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Prospects for Investigative Reporting in Private Media Organization in Nigeria: A Case Study of Unity FM and Al'barka Radio

Shehu Abdulkadir Abdullahi & Sarah Oluwadamilola Olanase
Federal Polytechnic Bauchi, Nigeria
The Polytechnic Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria
sabdulkadir240@gmail.com; Olanasesarah@gmail.com

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Abstract

This research work was conducted in order to determine the Prospects for Investigative Reporting in Private Media outlets in Bauchi and Jos. The objective of the study was to find out whether the two private radio stations (Unity FM, Albarka Radio) in Jos and Bauchi do practice Investigative Journalism. A qualitative, cross-sectional survey was employed for the study. In-depth interview was used as means of data collection from a purposively sample of six radio journalists, consisting of two editor and four reporters. Following from the social responsibility and surveillance theoretical discourse, findings revealed that both the radio stations in Jos and Bauchi do practice Investigative Journalism and are also training young minds on the beat. This research work recommends that the practical aspect of the course should receive more attention than the theoretical part in tertiary institutions, there should be constant training, retraining and retraining staff in each media organization and also adequate budgets of funds should be put into considerations by the management of any media organization.

Keywords: Investigative, Journalism, Reporting, Media and Organization

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INTRODUCTION

Investigative Journalism is the aspect of Journalism that deals with special investigation into special issues, events that is of high significance, such as; crime, corruption, political issue, terrorism, and others especially about people in political positions or people of high profile. This aspect of Journalism is considered to be tedious, tactful and dangerous adventure because many Investigative Journalists tend to be exposed to kidnapping, killing, raping, threaten and the popular case is that of Dele Giwa who was killed on the 19th of October, 1986 in his house (no 25, Talabi crescent, off Talabi street, Adeniyi jones avenue) by a letter bomb. His death came as a result of investigating a drug case involving Nigeria and the US. Dele Giwa was a famous and renowned Journalist in Nigeria; he was the founder and Editor in-Chief of the News watch magazine which was established alongside Journalists like Ray Ekpu, Dan Agbese and Yakubu Mohammed in 1984. Dele Giwa was known to be a Journalist who sticks unto the truth and also take his time in exposing the corrupt and illegal deeds of the government, and this earned him the people's recognition, ultimate support and trust. This research work intends to give an over view of the prospects for Investigative Reporting, as it has many, sometimes widely divergent, meanings. To understand what Investigative Reporting is it may be best to start by explaining what it is not? It is said that all reporting is Investigative. After all, Journalists routinely dig for facts, they ask questions, they get information, they "Investigate," but is this really the case in the day-to-day practice of Journalism? How deep do reporters really dig for information? How probing are their questions? how complete or original is the information that they present? If reporters attend a press conference and then write about it, they cannot be said to be doing Investigative Reporting, if they interview those wounded in a police operation and then report what they have been told, that is not Investigative Journalism either the reality is that daily news coverage is usually not probing or Investigative, it reports mainly what officials or institutions say as well as other people's responses to what has been previously said. Much of what we consider "news" is reports on official statements or reactions to official statements, daily Journalism is also mainly about events that reporters have witnessed or interviewed witnesses about such as a train collision, a demonstration, a criminal being arrested. There is no digging beyond what has been said or what has been seen, daily news reporting is seldom Investigative; it is mostly reactive. Most of the time Journalists react to what is happening or what has been publicly announced, reporters seldom decide on their own what or who they cover, they often do

not initiate story ideas, unfolding events and the daily schedule of news briefings and press conferences determine what makes it to the newspaper, the newscast or the web.

Statement of Problem

There are claims that Investigative Journalism has been in the decline since its haydays in the 1970s, and many investigations are now more concerned with entertainment than information. (Harcup, 2009). Yusha'u, M. 2009:155-174 posits that Investigative Journalism as practiced in Nigeria is ineffective as it is constrained by several problems despite its bright prospects. More often than not, Journalists publish half-truth, distorted stories and outright falsehood without in-depth investigation, thereby making rumors, unsubstantiated claims and emotions the bedrock of information gathering. While the press can help to strengthen government institutions, especially through its watchdog role, significant reform is needed to strengthen media organizations, to limit corruption and to restore public confidence in the press. Investigative Journalism in Nigeria is limited by low salaries, bad working conditions, corrupt practices by Journalists, and clientelism. Investigative Journalism can be distinguished from routine Journalism in that it must be in the public interest and relies on extensive research and the follow-up of information. Investigative Journalism often involves exposing corruption, as well as acts that violate norms and morals, allegations of corruption become scandals when they are exposed to the public most often by the media. Key factors that impede the use of Investigative Journalism to uncover corruption scandals include the following:

Aims and Objectives of the Study

This study is aimed at exploring the potentials for Investigative Journalism among private media organizations in Bauchi and Jos Plateau state. However, the study is set to achieve the following **OBJECTIVES**:

i. To find out if private media organizations in Bauchi and Jos practice Investigative Journalism

ii. To investigate the prospect for the practice of Investigative Reporting in private media organizations in Bauchi and Jos

iii. To compare the practice of Investigative Reporting in the two selected stations

Research Questions

The dissertation will explore these research questions through a survey and in-depth interviews with Investigative Journalists working in some selected media houses in Bauchi and Jos:

i. Do private media organizations in Bauchi and Jos practice Investigative Journalism?
ii. What are the prospects of Investigative Journalism for the practice of Investigative Reporting in Unity F.M and Albarka Radio?
iii. How influential do Investigative Journalists perceive their work and to what extent do they discharge their surveillance functions in Unity F.M and Albarka Radio?

Scope of the Study

This study is restricted to only Unity F.M, Jos, Plateau state and Albarka Radio Bauchi, Bauchi state.

The scope of this research work is limited only to the two radio stations mentioned above so as to know how well are they practicing Investigative Reporting and to what extent do they report Investigative issues and also know the problems they encountered during reporting or sourcing of information.

Significance of the Study

This research work deals with the challenges and problems of the prospects of Investigative Journalism practice in Nigeria as an academic work which intends to pass through fact findings. The study will enable the researcher to have more knowledge about the prospects for Investigative Reporting in some private media organizations in Bauchi and Jos, Plateau state and will also help the researcher to provide some recommendations towards how to prevent these challenges of the practice of Investigative Reporting in Bauchi and Jos, Plateau state.

Furthermore, it will enhance the knowledge of various players in the mass media especially radio on their role in effective and efficient reportage of Investigative Reporting since Journalist are refers to as the "watch dog" of the society who tends to uncover wrong doings of public, private office holders and government officials

Definition of Terms

Prospect: The potential and present level of Investigative Reporting in Nigeria.

Investigative : The act of discovering information by digging deep into an issue carefully to discover the truth and report.

Reporting: to dissemination or sharing of information, idea and opinions using a suitable channel of communication.

Private: Refers to personal ownership fund and operated by individual or group of persons for personal use and control without the involvement of government.

Media: Refers to channel of communications that information's are been passed from the channel to the audience.

Organization: Refers to an organized body of Journalist that are guided by some legal entities with an explicit purpose of uncovering information and reporting.

Bauchi: Bauchi local government was created according to the local government reform of 1975, the local government comprises of 3 districts namely Zungur, Bauchi and Talambi with 20 villages areas and 445 hamlets, the local government cover area of 3,540, 701 square kilometers

Jos: Jos is a city in the middle belt of Nigeria. the city has a population of about 900,000 residents based on the 2006 census popularly called "j-town", it is the administrative capital of plateau state. The city is located on the Jos plateau at about 1,238 meters or 4,062 feet above sea level.

Literature Review

In this chapter, I will now seek to review available literature on the importance of Investigative Journalism, this study is deeply rooted in two theories, which are; social responsibility theory and surveillance function of the media. First, I will argue the concentration of media is a significant hindrance to Investigative Journalism. Second, I will introduce the development of a normative theory of social responsibility, and argue that Investigative Journalism is a public good needed to hold power to account. Finally, I will

look at the surveillance function of the media and introduce various models of surveillance function of the media in Investigative Journalism.

Chambers (2000:89) posits that Investigative Journalism in the United Kingdom had flourished in the last three decades of the 20th century. However, Dorril (2000) contended that Investigative Journalism enjoyed "a brief bloom in the seventies, flowered for a short period in the seventies, badly witted in the eighties and is now effectively dead." On the contrary, Hanna (2000:2) argues that Investigative Journalism was not dead but in decline. Variables responsible for the decline, according to him are structured changes within the media since 1970s and relentless cost-cutting.

The Nigerian press has over the years played an active role in the struggle for the country's independence and influenced the thinking and actions of stakeholders as well as government policies. Today, scholars hold that the Nigerian press has become lazy and does less in-depth reporting Abide (2010) noted that "sensational news, congratulatory messages and coronation news have become the major contents of national newspapers". (www.naij.nig.org).

Concept of Investigative Reporting

Investigative Journalism is a form of Journalism in which reporters deeply investigate a single topic of interest, such as serious crimes, political corruption, or corporate wrongdoing an Investigative Journalist may spend months or years researching and preparing a report. Practitioners sometimes use the terms "watchdog reporting" or "accountability reporting". Most Investigative Journalism has traditionally been conducted by newspapers, wire services, and freelance Journalists. with the decline in income through advertising, many traditional news services have struggled to fund Investigative Journalism, which is time-consuming and therefore expensive.

Passion: To Investigative Journalist Evelyn Groenink, passion is the most important quality: 'Most Investigative Journalism is a thankless endeavor, time and energy consuming that will get your editor impatient and powerful people annoyed with you.

Curiosity: Asking questions is where Investigative Journalism starts. The questions can be about events in the news or about things you see or hear about in your everyday life.

Initiative: Investigative Journalists need to take the initiative, do their own preliminary research and shape the idea into a solid story plan. If the newsroom is still not interested,

further initiative in identifying support (such as an Investigative grant) for the work might be needed.

The purpose of Investigative Journalism

A pertinent question that has been asked many times is what is the importance of Journalism in the society? A lot has been written about the importance of Investigative Journalism and many scholars agree on the role and the importance of this genre in a society. According to Rosenstiel and Kovach the primary purpose of Investigative Journalism is to provide citizens with the information they need to be free and self-governing.

Theoretical framework

The researcher decided to use two (2) different theories for the purpose of this research which include; Social Responsibility theory and Surveillance theory

Social responsibility theory

In mid-20th century most of the developing countries and third world nations have used this social responsibility theory of press which is associated with "the Commission of the Freedom of Press" in United States at 1949. In the book "Four theories of Press" (Siebert, Peterson and Schramm) it's been stated that "pure libertarianism is antiquated, out dated and obsolete." That paved way for replacement of Libertarian theory with the Social responsibility theory.

The theory performs the following tasks:

i. Servicing the political system by providing information, discussion, and debate on public affairs;
ii. enlightening the public so that it should be capable of self-government

Social responsibility theory allows free press without any censorship but at the same time the content of the press should be discussed in public panel and media should accept any obligation from public interference or professional self-regulations or both. The theory lies between both authoritarian theory and libertarian theory because it gives total media freedom in one hand but the external controls in other hand. Here, the press ownership is private. The social responsibility theory moves beyond the simple "Objective" reporting (facts reporting) to "Interpretative" reporting (Investigative Reporting). The total news is complete facts and truthful but the commission of the freedom press stated that "No

longer giving facts truthfully rather than give a necessary analyzed or interpretative report on facts with clear explanations".

The theory helped in creating professionalism in media by setting up a high level of accuracy, truth, and information. The commission of press council also included some tasks based on social responsibility of media, which are as follows:

i. Formulate the code of conduct for the press.
ii. Improve the standards of Journalism.
iii. Safeguarding the interests of Journalism and Journalist.
iv. Criticize and make some penalty for violating the code of conduct.

METHODS

Methodology according to Fiske S.T., and Cuddy, G.P., (1983) is the study of techniques used in conducting research within the science and social sciences. The research relied on the explorative research methodology for source of data. The explorative research methodology combines more than one method of studying the research problem. In this research methodology, secondary data collection such as books, newspaper, journals, magazines were consulted to get secondary information on the research topic, while questionnaires will be administered to respondents of the study for primary data, in addition to in-depth interview to get more information on the research.

Research Design

Under this study, Qualitative survey research method will be used in conducting this study. Wimmer, R.D. & Dominick, J.R. (2003), explains that the survey method presents the universe of the study by appropriating or reducing the universe in that it provides the study with the opportunity to check on the incident, distributions and interrelation of variables (demographic, information, attitude, motives, intentions and so on)

For the purpose of this study, cross sectional survey research design will be used. This is because descriptive research is primarily concerned with the collection and analysis of data for the purpose of describing, evaluating or comparing current or prevailing practices, event and occurrences. This study adopts the survey design aimed at collecting data in order to answer the various research questions this study intends to answer.

Population of the Study

According to Abayomi (1986) research population is the totaling of cases in an investigation of research element.

The population of this study comprises of staff of the two selected radio stations in Bauchi Jos. This distribution is as follows:

Table 1: Population of study

Variables	**Number of staffs**	
	News department	**Programs department**
Albarka Radio	20	10
Unity F.M	10	8
Total	**30**	**18**

Source: Respective Private Radio stations in Bauchi and Jos.

Sampling Design

In the theory of finite population sampling, a sampling design specifies for every possible sample its probability of being drawn, sample design is the framework, or road map, that serves as the basis for the selection of a survey sample and affects many other important aspects of a survey as well. One must define a sampling frame that represents the population of interest from which a sample is to be drawn. Sample is the number of people that are selected from the entire population for the purpose of research by the researcher

Sampling technique

The sample technique which the researcher adopted for this study is the purposive sampling technique. According to Akinfeleye (2008:12) purposive sampling represents a group of different non-probability sampling technique also known as judgmental, selective or subjective sampling, purposive sampling relies on the judgement of the researcher when it comes to selecting the units (e.g., people, cases/organizations, events, pieces of data) that are to be studied usually, the sample being investigated is quite small, especially when compared with probability sampling.

The main goal of purposive sampling is to focus on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest, which will best enable you to answer your research questions.

Sampling size/procedure

According to Krejcie, R.V. and Morgan, D.W. (1970) sample depends on the type of research involved. This distribution was done based on the total number of staff in news department and programs department under the study. The distribution is as follows:

Table 2: Sample frame and size

Variables	**Number of staff**		**Sample size**
	News department	**Programs department**	
Albarka Radio	20	10	28
Unity F.M	10	8	16
Total	**30**	**18**	**44**

Source: Respective Private Radio stations in Bauchi and Jos.

The above table shows the distribution across the news department and program department in the two Radio stations in Bauchi and Jos. (Albarka Radio Bauchi and Unity F.M Jos) the total aggregate is 48.

Method Instrument of data collection

In gathering the data, an intensive interview In-depth interviews are preferred if focus group aren't feasible, and particularly if the topic under investigation is sensitive in nature and you believe folks won't contribute otherwise. You interested in individual rather than collective perspectives. This method can also be used to refine questions for follow up (e.g., to develop future surveys.)

Method of data analysis

The major technique that will be use in the data analysis will be qualitative analysis using thematic method of presentation and will be presented based on the following steps:

i. Transcription of all data
ii. Organizing data
iii. Data coding

iv. Data Validation

Data validation is one of the pillars of successful research. Since data is at the heart of research, it becomes extremely vital to ensure that it is not flawed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This sub chapter will be discussions of findings based on information obtained from the filed during conducting the survey and relate it with literature which is the stand point of different scholars that were quote in the work.

RQ1: Do private media organizations in Bauchi and Jos practice Investigative Reporting?

This research question enquires about the practice of Investigative Reporting in Bauchi and Jos which is to know if Radio Stations in the two selected states do practice Investigative Reporting and to what level do they practice it? Based on the findings obtained through the survey conducted for this research, both the two selected Radio Stations do practice Investigative Reporting.

Chambers (2000:89) posits that Investigative Journalism in the United Kingdom had flourished in the last three decades of the 20th century and based on the findings obtained in the course of this study, However, according to a 40-year-old retired Investigative Journalist with the Federal Radio Cooperation of Nigeria (FRCN) who is now a staff in Albarka Radio of Bauchi, the issue of Investigative Journalism is paramount in the media industry because it exposes wrong doings of public office holders, government officials or individuals who have committed an offence but don't want the public to know. Investigative Journalism is of high importance in the media industry that all media stations irrespective of who fund the organization do carryout Investigative programs in order to uncover the wrong doings of government officials and also private individuals, Investigative Reporting is not a beat that can just be practice anyhow and it is very important for all media stations to take part in contributing and funding it staff to source and report on in order to exposes some individuals that are planning evil which will bring justice to the people. Also, another contribution was made by Rabi'u Oscar of Unity F.M, where he sees Investigative Journalism as an

> *"aspect of Journalism which a reporter will go undercover in other to enquire information secretly without the knowledge of the people involved, Investigative Journalism in our organization is unlike other international broadcast organizations that have the necessary gadgets in abundance which cannot be compared to our own".*

From this, you can see that both the literature and the findings from the survey have similar view point about the practice of Investigative Reporting.

RQ2: What are the prospects of Investigative Journalism for the practice of Investigative Reporting?

Some few notable cases or instances of Investigative Reporting in Nigeria have contributed to the social change and good governance in the democratization processes. Investigative Journalism has not been as popular and fully harnessed relative to developed democracies (Anyadike, 2013; Forbes, 2005, Kaplan, 2007). Notwithstanding, there have been spectacular cases of Investigative reports across the continent, shaking institutions and individuals, mostly in the power circle. Only few examples will be mentioned here for reference purposes as the cases are so numerous to be reviewed in this work whose focus is on the Prospects for Investigative Reporting in Private Media Organizations in Bauchi and Jos.

- Dasuki Gate Scandal
- Fisayo Soyombo Corruption in Nigerian Police System
- Orji Kalu N7.5 billion fraud
- Joshua Dariye 1.6 billion naira
- Olusegun Obasanjo $16b power fund

According to sources from Albarka Radio, Investigative Journalism to be candid is widely practiced and many people don't want to get involved because of the risk in it, the upcoming Journalists are only looking for money instead of doing the right thing and Investigative Journalism requires a lot of resources, there is stress of doing it, sometimes people lose their lives during conducting such kind of investigations. They believed that with time, the upcoming Journalists and the existing ones that run away from the beat will see reasons why they should embark or engaged themselves into it and to create their names with gold by gaining peoples recognition and praises for exposing corrupt officials. People would be supportive to investigate Journalists because at the end of the day, they

are the ones to enjoy the work of the Investigative Journalist for instance if a minister or commissioner deep his hands into the funds of the ministry and at the end of the day there is nothing done with that money, when Journalists investigate into the issue and reports, that individual wouldn't go unpunished and the people will be happy while some other sources from Unity F.M said that the beat is very risky that cannot be entrusted to all Journalists but there are also trustworthy Journalists who can handle the job and also trustworthy people that will encourage Journalists by being bold to provide them with information, sensitizing them and also informing them about something that is going wrong. Based on the above postulations, the prospects of Investigative Journalism in years to come will be very bright having more Journalists venturing into it and as well the Journalists put their beat above all things by reporting events or issues as they happened without manipulation and presenting nothing but facts by differentiating personal opinions from facts where necessary.

RQ3: How influential do Investigative Journalists perceive their work and to what extent do they discharge their surveillance function?

Unlike the case with some other Journalism reportorial fields, Investigative Reporting is faced with myriad of challenges the world over - from developed to developing societies (Coronel, 2009; Martin & Justin, 2010). This is largely due to its potentialities in checking political and corporate excesses and impacting on an overall process of social change in society (Forbes, 2005). The challenges and barriers to Investigative Reporting are relative to regional contexts. While there may be a few barriers that may infringe on practitioners and the practice global. the same way, a host of other challenges affect the practice of Investigative Reporting in some countries or regions in more peculiar ways relative to others (Coronel, 2009; Martin & Justin, 2010). Like the saying goes, a Journalist has nose for news, eye for news which makes him to be always conscious about the happenings in an environment i.e. what is going in and out. Whenever you see something that is of human interest, you tend to bring it to the for burner to see if there will be an availability of data on that particular issues.

Surveillance matters a lot in life not only to Journalists but to people as well if not, banditry, terrorism, kidnappings, rapping and more social problems will terrorize your area. Always be keen and have interest on issues regarding human lives by being security conscious. The practice of Investigative Journalism will be very wide in years to come like

here for instance, we do train the Journalists that are under us and if it is applicable to all organization, almost all the upcoming Journalists will have good understanding of the beat because of the mentorship they received and they will come up and continue with what we have been doing when we are really tired so as to keep it going and also be initiatives on how to go about it. As the watchdog of societies, you should always put an eye on different angles of life through some policies in the society don't allow Journalists to carry out their duties.

Summary

Investigative Journalism is a form of Journalism in which reporters deeply investigate a single topic of interest, such as serious crimes, political corruption, or corporate wrongdoing. An Investigative Journalist may spend months or years researching and preparing a report. Practitioners sometimes use the terms "watchdog reporting" or "accountability reporting".

Most Investigative Journalism has traditionally been conducted by newspapers, wire services, and freelance Journalists.

This research work has covered a wide aspect by digging deep in the above two radio stations to know the prospects for Investigative Reporting in private's media organizations in Bauchi and Jos.

CONCLUSION

Very little do Journalists realized that Investigative Journalism does not only change the system of laundering, looting and misappropriation of funds, but also contributes to the development of a nation which also build a good image and reputations for Journalists there by leaving legacies for the upcoming one's to follow. Journalists render their services to humanity which their importance in a society cannot be ignored in view of its role in promoting mutual understanding between the government and the public, between the publics and the Journalists so as to ensure a free and successful dissemination of information.

It is the hope of this research work that findings of the research will be used to communities and authorities particularly the NBTE, Vice-chancellors, Rectors, Head of

Departments and sources of information to help in brightening the potential and prospects of Investigative Journalism in years to come.

Recommendation

Regular review and revise laws: I recommend that the government should ensure legislation aligns with international standards protecting press freedom and investigative reporting

Non-disclosure of sources: If Investigative Journalists will continue with their habits of not disclosing their sources of information's which is an ethical standard for the practice of any form of Journalistic practice, people will be open to them knowing that they have people they can trust who will not disclose them and put their lives in danger.

- **Provision of Security:** As many run away from the beat because of the high risk involve having the fear of who will take care of their family after them, if proper security is provided to guard, support and help them carry out their duties effectively without any fear or traits, many Journalists will venture into the beat because they will feel secured.
- **Adequate budgets of funds should be put into considerations by the management of any media organization:** Funding from the managements should receive a high attention to enable Journalists carry out their duties. Many budgets prepared by Journalists have been turned down by their managements which are essential and necessary elements to make reports successful, without adequate funding from the management's Journalists might end up killing stories by collecting bribes from the persons involved in the dubious acts which deviate or contradicts the ethics and law of the land.
- **Modern equipment's/gadgets should be provided to Journalists:** We are now in a digital world where most people pay attention to what someone is doing. Modern gadgets like; laptops, palmtops, tablets, sophisticated midgets, tape recorders and others will assist greatly in helping an Investigative Journalists to carry out their work successfully by gathering information's undercover without people know they are doing, most people will not open up when they realized you are recording their conversations.
- **Constant training, retraining and retraining staff:** This serves as a booster to the reporters because it equipped them with whatever they want and provide them with

skills on how to perform their duties for the organization, community and their nation at large.

- **Salary increment/remuneration:** Salary is an essential and crucial element that need high attention from the government and the managements as well. Remuneration matters a lot in life, when Journalists are satisfied with their monthly salaries and allowances, they wouldn't be engaged in some dubious activities of blackmail, publishing fake stories and lot others all in the name to get money to carter for their needs and to provide for their family.
- **The practical aspect of the course should receive more attention than the theoretical part:** NBTE and other agencies that gives license for universities, polytechnics and colleges to teach mass communication should emphasis more on the practical aspect of the course to all the institutions they offered license to teach mass communication and the managements of those institutions should keep a close eye on the lecturers talking practical courses and also help them by providing all the necessary gadgets needed for the practical.

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