regulations that are potential causes for the corrupted behaviors. According to Nogara (2009), the media could show stories that not only assess the critical issues but also uncover corruption and other deficiency and weaknesses in public institutions, like courts, police and anti-corruption agencies and develop public pressure for reformation.

The issues of corruption have not been extensively investigated in Sudan even though, the country has many local and national newspapers. The reason for this ineffectiveness is because the media mostly depends on information that are under the control of the ruling elite (Muzzatti & Featherstone, 2007). Journalists who are empowered to expose government misdeeds have been under intense pressure with closure of press houses and increased detention of reporters by the security forces (The Guardian, 30 June 2015).

Though, previous studies have shown the relationship between a country good governance and active media coverage of politics (Ahrend, 2002). Snyder Jr and Strömberg (2008) found a relationship between media coverage and voters' knowledge. Also, the fact about media ownership in 97 countries was examined by Djankov, McLiesh, Nenova, and Shleifer (2001). The study revealed that media in these countries are usually owned and controlled by the government or private elite families. Hence, there is less freedom for media in those countries and they are denied other privileges. Djankov et al. (2009) noted that newspapers have the adverse effects of government ownership and curtailment of freedom of expression more than televisions. This has led to the inference of the government ownership of the media and can reduce its effectiveness while increasing corruption. Another reason is that media contents are mostly modeled and shaped to satisfy economic needs. For instance, a news item related to corruption may be designed to inform less and sell more. Narratives that are stated differently about people's plight and violence are sold faster (Muzzatti & Featherstone, 2007). This indicates that, media coverage of critical issues like corruption is always impacted if the control of media is through the ownership or due to financial pressures obliging media clients' advertisements.

Therefore, Stapenhurst(2000) proposed that media should be free and fearless and to be more accountable. The study advises journalists to work hard in order to build their image in public which is possible only if they demonstrate their freedom, objectivity and professionalism. Also, the study advises the owners of the media to ensure timely payment of journalists' wages in order to motivate them to write more independently and fearlessly on corrupt practices in the society.

Recently, the attention of media studies has been shifted to coverage of events and media frames. Media frames are known to be strategically designed to achieve the desired result in the game; they help the media personnel regulate themselves to determine which particular players require more devotion and attention (Scharrer, 2002), how to report and narrate the winner or the loser by making the correct choices of rhetoric (Wolfsfeld & Sheafer, 2006), what realities to highlight and what to ignore (Muzzatti & Featherstone, 2007) in order to give more importance to some and underestimate others. Certainly, these framing components affect the readership and their understanding of reality (Scharrer, 2002). In its life span, any news event is often reframed frequently and occasionally to confirm its various attributes, and also to keep it in the spotlight (Chyi & McCombs, 2004). People may suspect bias in the media when the frames changes in a topsy-turvy manner, particularly when media investigation is seen favoring constantly one side. Such a bias takes place when media framing exhibits consistent patterns in their coverage suggesting some influence or the use of government authority (Entman, 2007). Such a biased media framing also consolidates the position of one side, giving it free rein to do anything it wants without any fear of punishment (Entman, 2007).

Also, another important aspect of media framing is felt when an individual or agency is trying to make an impact to curb or distort a political scandal. There will be doubt on whether the media frames biased, neutral or arbitrary; whether their description of events favor a specific side or they narrate their own version for either side to prove their neutrality. A disclosure on this will greatly help the future media studies determine what "drives" the news (Wolfsfeld & Sheafer, 2006). Bias or partisanship is also important as it have an impact on the published media reports on political events. Media report that is bias will present political issues only from one angle and ignore or dismiss the opposite views which is seen as a big hurdle for the media in fulfilling its responsibilities to offer unbiased and reliable information (Votmer, 2010).

The focus of previous studies are on the relationship between press freedom and corruption (Ahrend, 2002; Becker, Naab, English, & Vlad, 2013; Brunetti & Weder, 2003; Fardigh, 2007; McConnell & Becker, 2002; Sani, 2014; Sowunmi et al., 2010) or the role of media in curbing corruption (Sowunmi et al., 2010; Stapenhurst, 2000). Other studies has focused on the government's advertising and its relationship with media coverage of corruption scandals (Tella & Franceschelli, 2009), whereas (Motlhasedi & Phiri, 2015) focused on the impact of mass media on corruption in South Africa.

However, there is dearth in the literature on newspapers framing issues of corruption. Therefore, the focus of this study is on how the Sudanese newspapers frame the news on corruption issues. This study adopts theories of media framing to examine the coverage of corruption in the Sudanese Press. The focus of this study is on framing in newsroom and its internal factors, which include issues of editorial policies and news values. External factors such as access to government information, coverage of the issues of corruption in Sudan, legislation, ownership and

economic interests in relation to framing are also examined in this study. The study also addresses the issue of corruption in Sudan within the context of Sudanese press by investigating how the Sudanese press frames the coverage of issues of corruption in Sudan.

### **III. Study Method**

This study employs a qualitative research method through an in-depth interview to identify the environmental influence and the challenges of journalists on reporting financial corruption in Sudan. More so, the sample design is based on purposive sampling techniques. This technique is applicable for this study because it meets specific criteria of what the researcher wants in order to gain in-depth understanding (Keyton, 2015; Treadwell, 2014). Also, 20 Sudanese journalists and editors across both governmental and private newspapers operating in Sudan were the total population of this research.

After conducting the interviews, the collected data were codified and classified under a main theme and sub-themes using the NVivo 8 software. The interviews data analyzed by using a thematic data analysis technique. The interviewees were all asked about their perspectives about the environment influence and journalists challenges on reporting financial corruption in Sudan.

### **IV. Findings and Discussion**

The themes below were developed to show the environment and journalists challenges on reporting financial corruption in Sudan. Evidently, the interview thematic analysis proved that among several challenges on reporting financial corruption, the informants of this study highlighted three main challenges Sudanese's journalists, and four main environment challenges. Those challenges are presented in Figure 1 and 1 respectively.

#### **Challenges in Reporting Corruption**

It is important for the media to monitor the manners of the government officials because the citizens have failed to do that. Therefore, media performance is related to the issues of corruption. People could be under the bondage of civil servant or political office holders that have the tendency to be corrupt when there is poor media output (Oladokun, 2010). Even though, in Sudan, media have been an active member of the country's political triangulation, corruption has been on the increase. The main reason why the media is incapable of monitoring the corrupt government officials and bring them to book is the non-existence of precise or statutory constitutional empowerment on a level-playing field.

Also, among the significant challenges that journalist face everywhere is working in an uncertain economic environment and layoffs happen everywhere which force journalists to do more with less income (Blog.journalistics, 2009). Figure 1 below identifies theme two as challenges in reporting corruption with its secondary themes (Information Hoarding, Lack of Investigative Training and Imposing Taxes) which are generated from NVivo 10 software.

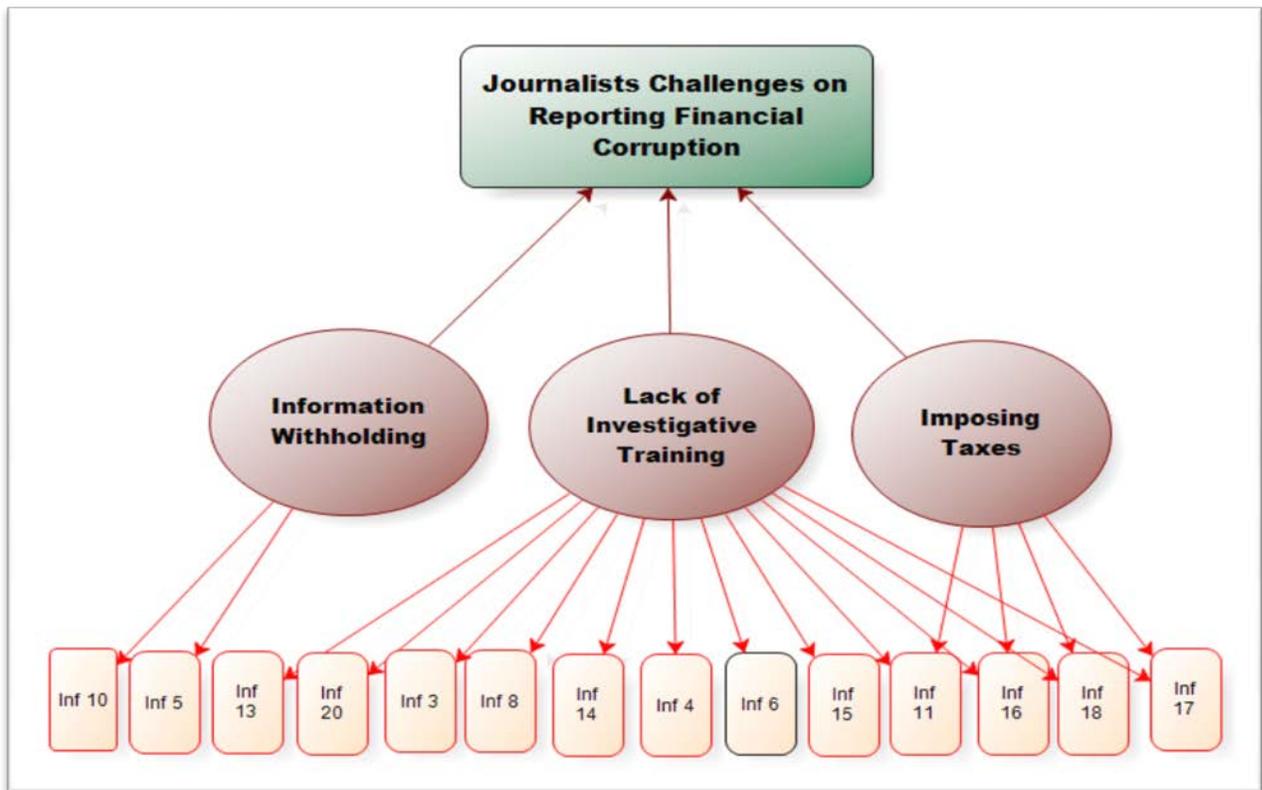


Figure 1: Sudanese's Journalists Challenges in Reporting Financial Corruption

### Information Withholding

An evolving issue in Africa is the concern over the adoption of freedom of access to government information, particularly on corruption which has gathered momentum since 2000 when the first freedom of information law (FOL) was passed in South Africa (Asogwa, 2017). Therefore, an important feature of meeting the requirements and the criteria of democratic governance is the right to access and accessing information. Meaning the actual application of freedom of expression and access to information, whether public access to the media or the access of journalists to the government information (Baglo, 2008). Figure 1 further explains this scenario as it shows the informants' perceptions on information withholding.

Below are the views and perceptions of informants on information hoarding on corruption issues. Regarding this perception, Informant 5 observed, "To a certain extent, because there is a blocking of information and this impedes the investigative journalism in Sudan with the existence of problems such as withholding information from different quarters, but not enough".

Similarly, informant 10 perspective supports the view and noted that:

"I do not think so, because of the absence of information, there is no doubt that the availability of information is the basis of the investigative news article, which leads to examining the problem and the final solutions. Because of the absence of information, the Sudanese newspapers review some topics generally rather than seriously." (Informant 10)

### **Lack of Investigative Training**

Investigative reporting is a tool that is used by media development implementers in their efforts to improve the media landscape in emerging democracies. Despite this, investigative reporters make up only a tiny percent of the staff of media organizations in the media industry (Sullivan, 2013). Hence, investigative reporting has traditionally been at the forefront of media despite its uncommon practice. This has caused significant changes and reform to the media and call for adequate training particularly to the Sudanese journalist who needed it for corruption coverage.

Several problems of investigative journalism has been described by African researchers as: poor working environment and corruption, restrictions on press freedom, authoritarianism laws, lack of journalistic training, financial problems, as well as violence against journalists (Mudhai, 2007; Yusha'u, 2009). Figure 1 revealed the findings and shows the perceptions of informants on the lack of investigative training.

Following are the perceptions of the informants on the issue of lack of investigative training on corruption. For instance, the problem faced by the investigative journalist is described by Informant 3 as:

“...I have been attacked by parties included in the investigation. I won the Thomson Foundation Award as the best investigation, but the journalist has a number of problems and can make some journalists reluctant to work as investigative journalists...”(Informant 3)

In addition, the view of Informant 5 support other informants and posits that: “There is a lack of information in Sudan in the presence of other problems such as training and weak press freedom from various government institutions. All these problems affect the investigative journalism in Sudan”. In contrast, the opinion of Informant 6 is that journalism is not facing any problem in terms of press freedom. He stated: “To a large extent, the existing space of freedom in newspapers is no exception but without an ambition. As journalists, we have a lot of freedom to move in, along with red lines not listed in the press law and in the press code of honor and each newspaper has its editorial policy.” (Informant 6)

Similarly, informant 17 further revealed that: “In general, I strongly believe that the press in our country publishes and discusses all issues, including issues related to financial corruption boldly, directly, objectively, without fear and no obstacles whatsoever stand in the way”. However, opposing to the opinion, the view of Informant 7 is that: “The Sudanese newspapers are still practicing their role as investigative journalism that is still unsatisfactory and needs to improve through training and providing more space of freedom of the press”.

Informant 13 and 15 oppose the above perceptions and expressed their views as: “The press is diligent, and it will have to gain the benefits of this effort” Informant 13. Similarly, Informant 15 stressed that “There is no lack of the investigative press, but the investigative press is few in the Sudanese press, and we need to do that more”.

Restating the perception, Informant 14 added that; “The press needs more investigations and larger areas of investigations, but corruption cases need more training because getting information is difficult”.

Likewise, the view of Informant 20 on the lack of investigative training on corruption is that: “There is an attempt by the Sudanese newspapers to play their role as an investigative journalism, especially in this social newspaper, despite that the Sudanese media lack training and legal obstacles”.

### **Imposing Taxes**

The media, whether print or electronic, springs its rights as well as obligations from those under the fundamental right to speech and countenance available to a citizen. Menon (2013) noted that, tax imposition is one of the areas where the fundamental rights have influenced. Considering this, there are several cases in court across African countries that challenge the imposition of import duty on newsprint. Meanwhile, there are challenges that relates to imposition of taxes on printing in Sudan. In order to solve this issue, an agreement was reached that 60% of outflow involved in printing was attributable towards securing newsprint after paying the pertinent duty. On the other hand, the court recognized the fact that the newspaper industry as the media, enjoyed no special protection from taxation.

Dabanga (2018) reintegrate the challenges and posits that, holding back of information to the press and economic restrictions that are imposed through tax and customs institutions are used to distress the financial situation of newspapers. These restrictions and difficulties obstruct the ability of journalists and press in Sudan, while also restricting the freedom of expression and opinion.

There are no strong constitutional securities in Sudan to make the media active in a dishonest society where corruption is allowed, as well as the imposition of taxes that are affecting the operations of the newspapers (Oladokun, 2010).

Government can hinder the effort of the media through several means such as money. Government can distribute advertisements, impose tax and order a restriction law to suspend the newspapers. In addition, there is a long tradition of government of distributing public advertisement to sympathetic newspapers while keeping them away from non-pro-government newspapers (Di Tella & Franceschelli, 2011). The Figure 1 shows the informants' perceptions on imposition of taxes.

Below are the perceptions of informants concerning the issue of imposing taxes. The view here is that of Informant 11 who explain how Sudanese newspapers suffer from taxes and other financial burdens which serves as powerful pressure on the newspapers thus:

“The imposition of heavy taxes on newspapers, zakat, and customs for press production inputs such as printing and paper inks, etc., are imported from abroad, thus increasing their financial burden. If you want to solve the problem of journalism, you have to take it out of the concept that "journalism is a business" and introduce it into the concept of cultural work...”(Informant 11)

A similar view was also expressed by informant 18 who stated that:

“The state also imposes taxes and other financial burdens on it and increases the costs of the production of newspapers and the owner (publisher) faces all these obligations and may not be able to fulfill them, which hastens his exit from the market.” (Informant 18)

### **Environment Influence on Corruption**

The basic for all effective journalism is the journalistic environment. Baglo (2008) defined journalists working environment as the professional, legal, political and social environment in the workplace and the society, where the journalist lives and operate. Figure 2highlights three-environment factors influence on corruption with its secondary theme, such as transportation and facilities, security threat, economic pressures and political pressures.

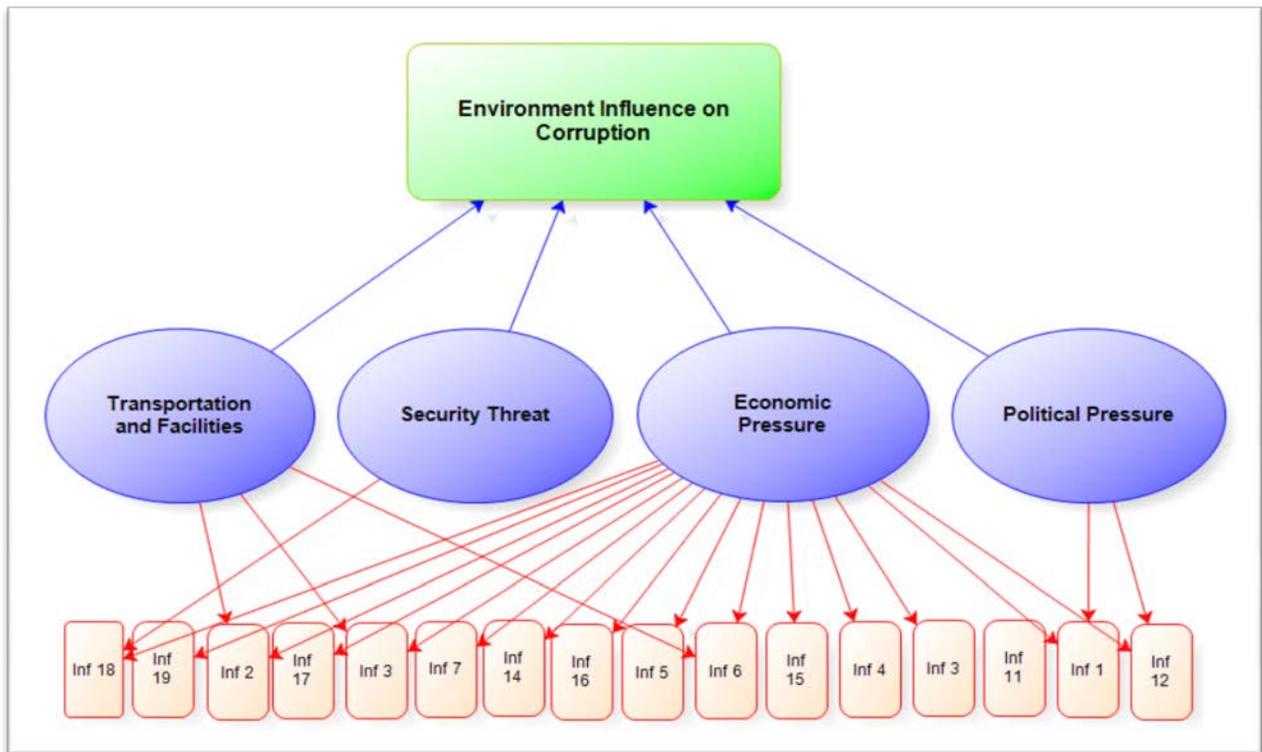


Figure2 :Environment Influence on Corruption

### The state of media practitioners' transportation and facilities

One of the major challenges of the community of journalists is the financial stability of the media, who run their businesses with little or no experience in business and finance. There are developing information markets in the developing countries, but not all of them are viable if they do not have stable financial resources. It is important to have a stable and permanent financial resources in order to ensure high-quality journalism and independence from the influence of senior politicians, corporations and the government (Spurk, 2016). There are several problems facing journalists in Sudan among which is the availability of means of transportation and other facilities such as cameras, mobiles, laptop and others. Figure 2 above highlights the perception of informants on transportation and facilities.

Following are the views expressed by the informant on issues related to the influence of the transportation and facilities and the working environment on corruption. For instance, Informant 2 observed that:

“The journalists’ work environment is very impressive. For example, sudden power outages may lose important information from the computer and others, and this generally affects the working environment. There may be other obstacles, such as the lack of a photographer or a means of transportation or other things related to the work. There may be people within the newspaper who are biased to the extent that they may block information or resort to cut it.” (Informant 2)

Also, Informant 3 supported the view of Informant 2 and posited that “Many journalists do not possess some materials, such as laptops, modern recording devices; the law of the press, improving the economic situation, and improving the working environment can contribute to the development of the press”.(Informant 3)

In addition, informant 6 described the difficulties of journalists in Sudan and narrated thus:

The work environment does not only affect the coverage of cases of financial corruption but also affect all the work of the press, which needs an ideal environment as the journalist makes a rational effort, physical effort, and mental brainstorming that are too large to provide material conforming to the professional standards...”(Informant 6)

### **Security Threat**

In many African countries (such as, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Zimbabwe, the Republic of Congo, Gambia, Swaziland, Niger, Chad and Zimbabwe), several journalists are threatened, tortured, imprisoned, exiled and killed for exercising their right of freedom of expression and freedom of the press (Baglo, 2008). In Sudan, freedom of expression has been subjected to many restrictions in the last two decades, which has limited the efficiency of the newspapers. In 2016, the Sudanese authorities closed the most newspapers in the world. Their measure has directly affected twelve newspapers and has been subjected to more than 21 seizures. The authorities have confiscated full editions of newspapers and closed many news publishers. Many journalists are exposed to precarious conditions, such as intimidation, harassment and arbitrary imprisonment.

Although, freedom of the press is guaranteed in the constitution of Sudan, however, the National Security and Intelligence Services and the Sudanese authority can restrict the work of the newspapers. The National Security Act of 2010 provides the protection of the national security apparatus from prosecution and the authority to detain and interrogate suspects, imprisonment, and torture (AmnestySudan, 2016; FreedomHouse, 2016). Figure 2 shows the perceptions of informants on security threat as emerged from the interview.

The following view is expressed by Informant 18 expressed on security threat of journalists’ work environment and its effect especially when reporting the issues of corruption in Sudan:

“The journalist’s environment certainly affects the coverage of corruption cases and now controls the press through many restrictive laws, including the National Security Act, the Press Law, the Criminal Code and the Informatics Act. All these laws directly affect the reduction of journalists' desire to spread corruption. When a journalist writes about a corruption case, he/she will be accompanied by fear or phobias, which are the consequences of applying these laws.”(Informant 18)

### **Economic Pressure**

The government has exerted pressures on journalists and other media owners. The owners of newspapers pay low wages that do not match the amount of work done by the journalists. This pressure necessitates the reason why in some cases journalists write stories that are not true and are presented to the editors. Thus, one can conclude that the hardship on journalists is a factor that forces many of them to eventually negotiate or respond to any extortion that would facilitate the maintenance and the conduct of their lives. These pressures have negative impact on the professional code of conducts of journalists and make them to breach the accuracy of their publication (Gehlbach &

Sonin, 2014; Leman, 2014; Okwuchukwu, 2014). Meanwhile, Figure 2 shows the informants' perceptions on economic pressure that newspaper experience

The following are the perception of informants on the economic pressure when covering corruption cases in Sudan. Some of the informants posit that there is no impact of economic pressure on covering the issues of financial corruptions, including newspapers that are in financial straits. They are of the opinion that, journalists usually understand and can overcome these pressures. Professionally, journalists can not be influenced and does not think that any pressure may affect them personally. Journalist conveys the right information and publishes it according to the rules and regulations that he has been trained and worked on for many years. According to Informant 1,2, and 16, economy pressure has no effect on transferring information, whether corruption cases or sports, technical or political issues. Informant 1 stated that "I do not think the economic pressures have an impact on covering the issues of financial corruption". Similarly, Informants 16 stressed that:

"Economic pressures do not affect; the economic situation is completely separate from the press and does not interfere with the owner or the owner of the institution in their editorial work at all, regardless of the loss that may happen." (Informants 16)

In contrast to the earlier perspectives, informant 3, 4, 11, and 15 express their views in a different way about journalists who live under difficult living conditions or poor environment that makes them to be vulnerable to extortion and possibly leads to direct media message not towards the main goal that is revealing corruption cases. For instance, Informant 3 corroborated this view thus:

"... Economic pressure affects reporting the issues of corruption. If a person is a weak member of the profession, the person involved in the corruption may bargain with him by paying money in order to give up exploring the corruption case. If the work environment or the owner do not support the journalist morally or do not care about the journalist who is facing problems when covering issues of corruption materially, he may abstain or be influenced by the publication of corruption ...."(Informant 3)

Also, Informant 4 shared the same view with Informant 3 and stated thus:

"... The economic pressures on the newspapers are carried out through the advertisement of any newspaper rogue for the government to block the advertisement immediately. The advertisement is the first financial support; therefore, the advertisement is a serious pressure tool practiced on the newspapers."(Informant 4)

Informant 11 explained that to a certain extent, for example, if you ask a person or a party who are accused of corruption information or tried to obtain it in one way or another and if you know the context of that party or that person and you are going to obtain evidence of corruption, in this case, money can be used as temptation, and this usually occurs when the cost of life of the journalist is too expensive.

Validating Informant 11, Informant 15 stated that:

"If there is pressure exerted on me as a journalist, I will not be able to deal with the issue of corruption with credibility. We can say that this is done according to the personality of the journalist. If this journalist is of the weak type, he will respond to extortion, but if he is someone who is professionally and morally high, is influenced by the

newspaper. It is due to the policy of the newspaper and the owner because the exposure to economic pressure is reflected on the journalist and the newspaper in the same amount.”(Informant 15)

Informant 5 expressed the following viewpoint on the fact that newspapers are subject to considerable economic pressure by the government, such as suspension for periods of unknown end, which exposes these institutions to huge financial losses. Furthermore, similar views are expressed by the following informants on the issue of economic pressure but from a different angle. They emphasized that the press organizations that are based on a strong and permanent financial base can face economic pressures which might be either from the government, businessmen, companies, influential peoples, or advertisers. Such is the view of Informant 6 who said that:

“Certainly, the press in Sudan is owned by private companies. Therefore, the law of companies or the private sector and the press is a complex industry and it is expensive. Therefore, if the institution does not have significant financial capabilities, it will have a weak product ... And if you do not have the financial capabilities and therefore can dispense with their advertisements and services and even their relationship, corruption cases do not affect ... Newspapers may be responsible for economic pressure in some institutions when dealing with corruption issues.”(Informant 6)

Informant 14 also elaborated more on the economic pressures on corruption coverage using the following point:

“The impact of press coverage on financial corruption and the economic environment in particular is influencing, because the economy can affect the disclosure of corruption issues. The press establishment, which lacks sufficient financial resources to operate efficiently, may not be able to cover press releases of financial corruption cases. Corruption issues can start at a small scale and evolve; hence it needs to be pursued and prosecuted for long periods of time. However, sometimes you cannot continue due to some obstacles because such issues need multi-party information. The Sudanese government has played a major role in uncovering the corruption issue.” (Informant 14)

In the same way, informant 18 expressed his view and posits that:

The impact of the economic factor is great because now, the economics of newspapers or newspaper industry in Sudan is one of the hardest industries in the economy of Sudan. Now the cost of running the newspaper is equivalent to 300% of its income; the ratio may vary depending on the economic situation of each newspaper, the economic status of each publisher, and the economic situation of each journalist. (Informant 18)

Validating the point of informant 18, Informant 19 noted that the economic factor is the biggest obstacle, especially with the increase in the inputs of the press industry and the scarcity of foreign currency that are being strained by these inputs. The press coverage is surrounded by many challenges, such as the fear of the owners that the newspapers may be subjected to confiscation, loss of market and the weak government advertisement. Hence, the economic pressures exerted by the press in Sudan and the high cost of the press industry are influential factors in the performance of the Sudanese press. The economic pressures on the press due to the financial distress, the rise of the press industry and the fear of blocking the announcement are important factors.

#### **4.2.1 Political Pressure**

One of the most obvious obstacles to the development of investigative journalism in the Arab world, including Sudan, is that Arab states are generally authoritarian regimes that exercise state control over the press (Bebawi, 2016). Figure 2 highlights the perception of informants on political pressure as expressed by the interviewees.

Hence, informant 1 noted that:

The work environment affects the situation if the owner of the institution has influence or he may be under pressure by someone. It has impact on the newspaper and there may be pressure exercised by the government agencies and interventions to stop publication in cases related to financial corruption. (Informant 1)

Recapping the view of informant 1, Informant 12 noted thus:

Of course, when you have a good working environment, the performance of the press is also better if there is coordination between the owner of the newspaper and the government spokespersons whenever the results in performance will be better. (Informant 12).

### **V. Conclusion**

Corruption is a serious problem and social conscience which has important impact on all societies. Generally, corruption can be defined as the use of public power to benefit a private interest. Meanwhile, corruption is a complex incident that leads to severe problem on the economy and environmental sustainability. It has been identified that the existing descriptions of the political economy concerning environment/society interactions and extensive evidence of bribery and illegal exchange in natural resources management, nowadays, fighting corruption goes on widely ineffective, with serious consequences for environmental quality (Leitão, 2016).

Irrefutably, the current study provides an understanding of the complex nature of identify the environmental influence and the challenges of journalists on reporting financial corruption in Sudan. Also, this study identifies information withholding, lack of investigative training and imposing tax as the theme in journalist challenges in reporting financial corruption in Sudan. More so, this study affirms that security threat, political pressure, economic pressure and transportation and facilities are the theme on environmental influence on corruption. These challenges are concluded to have an influence on corruption in Sudan. These challenges and environmental influences are found to have an important implication on economy development in Sudan.

#### **Recommendation for Further Research**

Further researches are needed to understand the role of the newspapers in influencing the Sudanese public opinion, especially the impact of the press on critical issues, such as the effect of the financial corruption on the public opinion in the Sudanese society.

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