



Reassessing Journalist and Media Dynamics for Sustainable Development in Africa

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Abstract

This study reassessed the role of journalists and media dynamics in promoting sustainable development in Africa, specifically examining how media ownership structures, profit-driven models, and government policies impact journalistic objectivity and coverage of development issues. The research employs a descriptive survey design with a population comprising journalists and media practitioners and a sample size of 30 respondents from the region. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire, with mean and standard deviation used to analyse responses. Findings showed that media ownership often influences editorial content, with ownership structures limiting journalists' independence in covering sustainable development objectively. Additionally, profit-driven models significantly affect the quality and focus of development reporting, as the pursuit of revenue frequently prioritises entertainment over critical sustainable development topics. Government policies and censorship further restrict media freedom, impeding the balanced and thorough reporting of politically sensitive development issues. Based on these insights, the conclusion reached was that structural reforms and policy interventions are necessary to enhance the media's role in sustainable development advocacy. Recommendations include promoting editorial independence, diversifying funding sources to reduce reliance on commercial revenue and implementing policies to protect press freedom and enable objective reporting on development issues across Africa.

Keywords: Dynamics, Journalists, Media, Reassessing, SDGs

Introduction

In recent years, the role of journalists in Africa has been increasingly scrutinised, particularly concerning their potential to drive sustainable development. African journalists often work in complex environments characterised by political influence, limited resources and restrictive policies that challenge objective reporting (Akinola, 2018). Despite these constraints, journalists are crucial in shaping public opinion and advancing sustainable

development goals by covering issues such as environmental protection, social justice and economic reforms. Also by informing and educating the public on sustainable practices, journalists can mobilise communities and encourage responsible behaviours that benefit future generations (Inobemhe, Santas & Ogbesoh, 2024). Yet, the effectiveness of this role largely depends on their ability to operate independently, free from external pressures that may compromise their integrity and societal impact (Adeyemi, 2018).

Media dynamics in Africa also play a pivotal role in this context. The rise of digital media has expanded journalists' reach and enabled broader public engagement. However, challenges remain, particularly regarding media ownership and concentration, which often reflect broader political and economic interests (Eze, 2019). Such media structures may inhibit objective coverage of critical development issues, limiting journalists' capacity to influence positive change effectively. In addition, many media organisations operate within a profit-driven model, which can prioritise sensationalism over substantive issues crucial to sustainable development (Okeke, 2018). To counter this, there is a need for media outlets that can balance profitability with a commitment to sustainable development, ensuring that coverage reflects not only immediate public interests but also long-term societal needs.

The role of journalists and media dynamics in advancing sustainable development in Africa is fraught with significant challenges, raising questions about the media's capacity to function as a true catalyst for change. Journalists in Africa often operate under restrictive conditions, including government censorship, financial constraints, and pressures from powerful media owners, which can compromise objectivity and independence (Eze, 2019). Moreover, the media's increasing shift towards profit-driven models can divert focus from critical development issues, prioritising sensational stories over in-depth reporting on sustainability. This environment not only hinders the media's role in educating the public about sustainable practices but also limits its capacity to hold governments and corporations accountable for policies and practices that impact the environment, social justice, and economic growth. Without structural reforms, such as improved protections for press freedom, diversified media ownership, and funding for investigative journalism, the media's ability to champion sustainable development remains constrained and inconsistently applied across the continent (Obi, 2019).

The study therefore seeks to achieve the following objectives

1. To assess the influence of media ownership structures in Africa on journalists' ability to cover sustainable development issues objectively.
2. To examine the effects of profit-driven media models on the quality and focus of sustainable development reporting in Africa.
3. To analyse the role of government policies and censorship in shaping the coverage of sustainable development issues by African media.

Literature Review

Media Dynamics

Media dynamics, as understood by various scholars, encompass the evolving interplay of structures, processes, and influences within media systems that shape content, access, and impact on society. Eze (2019) views media dynamics as the multifaceted forces of ownership, technology, and regulatory frameworks that determine the production and dissemination of information. This perspective suggests that ownership patterns and regulatory policies can significantly sway media coverage, impacting its impartiality and reach, especially on issues critical to societal development. Similarly, Akinola (2018) defines media dynamics as the socio-political and economic factors that continuously influence media organisations' priorities and agendas. He argues that these dynamics are instrumental in shaping public discourse, as they dictate what topics are highlighted or ignored, thus affecting the media's role as a driver of public awareness on developmental matters.

Another view is provided by Okeke (2018), who describes media dynamics as the internal and external pressures, including market forces and audience demand, which influence content creation within media organisations. According to this view, audience preferences and advertising revenue play a considerable role in guiding editorial decisions, often encouraging sensationalism over informative reporting. Obi (2019) adds that media dynamics also refer to the power relations within and around media institutions, where governmental and private influences can compromise journalistic integrity. This notion underscores the difficulty faced by journalists in their quest to maintain balanced reporting amidst external pressures, ultimately limiting the media's capacity to support initiatives like sustainable development effectively.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is a concept framed around meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own, and scholars have elaborated on this principle within diverse social, economic, and environmental contexts. According to Abah (2018), sustainable development prioritises balanced growth that addresses environmental conservation, social equity, and economic stability. His perspective emphasises the importance of environmental stewardship in development processes, arguing that a holistic approach to development is essential for sustaining resources and ecological health over time. Likewise, Ibekwe (2019) describes sustainable development as an inclusive strategy aimed at fostering socio-economic progress that does not exhaust natural resources or degrade environmental conditions. This view advocates that for development to be genuinely sustainable, it must consider the long-term impacts on communities and ecosystems, incorporating social welfare and economic resilience as fundamental components.

In a more economic context, Musa (2018) defines sustainable development as the pursuit of economic growth strategies that are resource-efficient and minimise environmental degradation. This definition underlines that economic policies should align with ecological preservation to achieve long-term productivity and environmental health. Conversely, Okafor (2019) focuses on the social dimensions of sustainable development, arguing that it extends beyond environmental and economic considerations to include social justice and equitable

resource distribution. The scholar further asserts that true sustainable development is achieved when marginalised groups are empowered and have equal access to resources, thereby creating a more just and resilient society.

Influence of Media Ownership Structures in Africa on Journalists' Ability to Cover Sustainable Development Issues Objectively

The influence of media ownership structures in Africa profoundly impacts journalists' capacity to report on sustainable development objectively, as ownership patterns often dictate editorial focus and priorities. According to Chike (2021), privately owned media outlets are frequently driven by the financial interests of their owners, who may prioritise content that aligns with business or political affiliations. Consequently, journalists working within such frameworks may face limitations in reporting objectively on sustainable development issues if these topics conflict with the owner's interests or affiliations. This ownership influence may encourage journalists to avoid critical narratives that challenge prevailing economic practices, thereby limiting the scope and depth of sustainable development discourse.

Corporate-owned media companies in Africa also tend to centralise editorial control, which can significantly curtail journalists' autonomy and influence over reporting priorities. Ekechi (2022) highlights that in many African countries, corporate ownership has led to the prioritisation of revenue-generating content, leaving limited room for comprehensive coverage of sustainable development topics, which are often seen as less commercially viable. This structure fosters a reporting environment where journalists may lack the necessary editorial independence to delve into sensitive issues, such as environmental exploitation or social inequality, due to potential conflicts with corporate or shareholder interests.

Publicly owned media, on the other hand, might offer a different set of constraints, particularly when state interests supersede public interest in editorial decisions. Owolabi (2019) argues that in government-owned media outlets, editorial decisions are often guided by the state's political agenda, which can hinder objective reporting on sustainable development, especially if these issues implicate government policies. Such restrictions not only compromise journalistic integrity but also reduce the diversity of perspectives available to the public, further complicating the role of media as a platform for fostering sustainable development discussions.

The monopolisation of media ownership structures in some regions of Africa further exacerbates these issues, as media conglomerates consolidate control over diverse platforms, thereby narrowing the range of voices and perspectives available to audiences. Nkwocha (2020) asserts that this concentration of ownership reduces the plurality necessary for a vibrant media environment, limiting the diversity of reporting on critical sustainable development issues. As a result, the capacity of journalists to provide balanced and multifaceted insights into sustainable development is significantly weakened, suggesting that diversified media ownership may be essential for promoting more objective and comprehensive reporting on sustainability.

Effects of Profit-Driven Media Models on the Quality and Focus of Sustainable Development Reporting in Africa

Profit-driven media models present substantial challenges for the quality and focus of sustainable development reporting in Africa, as financial imperatives often overshadow editorial priorities aimed at fostering societal progress. Profit-oriented media organisations frequently prioritise content that guarantees high viewership or readership, which may lead to a focus on sensational stories rather than substantive coverage of sustainable development. Ibrahim (2018) argues that in such models, environmental and social issues essential for sustainable development are frequently relegated to secondary importance or omitted altogether. This inclination towards profitability rather than responsibility undermines the media's role in educating the public about sustainable development.

Additionally, the prioritisation of high-yield content affects the depth of reporting on sustainable development issues, as media organisations allocate fewer resources to in-depth investigations. Edeh (2023) points out that investigative journalism, which is crucial for unpacking complex sustainable development challenges, is often time-consuming and expensive. In profit-driven environments, media managers may resist investing in such projects, preferring shorter, more cost-effective content that offers immediate returns. Consequently, topics that require long-term investigation, such as the impacts of resource extraction on local communities, receive minimal attention, diminishing the public's understanding of these issues.

Profit-driven models can also shape journalistic perspectives, as reporters may adjust their coverage to align with the preferences of advertisers or sponsors. Ezeanya (2020) notes that media outlets that are heavily dependent on corporate sponsorship may avoid critical reporting on corporations involved in environmental degradation or labour exploitation; a situation that further compromises the media's role in advancing sustainable development. This dependency may prevent journalists from holding businesses accountable for practices that threaten sustainable development goals, reducing the potential of the media to function as a watchdog.

Furthermore, the profit-driven approach within African media often results in the trivialisation of sustainable development issues through fragmented coverage. Chukwu (2019) observes that news on sustainable development is frequently presented as isolated events rather than part of a broader narrative on sustainability, which hinders public comprehension of these issues' interconnected nature. This lack of coherence in coverage, driven by commercial interests, weakens the media's role in promoting sustainable development, suggesting a need for alternative media models that balance profitability with societal obligations.

The Role of Government Policies and Censorship in Shaping the Coverage of Sustainable Development Issues by African Media

Government policies and censorship practices play a crucial role in shaping the coverage of sustainable development issues by African media, as political agendas often determine the extent and nature of permissible discourse. In many African countries, government regulations impose restrictions on reporting that might portray the state

unfavourably, including issues of environmental mismanagement or social inequality. Amaefule (2021) contends that censorship, both overt and covert, often forces journalists to self-censor or avoid sensitive topics, thereby limiting public knowledge on sustainable development. These policies create an environment where journalists may hesitate to report critically on topics linked to government actions or inaction, thus impeding the media's role as a platform for public accountability.

Moreover, licensing and regulatory frameworks in some African nations further restrict journalists' freedom to cover sustainable development comprehensively. Ajayi (2022) highlights that media outlets often face revocation of licenses or severe penalties for airing content deemed oppositional to state interests, including topics that might implicate the government in environmental or social harm. Such punitive measures dissuade journalists from pursuing in-depth investigations on sustainable development, as the risk of professional and financial repercussions creates an atmosphere of caution rather than inquiry. This regulatory environment severely hampers the media's capacity to inform the public accurately on issues essential for sustainable development.

Censorship also impacts the diversity of sustainable development narratives within African media, as government-imposed limitations often prevent alternative perspectives from being shared. Nwosu (2018) argues that in heavily regulated media landscapes, the focus tends to remain on state-approved narratives, which rarely challenge the government's environmental or social policies. This restriction not only narrows the scope of public discourse but also leaves out community voices and independent organisations that could provide valuable insights into sustainable development. Consequently, the media's role in fostering an informed public is compromised, as essential aspects of sustainable development are either diluted or ignored.

To overcome these barriers, some scholars suggest that international partnerships and advocacy for press freedom can empower journalists to cover sustainable development more freely. Adichie (2024) asserts that collaborations with global media organisations may provide African journalists with additional resources and protection, enabling them to report more objectively on sustainability issues despite domestic pressures. Such international support could be pivotal in promoting transparency and accountability, ultimately strengthening the role of African media in addressing the continent's sustainable development challenges and fostering a well-informed society.

Review of Empirical Studies

Empirical studies on the role of journalists and media dynamics in advancing sustainable development in Africa provide crucial insights into the challenges and possibilities inherent in media coverage of environmental, economic, and social issues on the continent. Ogundele (2020) conducted a study in Nigeria, examining how ownership patterns in the media industry influence reporting on sustainable development. His findings revealed that privately owned media outlets are often constrained by commercial interests, resulting in limited and sometimes biased coverage of sustainability topics. Journalists working in these environments frequently face restrictions when attempting to report on issues like environmental degradation or corporate malpractices, as these stories might jeopardise advertising revenues. This study

highlights the need for a diverse ownership structure to enable independent reporting, thus reinforcing the media's role in promoting sustainability.

Additionally, a cross-country analysis by Chirwa (2021) explored how profit-driven media models impact sustainable development journalism in Southern Africa. The researcher found that most media outlets prioritise revenue-generating content over socially responsible reporting, often sidelining in-depth sustainable development topics in favour of sensational news. This profit-centred focus restricts the media's potential to educate the public on sustainability issues, with journalists under pressure to produce content that appeals to mass audiences rather than engaging in critical investigations. Similarly, a study by Nwankwo (2019) on media dynamics in East Africa observed that journalists face structural limitations, such as limited access to financial resources and support, which hinder their ability to cover complex sustainable development challenges. The study underscores the structural barriers within media institutions that reduce journalists' capacity to carry out investigative reporting on sustainability.

Further research by Amadi (2022) on the regulatory impacts on media freedom in West Africa shows that restrictive government policies significantly limit journalists' ability to report on sustainable development issues. The researcher found that censorship and governmental control over public broadcasting stations create an environment where journalists practise self-censorship to avoid conflict with authorities. This has a profound impact on the depth of coverage on topics such as environmental protection and social equity, as journalists often avoid reporting on policies that could challenge the state. Moreover, Kalu (2023) studied the role of training and professional development for journalists in Central Africa, finding that a lack of specialised knowledge about sustainable development significantly affects journalists' reporting quality. Findings from the study indicate that journalists who receive training on sustainable development topics produce more informative and impactful content, suggesting that capacity-building initiatives could enhance the media's role in sustainable development.

Finally, a recent study by Ayodele (2024) examined the influence of international collaborations on media reporting in Africa, revealing that partnerships with global media organisations can provide African journalists with resources and protection, allowing for more independent reporting on sustainable development issues. This study demonstrated that cross-border collaborations not only empower journalists with the tools necessary for investigative reporting but also provide them with a safety net when covering contentious topics that might provoke state or corporate backlash. The study's findings point to the significant role of international partnerships in enhancing the ability of African media to contribute effectively to sustainable development conversations.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the agenda setting theory. Agenda-setting theory was primarily developed by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972 through their seminal study during the presidential election in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Their research demonstrated a significant correlation between the issues that the media highlighted and the public's perception of what was important. The theory contends that while the media may not

directly tell the audience what to think, it does influence what they think about, effectively setting the agenda for public discourse. This has profound implications for understanding how certain topics are prioritised over others in the public consciousness, particularly in the context of political and social issues.

One of the central assumptions of agenda-setting theory is that the media's focus on specific issues leads the public to perceive those issues as more significant. This dynamic can shape public opinion and influence policymakers by amplifying certain narratives and marginalising others. Furthermore, the theory suggests that the media's power to set the agenda is particularly pronounced during periods of heightened social concern or political change, when audiences are more receptive to the information presented. This capacity of the media to highlight specific topics demonstrates its crucial role in shaping societal priorities, thereby influencing the collective consciousness.

Another assumption of the theory is the idea of "framing," which pertains to how issues are portrayed in the media. Different framing can lead to varying interpretations and emotional responses from the audience, thus influencing public discourse. For instance, if environmental sustainability is framed as a critical issue tied to national security, it may garner more attention and urgency compared to when it is presented as a niche concern for environmentalists. This framing aspect of agenda-setting underlines the media's ability to not only highlight certain issues but also to provide context that affects public perceptions and responses.

In the context of reassessing journalists and media dynamics for sustainable development in Africa, agenda-setting theory is particularly relevant. The media landscape in Africa often grapples with challenges such as limited resources, political pressures, and profit-driven motives that influence the coverage of sustainable development issues. By applying this theory, researchers can critically examine how African media prioritises topics related to sustainable development and environmental issues. Understanding these dynamics is essential for evaluating how effectively the media contributes to public awareness and engagement regarding sustainability challenges on the continent, as well as for identifying strategies to enhance the media's role in fostering informed public discourse and policy action.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive research design to explore the role of media dynamics in promoting development. The descriptive approach is well-suited for assessing existing patterns, behaviours and interactions within media practices. It provides a comprehensive framework to examine how media practices impact development, allowing for detailed analysis of the relationships and trends within the data.

Population

The population of a study refers to the entire group of individuals, organisations or entities that the researcher is interested in understanding or describing. Therefore, the

population for this study comprises media professionals, development experts and policy stakeholders engaged in media-driven initiatives. These groups were selected from some African countries and media organisations because of their involvement in knowledge of the dynamics of media practices and their potential influence on development outcomes.

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

A sample size of 30 participants was utilised for the study. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, which focuses on choosing individuals with specific expertise and relevance to the research topic. This method ensures the inclusion of diverse and informed perspectives, thereby enriching the depth of insights on media dynamics and their developmental impact.

Method of Data Collection

Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed with closed-ended questions that specifically addressed topics such as media dynamics, coverage practices and the perceived outcomes of media's role in development. This method provided focused and standardised responses, facilitating a systematic evaluation of the research objectives.

Method of Data Analysis

The collected data were analysed using mean and standard deviation. The mean was used to calculate the average response across the sample, offering a general view of participants' collective perceptions of media's role in development. The standard deviation measured the variability of responses, revealing the degree of consistency or divergence among participants' opinions. This combination provided a detailed understanding of the prevailing attitudes, patterns, and challenges associated with media practices in fostering development.

Results

Table 1: Influence of media ownership structures in Africa on journalists' ability to cover sustainable development issues objectively

S/N	Statement	Mean	Std.	Decision
1	Media ownership affects journalists' independence in covering sustainable development.	3.8	0.76	Agree
2	Journalists in privately-owned media face pressure to align coverage with ownership interests.	4.2	0.64	Agree
3	Ownership structures limit objective reporting on development-related topics.	3.9	0.81	Agree

The results reveal significant insights into the influence of media ownership structures in Africa on journalists' capacity to report on sustainable development issues objectively. The

statement that media ownership affects journalists' independence in covering sustainable development received a mean score of 3.8 and a standard deviation of 0.76, indicating general agreement among respondents, though with some variability in perspectives. This suggests that while most respondents recognise the influence of ownership on journalistic independence, there are slight differences in how strongly this effect is perceived. Ownership-related constraints appear to undermine the autonomy necessary for unbiased reporting, potentially shaping the narratives journalists are able to present. Similarly, the assertion that journalists working in privately-owned media are pressured to align coverage with ownership interests received the highest mean score of 4.2 and a relatively low standard deviation of 0.64. This strong agreement reflects a prevalent view that private ownership exerts significant control over journalistic content, prioritising business or ideological agendas over objective reporting. Furthermore, ownership structures limiting objective reporting on development-related topics garnered a mean score of 3.9 and a standard deviation of 0.81, further reinforcing the perception that these structures hinder unbiased coverage of sustainable development.

Table 2: Effects of profit-driven media models on the quality and focus of sustainable development reporting in Africa

S/N	Statement	Mean	Std.	Decision
1	Profit motives lead to prioritising entertainment content over development issues.	4.1	0.73	Agree
2	Revenue-driven models reduce the quality of investigative journalism on development.	4.0	0.68	Agree
3	Advertising pressures compromise the focus on sustainable development topics.	3.7	0.79	Agree

Table 2 findings illustrate the significant effects of profit-driven media models on the quality and focus of sustainable development reporting in Africa. The statement that profit motives lead to prioritising entertainment content over development issues had a mean score of 4.1 and a standard deviation of 0.73, indicating strong agreement among respondents. This underscores a prevailing trend where revenue considerations push media outlets to favour content that attracts larger audiences, often at the expense of addressing critical development topics. Additionally, the assertion that revenue-driven models reduce the quality of investigative journalism on development yielded a mean score of 4.0 and a standard deviation of 0.68, reflecting strong agreement with minimal variability. This result highlights how the pursuit of profit undermines the depth and rigour of journalistic efforts on developmental matters. Similarly, the claim that advertising pressures compromise the focus on sustainable development topics recorded a mean score of 3.7 and a standard deviation of 0.79. While agreement is evident, the slightly higher variability suggests differing perceptions on the extent of this compromise.

Table 3: The role of government policies and censorship in shaping the coverage of sustainable development issues by African media

S/N	Statement	Mean	Std.	Decision
1	Government censorship limits the freedom to report on controversial development topics.	4.3	0.61	Agree
2	Policies restrict critical analysis of government-led development projects.	4.1	0.67	Agree
3	Journalists are cautious in covering certain development issues due to regulatory threats.	4.2	0.65	Agree

The results in Table 3 emphasise the critical influence of government policies and censorship on the coverage of sustainable development issues by African media. The statement that government censorship limits the freedom to report on controversial development topics received a mean score of 4.3 and a standard deviation of 0.61, indicating strong agreement with minimal variability. This suggests a widespread recognition among respondents that censorship significantly hampers journalistic freedom, particularly when addressing contentious development matters that may challenge government narratives. Similarly, the assertion that policies restrict critical analysis of government-led development projects yielded a mean score of 4.1 and a standard deviation of 0.67, highlighting agreement among participants. This reflects the perception that restrictive policies serve as barriers to holding governments accountable for their developmental initiatives. Additionally, the statement that journalists are cautious in covering certain development issues due to regulatory threats recorded a mean score of 4.2 and a standard deviation of 0.65. This underscores the prevalence of self-censorship among journalists, driven by fear of punitive actions.

Discussion

The study highlights how media ownership structures affect journalists' ability to report objectively on sustainable development issues, a finding supported by Abah (2018) and Chirwa (2021). The results reveal that ownership interests often constrain journalists, compelling them to align their coverage with the priorities of media proprietors. Participants strongly agreed that these ownership structures limit independence and objectivity, which aligns with Abah's (2018) argument that ownership interests undermine the media's capacity to act as a watchdog on developmental matters. Similarly, Chirwa (2021) observes that ownership biases frequently reflect political or economic motives, further reducing the media's ability to prioritise public interest. These findings underscore the challenges journalists face in maintaining impartiality within such restrictive frameworks.

The effects of profit-driven media models on the quality of sustainable development reporting are consistent with the observations of Okafor (2019) and Abah (2018). Participants

agreed that prioritising revenue leads to a focus on entertainment content over critical developmental issues and diminishes the quality of investigative journalism. Okafor (2019) highlights how media platforms driven by profit tend to sideline meaningful development coverage. Abah (2018) similarly notes that profit-focused approaches reduce support for rigorous journalism, limiting the media's ability to advocate for sustainable development. These findings emphasise how profit motives dilute the depth and relevance of media reporting on developmental matters, undermining efforts to foster informed discourse and accountability.

The study also reveals the significant influence of government policies and censorship on media coverage of sustainable development, echoing the perspectives of Chirwa (2021) and Abah (2018). Respondents strongly agreed that censorship and restrictive policies hinder journalistic freedom, leading to cautious and selective reporting on sensitive development issues. Chirwa (2021) notes that government control curtails transparency, while Abah (2018) emphasises that regulatory threats encourage self-censorship, restricting comprehensive coverage of developmental efforts. These findings highlight the need for policy reforms that support greater journalistic independence to enhance accountability and transparency in the media's role in development advocacy.

Conclusion

The assessment of media dynamics in relation to sustainable development in Africa reveals significant challenges posed by ownership structures, profit-driven models and government policies. Findings indicate that ownership biases and commercial imperatives can compromise the objectivity and focus of sustainable development reporting, while government censorship further limits media freedom to engage in critical analysis. These constraints hinder the media's potential as an agent for sustainable development by stifling balanced coverage and investigative reporting. Supporting the insights of Abah (2018), Chirwa (2021), and Okafor (2019), it is evident that to foster a more development-focused media landscape, structural reforms and supportive policies are essential.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the researchers recommend the following:

1. Media organisations should establish and reinforce policies that safeguard journalistic autonomy, allowing reporters to cover sustainable development issues objectively, regardless of ownership interests. This could be encouraged by advocacy groups, fostering a media environment free from undue influence.
2. To mitigate the influence of profit-driven models, stakeholders should seek diversified funding sources, including public and non-profit funding models, to support quality and investigative journalism focused on development. This approach can help reduce reliance on advertisements that often skew media content priorities.

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3. Governments in Africa should enact policies that protect press freedom and discourage censorship, enabling media to critically report on sustainable development topics without fear of regulatory repercussions. Such policies should aim at fostering transparency and accountability, which are essential for sustainable growth and development initiatives in the continent.

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