

INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM TRAINING AND TRAINERS: AN EVALUATION OF ABUJA JOURNALISTS

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Abstract

The researchers examined training and trainers of investigative journalism among Abuja journalists. The study adopts in-depth interview design and multi stage sample (stratified and purposive sample) in selecting 21 participants. Data collected were analyzed using thematic analysis. Findings revealed among others that; FCT journalists had on the job training in investigative journalism practice. Also, the study discovered that on the job training in investigative journalism were done by ten trainers namely- African Institute for Investigative Journalism, BBC, Konrad Adeneur Foundation, World Bank Institute, MacArthur Foundation, International Institute of Journalism, American Embassy, Nigeria Union of Journalists, Premium Times and Daily Trust. And of this number Konrad Adeneur Foundation had the most frequency when it comes to on the job training for FCT journalist in investigative journalism. In view of the findings, this study recommends regularly on the job training on investigative journalism. And, likewise, stakeholders, Nigerian Union Journalists, and among unions should seek for other avenues for attracting trainers of investigative journalism.

Keywords: Investigative journalism, Training, Trainers, Journalist, Abuja

Introduction

The practice of investigative journalism has grown considerably around the globe. An appraisal of literature on the practice of investigative journalism indicates that investigative journalism has spread worldwide and even in authoritarian countries (Kaplan, 2013; Ahmad, Cheema, Waheed, Zulfiqar, Ahmad and Anjaria, 2012). After the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the practice of investigative journalism considerably grew in areas other than Europe and United States (Ahmad, et al, 2012). There have never been more opportunities for regional collaborative investigative journalism explosion in data and communication technology than now (Kaplan, 2013; Donal, 2011).

On the contrary, Oso (2013) observes that the watchdog role argument has over the years been displaced of its effectiveness, as the media occasionally bark, but their ability to bite has been seriously curtailed. Corroborating, Dorril (2000), Just, Levine and Regan (2002) and Hanna (2000) argued that from the last three decades onward the practice of investigative journalism around the world is at moribund stage. The absolute number of investigative stories on local TV news stations had declined during the past five years (Aucoin, 2005). According to losing their eyes and ears around the world precisely when they needed them most. Many broadcast networks and major newspapers are losing their eyes and ears around the world precisely when they needed them most due to the closed foreign bureaus, cut in travel budgets and disbanded investigative teams (International Consortium of Investigative Journalists cited in Amanda, 2016). For example, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Boston Globe*, *Newsday*, and the *Baltimore Sun*, have closed their remaining overseas investigative agencies. Also, CBS News used to have 24 foreign bureaus

and stringers in 44 countries, but today, there are only six bureaus around the world and none of them in Africa or Latin America (Lewis in Kaplan, 2008).

Although, despite the reported claims by pundits on the decline of investigative journalism, the creation of the Centre for Investigative Journalism at various countries of the world and its successful collaboration with a range of broadcasters and news organizations indicated otherwise (Amanda, 2013). Recalls that till 1989 only three non-profit organizations were working in the field of investigative journalism, but at the moment this has increased in recent years, with vibrant centers across the six continents of the world (Ahmad, et al, 2012; Ntibinyane, 2018; Oyedele and Lasisi, 2018)

Regardless of the aforementioned, Berglez (2013) argues that many other possibilities for enhance investigative journalism outcomes remain largely unexplored in some parts of the world. Could this be applicable to journalists in Abuja? It on this note, the study attempts to contribute to the knowledge base by exploring investigative journalism training and trainers of journalists in Abuja.

The following objectives are formulated for this study:

1. To determine the whether journalists in FCT have on the job training (i.e workshop, seminar etc) in investigative journalism
2. To find out the trainers and most regular trainer(s) of FCT journalists in investigative journalism.

Based on the problem and objectives of the study, the following questions have been designed to guide the study.

1. Do journalists in Abuja (Federal Capital Territory) have on the job training (i.e workshop, seminar etc) in investigative journalism?
2. Who are the trainers and most regular trainer(s) of Abuja (Federal Capital Territory) journalists in investigative journalism?

Reviews of Literature

Concept of Investigative Journalism

The concept of investigative journalism differs from one author to another. According to Carson (mentioned in Amanda, 2016) renowned Investigative journalism scholars-Hugh de Burgh, Tiffen and Schudson have all attempted to define investigative journalism, though their conceptualization of investigative journalism differ, but they all agreed that investigative journalism is to 'expose injury and injustice; reveal information in the public interest; and where necessary, promote legislative reform to correct a wrong legal or administrative loophole. UNESCO (2011) argues that investigative journalism involves exposing to the public matters that are concealed either deliberately by someone in a position of power or accidentally behind a chaotic mass of facts and circumstances that obscure understanding. Also, Marsh (2013) sees investigative journalism as a report that aims to clear the rights and wrongs in the society which targets are not limited and achieves its effects through publicity.

In addition, Yushau (2010) refers to investigative journalism as the mirror of the society that uses its conscience in uncovering wrongdoing that would likely remain hidden to the public. Dyikuk (2001) argues that investigative journalism is a form of journalism in which reporters deeply investigate a single topic of interest often involving crime, politics corruption and corporate wrongdoing. Therefore, investigative report is a type of journalism that is produced over time, outside day-to-

day deadline crunch, and includes diverse sources (Hansen cited in Broussard, 2014).

Investigative Journalism Training and Trainers: A review

A considerable number of mass communication awarding institutions and graduates have proliferated over time (Ayodele and Olisa, 2017; Pate, **Lai** and **Jibril**, 2017). And, yet journalists are poorly trained, because, the quality of journalism education has declining (Ayodele and Olisa, 2017; Carlsson and Poyhtari, 2017). This has promoted debates on the level of training and trainers of investigative journalism around the world. For example, the dearth of investigative journalism training has been mostly attributed to the absence of good curriculum, equipment and tutors (Olusegun, 2004). It is argued that academics do not necessarily have the know-how to teach investigative journalism as they have never practiced it themselves (Saba, 2016: Olusegun, 2004). In others studies, Agba, Abang and Ogri, (2019) detect a wide disparity between what is taught in the classroom and journalism practice which takes place in the newsroom.

Therefore, most journalism graduates have been declared of lacking the basic skills and competence to properly fit into the constantly changing needs of the media industry in the contemporary world (Agba, Abang and Ogri, 2019; Okoro, Obaya and Onyebuchi, 2013; Ojomo, 2015). In other words, there is a yawning gap between journalism educations and what is required to practice journalism elsewhere (UNESCO, 2007). Regardless of Mohammed and Ahmad (2021) position that investigative journalism is taught briefly in Nigerian universities undergraduate programmes under a subsumed course. Based on the aforementioned, these clearly show that most studies attribute the problem of training on the educational system, while some blame it on the employers.

Based on the aforementioned, investigative journalism practice had received heavy set back, this is evident in Kohut (mentioned in Kaplan, 2008) that fewer Americans support watchdog journalism compared to the mid-1980s. Those valuing the press' watchdog role decreased from 67% to 60%. On the contrary, Lars and David (in Kaplan, 2008) reported that the percentage of respondents whom approve of investigative journalism climbed to 84%, indicating that a significant majority of the public still favors a news media that reports on corruption and fraud. In many Africa countries, Ntibinyane (2018) and Oyedele and Lasisi (2018) argue that following the coming of nonprofit organizations and foreign aid investigative journalism has proliferated. Investigative journalism is now being practiced in more than 20 countries throughout the continent. We have in South Africa the *AmaBhungane Center for Investigative Journalism*, in Botswana the *Ink center for Investigative Journalism* and in Nigeria the *Premium Times Center for Investigative Journalism* (Ntibinyane, 2018). And there are other NGOs; Olawoyin (2018) observes the presence of International Center for Investigative Reporting (ICIR), Macarthur Foundation, Wole Soyinka Center, Ripple center for data and investigative journalism among others for their support in Nigeria through financial assistance, training and motivational support.

Theoretical framework

The study is anchored on Behaviorism theory. Behaviorism theory is **propounded by** John B. Watson **in 1940s**. Behaviorism theory claims that learning is endless. It also argues that learning is observable and measurable behavior, as consciousness cannot be seen, touched or exhibited in a test tube (Mangal, 2008). Behaviorists argued that most human behavior is the result of conditioning by the external environment, **Baran and Davis (2010) explain:**

Early mass communication theorists, who saw the media as providing external stimuli that triggered immediate responses, frequently used behaviorist notions. For example, these ideas could be applied to the analysis of the Nazi propaganda films. The powerful, ugly

images presented of Jews or the mentally ill were expected to trigger negative responses in their German audiences. Repeated exposure to these images would condition them to have a negative response whenever they see or think about Jews. These behaviorist notions were used by some theorists to develop what has come to be known as **magic bullet theory (p. 81)**

Although, the basic assumption of behaviorism theory is that learning only occurs after some changes in behavior due to acquisition, reinforcement and associations. In other words, behaviorism learning theory entails the change(s) in behavior that result from stimulus-response associations made by the teacher and learner (**Zhou and Brown, 2017**). Therefore, Behaviorism theory is a learning theory that focuses on modifying behavior (Sabo, 2020). Since, learners are blank slate that should be provided with information to be learnt (Mangal, 2008). Furthermore, according to Harold and Corcoran (2013) the key assumptions of behaviorism that support education are:

- Learning occurs where specific stimuli are introduced to the learners.
- Every behavior is learned
- The behavior is governed by the environment in which it occurs,
- Learning doesn't occur without teaching
- Learning equates to changing behavior

- Behavior is governed by what follows actions

Therefore, logic for adopting this theory is as follows: considering the fact that FCT journalists are humans, and humans are prone to behavioral changes. For instance, the assumption of the theory contends that humans are passive and blank slate, therefore, training (stimulus) must take place before learning will be attained. Like investigative journalism education, journalists would have to be trained by professionals in other to practice investigative journalism.

Methodology

This paper adopts in-depth interview method (qualitative). This is because interview elicits deeper insight at building a robust understanding of a topic in complex relationships of our social world (Wotanis, 2011; Maxwell, 2012; Patricia, 2017). The population of this study is made up of 3,050 journalists in the Federal Capital Territory- Abuja (Nigerian Union of Journalists, 2019). **The sample size for the study** was determined through saturation and sufficiency. Although, attaining saturation and sufficiency could be quite difficult for some researchers (Seidman, 2006; Baconshone, 2020). Hence, Boyd (2001) suggests that saturation can often be reached after interviewing 2 to 10 persons. But, whenever 2 to 10 persons are often too few to meet the sufficiency standard depending on the study, Luborsky and Rubinstein (mentioned in Boyd, 2001) recommended between 12 – 26 respondents in other to achieve saturation and sufficiency. Considering, Luborsky and Rubinstein's recommendation, the study interviewed 21 news editors.

These 21 interviewees were selected through mixed method sample. This method is adopted because is a kind of sample that precedes another and influences the proceeding sample using probability and non-probability sample namely; stratified and purposive sample (Louis, Lawrence, and Keith, 2018). Thus, stratified sample was used to group media houses into 3 strata namely: print media (newspaper and magazine), Electronic media (radio and television) and online media. Thereafter, the researcher selected 21 interviewees (7 for each media genre) using purposive sample. Data were collected with the aid of interview guide and presented on table and analyzed with the aid of thematic analysis using Atlas.Ti software application.

Data Analysis and Findings

Research question 1: Do journalists in Abuja (Federal Capital Territory) have on the job training (i.e workshop, seminar etc) in investigative journalism?

This research question seeks to know whether Abuja (Federal Capital Territory) have on the job training – be it workshop, seminar etc. in investigative journalism

Table 1: Response on the job training on investigative journalism

Theme	Quotation Content	Source
On the job training investigative journalism	I had chance to attend many courses organized by my employer both former and current employers organized by the Nigeria Union of Journalists among other bodies that I belong to. I have attended courses within and outside the country, on course that are related to investigative journalism.	P21
	Yes. I went to International Institute of Journalism here in Abuja and I was taught investigative journalism.	P20
	Yes. I had training on investigative journalism	P18
	Yes. I had training with African Institute for Investigative Journalism	P17
	Of course, yes, we were taught investigative journalism...The recent was three-week training in Germany DWU financed by Konrad.	P15
	Yes. I learnt investigative journalism on the job.	P14
	Yes. I have done courses on investigative journalism.	P12
	Yes. I have been exposure to like few investigative trainings organized in Nigeria.	P11
	Yes. A little bit. I had training with MacArthur foundation and some unknown organization.	P9
	Yes. I had some training. The recent one was the one day BBC training, I think last year.	P8
	Yes. I got most of it on the field. So, the lessons on the field were more practical or demonstrative.	P7
	Yes. Some training was related to work and sorry I cannot disclose them. Although some were local and other were outside the country.	P6
	Yes. I was taught during my post graduate - developmental communication and also during work.	P4
Yes. I have done some	P3	
Yes.	P2	
Oh! Yes. I have undergone a number of courses both at home and aboard on investigative journalism.	P1	
No on the job training on investigative journalism	Not at all.	P19
	Not really.	P16
	No.	P13
	No. I have not necessarily attended any. No. It is not something that I am particularly kin about.	P10

As shown in table 4.2.2.6, there are two themes- on the job training on investigative journalism' and 'No on the job training on investigative journalism'. The theme on the job training on investigative journalism had the most reoccurring theme (P21, P20, P18, P17, P15, P14, P12, P11, P9, P8, P7, P6, P4, P3, P2, and P1).

For instance, participant 1 acknowledged that, 'Oh! Yes. I have undergone a number of courses both home and aboard on investigative journalism.' In the same vein, participant 4 added that, 'Yes. I was taught during my post graduate- developmental communication and also during work.' Similarly, participant 15 said, 'Of course, yes, we were taught investigative journalism. The recent was three-week training in Germany DWU financed by Konrad.' Also, Participant 8 affirmed in an extract that 'Yes. I had some training. The recent one was one day BBC training, I think last year.' Participant 9 affirmed that 'Yes. A little bit. I had training with MacArthur foundation and some unknown organizations.' In the same mood, it was participant 12 that confirmed that 'Yes. I have done courses on investigative journalism.' And, participant 17, affirmed that 'Yes. I had training with African institute of investigative journalism.'

This result signifies that majority respondent had on the job training on investigative journalism. This result aligns with Mohammed and Ahmad (2021) study that journalists are taught investigative journalism.

Research question 2: Who are the trainers and most regular trainer(s) of Abuja (Federal Capital Territory) journalists on investigative journalism? and

This research objective seeks to find out the organizer or trainers of Abuja (Federal Capital Territory) journalists on investigative journalism and also those whom often train the journalists. Below is a present to that effect:

Table 2: Response on investigative journalism organizers/trainers

Themes	Quotation Contents	Sources
African Institute for Investigative Journalism	Yes. I had training with African Institute for Investigative Journalism	P17
BBC	I have done many trainings that were organized by world bank institute, BBC name them. The recent one was one day BBC training, i think last year.	P3 P8
Konrad Adeneur Foundation	...The recent was three -week training in Germany DWU financed by Konrad. Another by Konrad Adeneur Foundation in Kano. Most of the trainings have been long now, so I can not say exactly, b ut of course, some were privately organized by Konrad Adeneur	P15 P12 P2
World Bank Institute	...the training was organized by World Bank Institute.	P3
MacArthur Foundation	I had training with MacArthur Foundation... There is growth in journalism support from MacArthur	P9 P16
International Institute of Journalism	...International Institute of Journalism here in Abuja	P20
American Embassy	One sponsored by American embassy. I recalled that one of them was sponsored by USA government at a time.	P7 P1
Nigeria Union of Journalists	...organized by the Nigeria Union of Journalist s among other bodies	P21
Premium Times	Premium Times School for Investigative J ournalism. I have been trained twice.	P4
Daily Trust	It was organized by Daily Trust Newspaper Foundation.	P11

Table 2, presents ten themes; African Institute for Investigative Journalism, BBC, Konrad Adeneur Foundation, World Bank Institute, MacArthur Foundation, International Institute of Journalism, American Embassy, Nigeria Union of Journalists, Premium Times and Daily Trust. From these themes Konrad Adeneur Foundation had the most responses (P15, P2 and P12). According to Participant 15'...*The recent was three week training in Germany DWU financed by Konrad.*' Participant 12 confirmed that, he had training with '*Konrad Adeneur Foundation in Kano.*' And Participant 2 affirmed that '*Most of the trainings have been long now, so I cannot say exactly. But of course, some were privately organized Konrad Adeneur Foundation.*'

This therefore implies that on the job training in investigative journalism were done by ten trainers: African Institute for Investigative Journalism, BBC, Konrad Adeneur Foundation, World Bank Institute, MacArthur Foundation, International Institute of Journalism, American Embassy, Nigeria Union of Journalists, Premium Times and Daily Trust. Also, responses affirmed that Konrad Adeneur Foundation had the most frequency. The result from this study compares with Olawoyin (2018) that Konrad Adeneur Foundation, International Center for Investigative Reporting (ICIR), Macarthur Foundation, and Wole Soyinka Center for investigative journalism among others has been instrumental to the training and motivational support of investigative journalists.

Discussion

The first finding from the study indicates that majority of FCT journalists had on the job training on investigative journalism practice. This result implies that despite journalists daily experience on the field, there is still need for on the job training as argued in behaviorism theory that learners are blank slate and every behavior occurs when specific stimuli (i.e training) are introduced to the learners (Mangal, 2008). Also, this result supports other studies in investigative journalism training. For example, Saba (2016) and Mohammed and Ahmad (2021) affirmed that journalists are been trained on investigative journalism.

The second finding indicates that on the job training in investigative journalism were done by ten trainers namely- African Institute for Investigative Journalism, BBC, Konrad Adeneur Foundation, World Bank Institute, MacArthur Foundation, International Institute of Journalism, American Embassy, Nigeria Union of Journalists, Premium Times and Daily Trust. Also, responses affirmed that Konrad Adeneur Foundation had the most frequency. The result from this study buttresses one of the assumption of behaviorism theory that learning is endless (Mangal, 2008). Also, the result compares with Olawoyin (2018) that Konrad Adeneur Foundation, International Center for Investigative Reporting (ICIR), Macarthur Foundation, and Wole Soyinka Center for investigative journalism among others has been instrumental to the training and motivational support of investigative journalists. There is also evidence that nonprofit organizations and foreign aid investigative journalism such as Premium Times Investigative journalism center, Wole Soyinka Center for Investigative journalism, Ripple center for data and investigative journalism among others trains journalists (Ntibinyane, 2018).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, the findings of the study contribute to the existing fountain of knowledge by assessing investigative journalism training and trainers of Abuja journalists. Thus, the study discovered that FCT journalists had on the job training on investigative journalism practice. Also, on the job training in investigative journalism were done by ten trainers namely- African Institute for Investigative Journalism, BBC, Konrad Adeneur Foundation, World Bank Institute, MacArthur Foundation, International Institute of Journalism, American Embassy, Nigeria Union of Journalists, Premium Times and Daily Trust. And, of this number Konrad Adeneur Foundation had the most frequency when it comes to on the job training for investigative journalism.

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommends the following;

- There should be regularly on the job training for FCT journalists in investigative

journalism.

- Likewise, stakeholders, Nigerian Union Journalists, and among unions should seek for other avenues of attracting trainers of investigative journalism.

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