

# The Mechanisms of Self-Regulation in the Algerian Media a Field Study on a Sample of the Algerian Media

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## Abstract

Our study aims to reveal the mechanisms of self-regulation applied in the Algerian media and the group of sections in other public media. Relying on a set of professional and ethical standards in regulating their behavior, whether through the external determinant or the censor or self-organization away from any interference that may occur. All this is going to be applied through a field study for workers in the field of private and public media, with the aim of knowing the effects of the existence of self-regulation mechanisms.

**Keywords:** Regulation; Self-regulation; Media; Ethical standards.

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## introduction:

Laws and legislation play a significant and important role in the process of organizing the media institution, whether it is related to the professional performance or defining duties, rights and standards for the professional practice. With the proposal, the mechanisms and tools of self-regulation that have become of maximum and added value in organizing the media institution, journalists and media workers as a whole, especially with the transition and digital transformation that was reflected on media institutions and their transformation into another range of publishing, writing and broadcasting as well.

The media arena remained empty of the regulatory controls and determinants established by media workers themselves away from any interference by the external censor. That was resulted in many negative practices in the journalistic performance, whose features surfaced on the surface of journalistic practice. Such as: news theft, violation of the sanctity of the private life, and the disrespect of the intellectual property right especially in the new media, and the lack of accuracy in publishing, investigating and investigating news, not to mention the various cases that are rife with the various courts.

The absence of a media body as a professional ethics council approved by Organic Law 12-05 in Chapter 2 has contributed to deepening the negative practices that are repeated daily in the

various Algerian media, and it could have been a court of conscience concerned with organizing and creating journalistic work. In addition, this was reflected in the failure the establishment of the new council and the failure of the dissolved Supreme Council for Journalistic Ethics, which was established in 2000-2004. This council did not last long because of the eco-professional health symptoms that led to the death of this new experience, which was developed for the first time for a charter of honor for Algerian journalists that establishes rights and shows the professional duties as well. As a result of this professional vacuum.

Thus, the journalist is working and regulated in accordance with the Media Law and the amended Penal Code of 2016, especially in Articles 303bis and 303bis1, whether through fines or imprisonment, despite the fact that the Media Law abolished freedom-depriving penalties, and established this matter within the scope of the amended constitution.

This study was based on the entrance of social responsibility in understanding the mechanisms of regulation and self-control applied in the Algerian media institutions, As a social guiding mechanism first, and as an indicator of professional behavior secondly, And the extent of its reflection on society and its impact on it.

## **2. Research Questions:**

### **2.1 Main Question**

In light of what has been presented above, the following main question have been asked:

What is the reality of the journalists' commitment in the Algerian media institutions to the ethical standards and principles included in the self-regulation mechanisms, if any, and how does their absence affect the journalistic practice?

### **2.2. Sub-Questions**

To study the topic, the study questions were limited as follows:

1. What are the criteria and mechanisms of self-regulation applied and found in the Algerian media?
2. What are the skills and ethical principles that self-regulation mechanisms have added to the performance of journalists in the Algerian media?
3. What are the reasons and motives behind the absence of self-regulation mechanisms in the Algerian media?
4. What are the procedures that make journalists more committed to the professional ethics?

## **3. Objectives and Significance of the Study:**

### **3.1 Objectives of the Study**

1. To show the mechanisms of self-regulation applied and existing in international and foreign media institutions.

2.To highlight the most important self-regulation mechanisms applied in the Algerian media.

3.To know the extent to which the Algerian media workers are familiar with the mechanisms of self-regulation and its organizational principles and limitations.

4.To measure the journalists' commitment to the tools of self-regulation in their media institutions.

### 3.2 Significance of the Study:

The significance of the study lies on knowing the importance of the existence of self-regulation mechanisms and tools in the Algerian media institutions and their impact on the professional practice, away from the controls of legal legislation, which is characterized by another spirit and character in the process of its laws. While the mechanisms of self-regulation are of a paramount importance in maintaining the professional conscience of employees of the Algerian media institutions and organizing and structuring the various media internally.

## 4.Regulation

Definitions have been varied to the concept of regulation, as some consider it a means of achievement and not a goal itself, and the mechanism through which the desired goals are reached in a good and effective manner, and it is necessary to define criteria to measure its quality or effectiveness.

### 4.1. Linguistic Definition

\*From the verb organize, the organization of work means arranging and managing it in a certain way.

\*Self: from the self, and it may be generalized to the group, so organizing the self or group is intended to control it. (McLuhan, 1994, p 65)

### 4.2.Terminological Definition

There were many definitions of self-regulation came to term with accordance to the concept of management. According to Muhammad Qasimal-Qaryouti, the term is closer to management. Several definitions came to term, including:

1.Stephen Robbins defines it as "a consciously coordinated social entity with clearly defined boundaries, working on a permanent basis to achieve a particular goal or set of goals."

2.Lineal Ebboek defines regulation as "the work to identify the faces of activity in order to achieve the goals and arrange them in the form of groups to assign them to several people". (Laban, 2005, p.102)

### 4.3.Terminologically

It is meant to be one of a number of collaborative activities that are consciously and intentionally carried out by one or more people, and this requires a connection between those activities.

Self-regulation in the press means organizing the mechanisms of communication and work within the media institution, in accordance with the knowledge and understanding that determines the obligations and rights." (Layadi, 1999, p.62)

#### 4.4.Procedurally

It is a set of principles and guidelines that the journalists and media institutions set themselves and by consensus of them or part, in order to guide and guide them in the professional journalistic performance (Abu Mazeed, 2013, p.82). Added to this, to carry the forms of pressboards a charter of honor, "or memorandums of interest, and other organizational determinants within the media institution". (Laban, 2004, p.102)

### 5. Previous Studies

The researcher's knowledge of the theoretical heritage of the study or previous studies similar to the subject of the study, is a necessary step that enables the researcher to form a general idea that helps him to surround the various aspects of the subject. The value of the study is reflected in its modernity as a result of the new role of the decree, where we did not find any study similar to our study, but there are features of other studies that implicitly converge with them in research variables, including the following:

#### 5.1.The First Study:

Social responsibility and its relationship with the sports journalists performance to the journalists of the Algerian daily Al-Shorouk and The Egyptian Al-Ahram newspapers .the media exchange accompanying the Cairo and Omdurman matches, by the researcher Marwan Shantou (2020).

The study aims to try to understand the social responsibility of the written sports press and its setback at the level of journalistic performance in the journalists of the daily Al-Shorouk and The Egyptian Al-Ahram newspapers and the extent of their community commitment. Depending on the functional approach, which is employed in knowing the role assigned to the individual, the group and society as a whole. The study showed that there is a significant relationship between the social responsibility of the written sports press and the performance of the sports journalist at Al-Shorouk Daily and the Egyptian Al-Ahram, which is a valuable gain of great importance. A journalist, from any medium and any role, plays his role as much as the values of his society he has.

#### 5.2.The Second Study:

##### **Framing As a Theory of Media Effects by Dietram A. Scheufele**

The researcher addressed the framing process of media influence theory, in terms of understanding media frameworks as a constructing social reality, and the factors affecting these frameworks, as well as designing a model of the framing process that includes inputs, processes and outputs of media practice.

The researcher followed the qualitative approach in providing a critical vision of the framework studies and concluded that the influencing factors that affect the media practice and those who

are responsible for them are the following: the Social standards and values, official organizations, and pressures of ideological or political orientations of the communicator. The study explained that these factors affect the inputs of media practice within the journalistic work environment, in terms of building frameworks, setting priorities, the impact of the framing process on the individual, and the process of echoing from the public to the media.

### 5.3.The Third Study:

**The view of the journalists in the Egyptian private newspapers about the ethics of professional practice by Al-Abassi Amira (2003)**

The study aims to reveal the vision of the researchers about the performance of their newspapers from the ethical perspective of the professional practice, and to identify the most prominent factors affecting that. Added to this, to reveal the vision of the communicator of the nature of the media environment in which he works, and its impact on his professional performance.

The researcher used the questionnaire as a tool to obtain information by applying it on the journalists that belong to a sample of the Egyptian private newspapers. The study concluded that the Egyptian private newspapers have become a field of conflict of interest between businessmen, as well as politicians, and the truce of the political system, in order to ensure their continued publication,

### 5.4.The Fourth Study:

**The ethical and legal responsibilities of journalists and their relationship to the personality traits, by Ibrahim Mohamed Saad (2003).**

The study sought to identify the ethical and legal responsibilities of the journalists, their relationship to personal attributes, the internal and external motives affecting decision-making in the ethical and legal dilemmas, the nature of the relationship between the personal features of the journalist and his appreciation of his responsibilities, and his commitment to professional values. The results of the study revealed that the principles of the journalist are the decisive variable in decision-making to address the ethical and legal dilemmas during his professional practices, and these principles focused on religion, self-morality, credibility and the right to know.

## 6.Theories of the Study:

The theoretical foundation of any scientific study is important and has a great role in increasing its value and accuracy and ensuring its scientific sobriety. Thus, adopting a theoretical foundation that gives a cognitive and conceptual consistency to the various elements formed for the research that should be specific and directed to the various stages of the research. This study was based on the following:

### 6.1.Social Responsibility Theory

The theory of social responsibility was used to reveal the extent to which the social responsibility is implicitly manifested in the mechanisms of self-regulation in which the Algerian media institutions operate, in addition to the various ethical standards established, whether obligatory,

self-contained or contractual in the Algerian media institutions. Some theoretical assumptions have been employed to serve the directions of the study, and. The set of assumptions identified in the questionnaire were formulated in the form of questions that measure the extent to which the tools and mechanisms of self-regulation are manifested in the media institutions. (Radwan, 2007, p. 22)

## 7.Study Methods

This study is considered one of the descriptive studies that is based on describing the nature, features and characteristics of a particular society, situation, group or individual. It is interested in studying the current facts related to a phenomenon or situation from a set of events, to obtain accurate information and data about it. Descriptive studies do not stop at the limits of description and diagnosis, but go beyond describing causal relationships for the purpose of discovering and deepening the facts associated with them (Laban, 2004, p.102)

**The study was based on two scientific approaches:**

### 7.1.Survey

This approach belongs to the descriptive research, and it is considered as an organized scientific effort that helps to describe the phenomenon and obtain data and information on the description of the phenomenon or the group of phenomena and provide a realistic or closest picture of the reality of the phenomenon (Radwan, 2007, p. 22)

It can be said that it is the scientific method that enables the researcher to identify the phenomenon studied in terms of the factors entrusted to it, and the relationships prevailing within it as it is in the real space and within its normal circumstances by collecting the data and information achieved for it.

The survey is also divided in terms of the research community into two types:

Comprehensive survey and sample survey, the first one is used to research small communities consisting of a limited number of vocabulary that the researcher can limit their total size and subject them all to scientific observation according to the objectives of the research objectives,. This method cannot be applied in practice in the academic research (Shoemaker and Vos 2009, p. 76)

### 7.2.Community and Sample Study

This step is methodologically important for any scientific study, so that we can reach accurate and sober results. The study community in our study embodies the workers in the Algerian public and private media institutions. The sample was chosen according to the problematic of the study and its objectives, because the nature of any study and its assumptions control the research tools. Added to this, «the correct sample is the one that is made up of the best representative of the indigenous community so that it is as similar as possible to the indigenous community" (Layadi, 2019, p.62), and more than 42 media institutions responded to the study.

The quota sample was adopted in the field study, represented by journalists from the various Algerian media, from traditional press, and new media. The sample included a mixture of journalists serving the study, including editors, editors in chief, editors, journalists, correspondents, news presenters, broadcasters, correspondents. Photographers, directors. (Radwan, 2007, p. 22)

This sample is very similar to the stratified random sample in dividing the study population into classes. The selection of these classes is made in proportion to their relative weight in the study community; this type of sample is used in the public opinion studies and the social studies (McQuail, 2005, p. 130)

## 8.Study Tools

After reviewing the literature of the study and the various mixtures of knowledge on which the study was relied, the questionnaire tool was prepared as a key tool, and the electronic acquisition mechanism for collecting data and information was adopted on the respondents surveyed, where the electronic link was distributed to the Algerian media workers. From March 20 to March 5, 2021, the questionnaire was distributed to 135 journalists .5 answers were cancelled due to lack of scientific conditions. The electronic questionnaire enabled us to calculate percentages and totals, and it is a statistical method that gives us percentages and repetitions.

### 8.1.Scientific Conditions of the Tool

The study tool, which is the questionnaire, was presented to the supervising professor for examination, and then presented to a group of professors arbitrators in order to know the appropriateness of the questionnaire and its ability to answer and inform the variables of the study. The ability of the tool to collect a sound and accurate scientific material, from linguistic and scientific safety, and was taken the whole of the observations of the arbitrators in the questionnaire, which enabled us to test the tool before distributing it to the respondents from the sample of the field study.

## 9.Presentation and Interpretation of Results

Through the field study, the following conclusions have been reached:

**Table 1.The Nature of Ownership of the Media Institutions in which the Respondents Work**

Categories	Generality	Percent
Generality	45	33%
Property	90	66%
Total	135	100%

### 9.1.Comment

Through the results of the table related to the nature of the ownership of the media outlet in which the study sample works, 66% stated that they work in private media organizations, and the remaining 33% of those working in public media organizations.

## 9. Mechanisms and Tools for Self-regulation

### 9.1. A table showing how to teach self-regulating tools

Table 2.The method of teaching self-regulation tools in the institutions in which Respondents work

Categories	Repetition	Percent
Editorial and management meetings	45	81.8%
Training courses	04	7.3%
Media seminars and events	02	3.6%
Workshops and training	03	5.5%
Write it as a thank you and a warning	41	74.5%
By phone, regular mail and e-mail	05	9.09%

Note: Multiple answer possibilities were available in this question

#### 9.1.1. Comment

It was found through the results of the table related to the method of indoctrination of self-organization tools and their contents, where the management and editorial meetings came in the first place with 81% as a mechanism for giving instructions and control indicators for the media in which the study sample members work.

in the second place came the mechanism of writing it in the form of a thank you alert 74%, a given that explains the adoption of interest notes, which came in a percentage of 60% that are not fixed and variable, and are weak in terms of the mechanism of organizational strength as well as the regulation of professional ethics. 7% stated that the indoctrination of self-regulation mechanisms is in the form of training courses, while media institutions adopted the mechanism of training workshops by 5%, while 3% came for seminars and events, which is a small percentage despite the importance of this mechanism in the process of highlighting and indoctrinating the tools of self-regulation in media institutions.



## 9.2. A table showing the reasons for the non-compliance of workers in the media sector with the professional ethics

Table 3. The respondents' answers about the reasons why workers in the media sector are not committed to professional ethics

Categories	Repetition	Percent
Absence of codes of conduct	27	49.1%
Absence of a media body that regulates the media	43	78.2%
Social problems and wage issues	47	85.5%
Lack of complete knowledge of all organizing tools	39	70.9%
Not attaching the utmost importance to universities	01	1.8%
They refused to answer	01	1.8%

### 9.2.1. Comment

Most of the respondents agreed by 85% that social problems and issues of wages are the most reasons why journalists do not adhere to the ethics of the journalistic profession. The absence of a media body that regulates the media by 78% as a body and council that protects work and frames it from abuses and the lack of complete awareness of the content of self-regulation tools came in a percentage 70% as another factor for non-compliance with the ethics of the profession. The absence of codes of conduct by 49% within the media institutions had the effect of non-compliance with the ethics of the profession and constituted the failure to attach the utmost importance on the part of universities to the teaching of professional ethics. While 1% of the respondents refrained from answering the question and indicates the overall results of the table, indicate that wages and social problems are the biggest cause of professional ethics violations.

### A table showing the forms of unethical practices in the media

Table 4. The respondents' answers about the forms of unethical practices in the media

Categories	Repetition	Percent
Stealing news and not attributing it to its source	51	92.7%

Failure to respect the conduct and confidentiality of the judicial investigation	44	80%
Insults, defamation and invasion of the privacy	47	85.5%
Failure to respect the right to reply and correct	39	70%
Uncover news sources	37	67%
Uncover the identity of colleagues	33	60%
Lack of the objectivity and bias	48	87.3%
Not respecting the privacy of the news and advertising	33	60%

### 9.3.1.Comment

News theft and lack of attribution to the original source came to the fore in immoral abuses in the Algerian press by 92%, and the absence of objectivity and bias in reporting news and media coverage by 87%. Insulting, slandering and violating privacy by 85% was one of the biggest abuses in which the courts and other violations, such as the lack of respect for the confidentiality of the judicial investigation by 80%, which is one of the five prohibitions punishable by the organic law of the media. Disrespect for the publication of the right of reply and correction in the Algerian media was 70% among the abuses that occur and are still occurring among the unethical practices that came in 60% of them revealed the identity of colleagues who write under pseudonyms, and the lack of respect for the privacy of news and advertisements.

### 9.4.A table showing the powers that the Professional Ethics Council should have:

Table 5. The respondents' answers about the powers that the Professional Ethics Council is supposed to have

Categories	Repetition	Percent
Giving him an obligatory feature in his decisions	46	83.6%
Activate self-regulatory tools	48	87.3%
Establishing the professional ethics committees	41	74.5%

Dimensions of the government intervention	45	81.8%
Involve the public in the council decisions	02	3.6%

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#### 9.4.1.Comment

The respondents demanded the necessity of activating the tools of self-regulation in the media institutions to protect the ethics of the profession and to organize the journalistic work, and this is by 87%. Most of the respondents' answers came to the need to give a mandatory status to the decisions of the Ethics and Professional Ethics Council, which was not set up. 74% of the respondents stressed the need to activate the professional ethics committees Within the media institutions, while other answers came to the need to involve the public in the decisions of the Council, and this is at a rate of 3%. It is explained from the results of the table that most of the respondents give a mandatory status to the decisions of the Council with the need to activate the tools of self-regulation, while the public remains marginalized in the processes of media participation and the view of it.

#### 10.Results

The results showed the weakness of reliance on the mechanisms of self-regulation in the Algerian media, neglecting them greatly, and not giving them great priorities within their organization.

- The unwritten oral instructions and orders were printed to regulate the Algerian media institutions, it is a weak organizational tool in terms of strength, and the ethics of the profession does not control it in return for not writing it as a binding organizational form.
- The study showed that the Algerian media institutions are still employed at educational levels below university from secondary and intermediate levels, a sample found in the respondents' answers.
- The process of indoctrination and training of media workers was largely the responsibility of the media institution in which they work.
- The weakness of the mechanisms of indoctrination and training of media workers and their restriction through oral indoctrination or by telephone, e-mail, and editorial and management meetings, and this procedure is considered a useless organizational part and does not guarantee respect for the ethics of the profession.

#### 11.Recommendations and Suggestions

- Work to establish the Council of Ethics and Professional Ethics as an effective organizational form, defining its reference and form, as a body that includes the various appointed and not yet established bodies, away from any government interference, whose mission is to regulate the performance of Algerian media institutions and set standards for journalistic ethics.

- Establishing a joint body between government agencies and the media, in which they participate to develop a general organizational code of conduct that paralyzes all traditional and new media.
- Requiring all Algerian media institutions to establish an internal professional code of conduct, in which a set of professional controls are placed to guide journalists.
- The inclusion of interest notes and honor codes of professional ethical controls, based on respect for others, and the rejection of all unethical practices that occur in the field of journalism and media.
- Activating training and vocational training processes, in order to teach journalists the principles of self-regulation tools, and the principles they contain that help them to guide them in covering events and control professional and ethical performance.

## 12.Conclusion

Self-regulatory mechanisms and standards work to control the behavior of the profession and its employees through the presence of specific and clear professional standards that are reflected in daily work practices. It will be a guide to the culture of this institution. The study works to show the features of the professional standards and mechanisms that govern the performance of the Algerian media, consolidate the values of the culture of the institution, highlight the deficiencies, and work on evaluating them.

## 13.Endnotes:

### 1. Books:

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### 2.Theses:

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### 3.Journal article :

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