SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MEDIA AND THE CHALLENGES OF INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study highlights the social responsibility of the media and examined the challenges impeding the practice of investigative reporting in Nigeria. This study is anchored in the social responsibility of the press. The conceptual research method was adopted in this study which focuses on analysing existing data established by seasoned scholars on the subject under review. Findings from the study indicate that the level of investigative journalism in Nigeria is dwindling due to several challenges such as press laws, official secret acts, ownership influence, corruption among the journalists, unprofessionalism on the part of the journalists, inadequate information and restricted access to documents. Some of the obstacles confronting investigative journalists are often promoted by some media regulatory institutions or agencies, which become corrupted at times, making it harder for investigative journalists to do an extensive investigation. As difficult as investigative reporting is in Nigeria, prominent media outlets such as Channels TV, Premium Times, and The Cable are sustaining the terrain. Following the findings, the researcher recommends that government at all levels steer clear of secrecy in governance, oppressive legislation, and guarantee the appropriate implementation of the Freedom of Information Act to give unrestricted access to information. Furthermore, greater funding should be made available for investigative journalists to expose the corrupt actions of those in positions of public trust. Finally, in the face of the highlighted obstacles, media operators must accept the reality of the media's social responsibility in society, which is to convey the truth objectively.

Keywords: Investigative journalism, Investigative journalist, Media, Social responsibility, Nigeria

Introduction

The media act as the intermediary between the government and the governed and also serve as the society's mouthpiece. A fundamental obligation of media professionals in any society is to serve as civic watchdogs, whose job it is to disclose truths and hold the government accountable to society. This frequently requires inquiry and in-depth work, which necessitates extensive study, digging deep, researching, questioning, and reporting. Investigative journalism as a branch of journalism focuses on conducting in-depth investigations into high-profile topics and events, such as crime, corruption, politics, terrorism, and others, particularly involving persons in positions of power or who have a large public profile. This area of journalism is seen as a delicate, and hazardous adventure because many investigative journalists are subjected to kidnapping, murder, and threats.

Investigative journalism, commonly known as "watchdog journalism," involves uncovering how rules and regulations are disobeyed; it holds the powerful accountable. To put it in simple terms, investigative journalism is the discovery, reporting, and presentation of information that others strive to conceal. It should be highlighted that fact-finding and fact-giving are fundamental purposes of journalism. As a result, each questionable problem must be resolved, and the results must be made public (Anyadike, 2013).

Over the years, the Nigerian press has played an active part in the country's independence struggle, influencing stakeholders' thoughts and actions as well as government policy. However, Ugwu (2010) observes that investigative journalism in a developing country like Nigeria is challenged by various problems that are nearly hurting its correct implementation, notwithstanding its promise. Scholars now believe that the Nigerian press has gotten sloppy and has done less in-depth reporting. Sensational news, celebratory messages, and entertainment news have emerged as the primary content of national publications. Many critical topics and events of societal significance appear to have been omitted from regular media coverage (Anyadike, 2013).

The investigative journalist's style extends beyond the conventional coverage of incidents, news conferences, and press statements. Investigative journalism aims to uncover concealed evidence about immorality, corruption, malpractice, and misbehaviour that may harm society. The notion of news value is changing as a result of investigative reporting. It is progressively moving news reporting away from the traditional manner of reporting incidents to more original conscious reporting on society's systemic operations. Concerning the above sentence, it is clear that the investigative journalist does not wait for news to happen. They prefer to go beyond the day's news to obtain "the news behind the news", rather than focusing on events and geographic beats. Investigative journalism goes beyond the simple reporting of obvious facts.

Investigative journalism entails delving deep to find what has previously been buried (Ufuophu-Biri, 2008). According to some, investigative journalism has been on the decrease since its prime in the 1970s, and many investigations are now more concerned with entertaining than with providing facts. However, despite its promising promises, investigative journalism in Nigeria is inefficient due to several constraints. Journalists frequently publish half-truths, skewed tales, and blatant falsehoods without thorough examination, allowing rumours, unproven assertions, and emotions to become the cornerstone of information collecting (Anyadike, 2013). This sparked the idea for this research.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria is becoming one of the world's most hazardous and challenging countries for journalists as many of them are frequently spied on, assaulted, unfairly detained, or even assassinated. With over 100 independent newspapers, Africa's most populous nation boasts of true media plurality; nonetheless, reporting issues involving politics, terrorism, financial espionage by the powerful, or community problems is extremely difficult. According to the 2020 World Press Freedom Index compiled by Reporters Without Borders (RWB), Nigeria was rated 115 out of 180 nations and now 120 in 2021. The report placed Nigeria among the nations that are hostile to free press, including India, Afghanistan, Chad, Pakistan, Zimbabwe, and Colombia.

In Nigeria, the media play an important role in safeguarding the stability of our political system, particularly during the battle for self-governance from the British colonial administration. Investigative reporting in Nigeria has remained more dominant in the magazine sector of the print industry than in the newspaper sector over the years, with Newswatch magazine, for example, playing a critical role in bringing into the spotlight and redesigning investigative and interpretative practice (Duyile, 2011). Furthermore, the broadcasting sector's increasing engagement in the industry is relatively new, with Channels TV still serving as an example.

Citizen journalism which supports investigative journalism is hampered by the 2015 cyber-crime law, which is regularly utilised to arbitrarily arrest and imprison journalists and bloggers. The *#Endsars* demonstrations in 2020 were followed by violence against the media as TVC News particularly was set on fire, and several reporters were assaulted. These aroused the researcher's attention to conduct an empirical investigation into the issues confronting investigative journalism in Nigeria.

Research Methodology

This study follows the conceptual research approach which focuses on examining the existing data established by scholars on the issue under evaluation (Snyder, 2019). The data for this study were obtained from secondary sources which comprise journals, newspapers, published books, reports, and articles that dealt with the challenges and prospects of investigative reporting in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Investigative Journalism

The phrase "investigative journalism" paints the images of investigative reporting in the minds of the general public. Some consider any news to be investigative since it necessitates investigation before the reporter can write the story. However, there are variations between daily news and investigative journalism, particularly in terms of depth, problems addressed, focus, and even information-gathering procedures (Adibah, Mohd, & Che, 2014). Investigative reporting is a type of journalism in which reporters thoroughly explore a topic of interest, frequently including crime, governmental corruption, or some other controversy. Investigative journalism is a kind of journalism that focuses on uncovering wrongdoing in public areas. Not only are they exposing wrongdoing, but they are also attempting to uncover the truth (Hassan & Azmi, 2018).

Investigative journalism differs from regular journalism, which focuses on press conferences, press releases, interviews, and other traditional methods of news production to communicate information acquired via official procedures. Investigative journalists have an important role as educators and custodians of the public conscience, functioning as watchdogs on the watch for corruption, mismanagement, and abuses of authority (Yusha'u, 2009). Because it requires discoveries and exclusive coverage, investigative reporting is the most complex and toughest sort of reporting (Dyikuk, 2017). While both basic and specialised reporting are popular, investigative reporting is uncommon.

Who is an Investigative Journalist?

Journalism has traditionally been defined as the act of obtaining, processing, and disseminating information for public consumption. The existence of investigative reporting connotes the existence of an investigative journalist, that is, a tenacious professional who has been educated to cover in-depth news items. An investigative journalist is involved in outrage journalism, indignation at injustice, anger at abuse and exploitation by the powerful.

Investigative journalists are viewed as courageous, and they are hated by the strong, as well as those in positions of authority. Journalists involved in investigative journalism are viewed as custodians responsible for defending societal values that may be violated by those in authority; one of their goals is to ensure that wrongdoers are duly punished, owing to the argument that investigative journalism is done to promote the public's interest. By analysing, critiquing, and interpreting the case under journalistic study, investigative

journalism tries to examine and interpret the value of justice and assert the importance or otherwise of right and wrong, innocence, and guilt (Yusha'u, 2009).

According to Ganiyu (2010), an investigative news reporter should have courage, an incisive intellect, tenacity and perseverance, be single-minded, incorruptible, and have strong interpersonal relationships (good mixer); be open-minded, have a sense of mission, courage, and a love of reading. As per Nwabueze (2012), the following attributes are necessary of an investigative reporter: sound news judgement, research, analytical, and communication skills; a sense of public interest, other qualities include the ability to make good and sound judgments, a mind for an epic journey, good writing skills, courage, and interview techniques skills; the list also includes the ability observe news behind the news, knowledge of videography, computer literacy, and joviality. Nwabueze (2012) goes on to suggest that being brave is an important attribute that maintains investigative reporters in the business. It takes bravery for someone to decide to travel to a country he has never been to and may have never heard of before the inquiry. This is more than just the audacity to approach anyone for an interview, regardless of his or her rank. It has to do with going where others cannot go to get a storey.

In this digital age, the investigative reporter must be computer savvy to store, analyse, and retrieve material in a computer so that his report remains private until it is published. The benefit of computer literacy is that it allows the professional to cruise the internet and look for information relevant to his inquiry (Dyikuk, 2017).

Social Responsibility of the Media

Journalists are supposed to promote fundamental human rights concepts such as democracy, justice, fairness, peace, and international understanding. This imposes a moral obligation on media professionals. Journalism is undoubtedly one of our society's most important social and cultural forces; that is, journalism has an impact on the social production of meaning (Berry, 2008). In most circumstances, the media has always acted as "the court of the masses" where cases are won or lost based on the response of individuals responsible for doing particular activities that have been made known to them. In certain ways, the media serve as a channel for raising and moulding public opinion problems and concerns that affect the broader population. For a large section of the world's population, the media provide a primary source of information about crime and safety (Carli, 2008).

The involvement of the media in crime control and prevention discussions may be both beneficial and detrimental. The negative elements might include interference

with the execution of crime prevention plans and policies since they could sweep up attitudes on such policies and methods owing to their representations and perspectives on crime-related topics. The media's portrayal of crime may be misleading, prejudiced, and encourage improper and destructive crime-control programmes (Dibia, 2014). The media may over-publicise certain crimes, security, and crime prevention, while ignoring white-collar crimes and environmental crimes in other cases. According to Liebes and Blum-Kulka (2004), the media's power in reporting scandals may be exaggerated because news sources play an active role in revealing acts of transgression, and in some cases, it is the journalist who violates an agreement to satisfy either personal motives or the commercial interests of his or her medium.

Despite the above-listed drawbacks, the media do have a beneficial side; its crime coverage and investigation may and, in most circumstances, do aid to crime control and prevention initiatives. In various countries, investigative journalists have assisted and continue to assist in the breaking of severe criminal cases, as well as the creation and passage of laws aimed at assisting in the control of crime (Dibia, 2014).

It is claimed that information is the key to power, and having it indicates that one possesses the necessary knowledge. The media assists in educating the public on particular topics, which stimulates critical thinking on the side of the people and promotes accountability on the part of agencies, institutions, organisations of governments. In Nigeria, like in many other emerging democracies, many public media sources have proven to be government mouthpieces, whilst privately-owned media organisations have tended to serve the interests of their owners and bottom line. The implication is that the public interest is frequently limited (Onyenankeya & Salawu, 2020).

The Nigerian Media and Investigative Reporting

Since the country's independence, numerous Nigerian governments, both military and civilian, have been accused of corruption. The media, for their part, has not been quiet on these concerns, particularly newspapers. However, unlike in many other nations (most especially the developed countries) where the media has been effective in bringing down corrupt public officials, the amount to which success has been accomplished in Nigeria is debatable. Of course, this does not imply that the media in the developed world is perfect; they also confront several problems such as political interests (Yusha'u, 2009).

While most corruption occurs between people, when the media focuses on it, the allegation of corruption receives public attention. The acts of public authorities are readily brought under public scrutiny in this age of communication and information revolution when individuals have access to information through the news media. As a result, the news media exploits political leaders' vulnerabilities and turns controversies into topics of national debate. The media does this for a variety of reasons, including financial interest, the desire of some persons to use scandal stories to achieve certain political goals, the professional ethics of journalism that support and promote factuality and entertainment, and, finally, the intensity of competition that exists between media organisations (Yusha'u, 2009).

It is worth noting that two prominent journalists, Dele Giwa and Bagauda Kaltho, were supposedly assassinated while investigating the crimes committed by Generals Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha, respectively. This once again highlights the need for investigative journalism in Nigeria. Dele Giwa and his colleagues, Ray Ekpu, Dan Agbese, and Yakubu Mohammed, were instrumental in establishing print-investigative journalism in Nigeria (Newswatch in 1984). Dele Giwa was assassinated in his house on October 19, 1986, by a parcel bomb. His son, Billy, who delivered the item to his father, stated that the brown envelope that killed his father was hefty and had a white label with Dele Giwa's name and address inscribed on it. It was labelled "Secret and Confidential," with a caution that only the recipient should open it. The sticker also included the Nigerian Coat of Arms and the words "From the office of the C-in-C." (*Vanguard*, 2011).

Challenges of Investigative Journalism in Nigeria

Even though the government has enacted the freedom of information act, journalists are still harassed or denied access to necessary information. Among the challenges of investigative journalism in Nigeria are:

Media ownership: The ownership of mass media firms is vital in the endeavour to combat and regulate crime, as privately held enterprises will do whatever it takes to stay in business. When people in government or power threaten a shutdown, there is always a limit to what may be made known to the public. The amount of censorship rises, denying reporters the freedom required to carry out their tasks, while those government-owned do not publish anything unfavourable against the present administration because their survival is also reliant on them (Dibia, 2014).

Financial cost of investigation: Investigative journalism is costly to operate and sustain. Investigative reporting may be a time-consuming process that necessitates a significant investment of both human and material resources. Apata and Ogunwuyi's (2019) also found that a lack of financing has an impact on investigative journalism in Nigeria. According to Onyenankeya and Salawu (2020), most Nigerian newspapers' failure to appropriately support investigative journalism is due to "poor revenue." These findings are consistent with prior research, which indicated that Nigerian newspapers allocate little or no funding for investigative journalism (Asemah, 2012; Anyadike, 2013).

Regulatory institutions' censorship: In most circumstances when funding is available, the government and its agencies impose a high level of censorship. Certain incidents have resulted in the possibility of license suspension and the shutdown of various media outlets, which has hampered the flow of information. Nigerian regulatory organisations, such as the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) and the Nigeria Press Council (NPC), should enable press freedom to guarantee that the press fulfils its social responsibilities.

Media law and ethics: Thus, media law refers to the regulation that governs the media, oversees its operations, and controls expression. The content of the media should not violate ethics, should not be obscene, vulgar, or defamatory, and should not offend religious sensibilities. To ensure ethnic diversity, certain regulations or legislations must govern media channels. **Section 39 of the federal republic of Nigeria's 1999 constitution (as amended) guarantees freedom of expression and the right to receive and impart information without hindrance. In respect to this problem, however, there is a famous adage that your rights end where another person's rights begin, which means that the presence of rights does not guarantee their exercise. As much as the media has the freedom to gather, publish, and transmit information, they must equally be wary of infringing on the rights of others** (Odunlade, 2021).

Official secretes: On the one hand, there is media law which governs the control of the media, freedom of the press, freedom of speech, and so on; on the other hand, there is the exposure of government secrets, which puts a halt to media freedom of expression (Odunlade, 2021). According to **Section 9 of The Official Secret Act, "***a classified matter means any information or thing which, under any system of security classification, from time to time, in use by or by any branch of the government, is not just to be undisclosed to the public but also of which the disclosure to the public would be prejudicial to the security of Nigeria."* It is thus

fair to conclude that an official secret is any classified knowledge that is not only not to be released to the public but also whose exposure would be detrimental to Nigeria's security, which is why publication is discouraged since it bears criminal penalties. In this way, any subject that the government does not want the public to know about can readily label "official secrets."

Other challenges of investigative reporting in Nigeria include persecution and unrestrained death of reporters, destruction of evidence, threats and refusal to allow a report to appear. According to Dyikuk (2017), the journalism profession is jeopardised due to issues such as a lack of adequate employees by media firms, a lack of comprehensive insurance coverage, a lack of time and money, and a lack of dedication. This frequently leads to a situation in which journalists accept bribes to make ends meet, a phenomenon is known as the brown envelop syndrome. Awofadeju and Ogwuche (2020) also agreed that there are threats to the lives of investigative journalists and their relatives which includes lack of adequate security for journalists while carrying out their duties, and there is usually a pervasion of required legal backing in the court of justice for investigative journalists, particularly. Asemah (2012) identified official secret acts, constitutional challenge and corruption among journalists, press laws, ownership influence, unprofessionalism, and a lack of principles on the part of investigative journalists as factors impeding the use of investigative journalism for fighting corruption in Nigeria.

Review of Previous Empirical Studies

Okocha, Terhile and Ola-Akuma (2021) conducted a study on the utilisation of drones in investigative journalism in Nigeria. The study is based on the tenets of the technology acceptance model, and a survey research design using a questionnaire as the data collecting instrument was used with a sample size of 100 respondents. According to the study's findings, drone journalism's functions in investigative journalism span from timelines to aerial photos to in-depth coverage of subjects. Further findings show that drone journalism significantly improves the practice of investigative journalism, whereas the limitations of drone journalism in investigative journalism vary from the invasion of privacy to safety concerns to operational difficulties. The study recommends the full adoption of drones in investigative journalism practice to improve the completion time of issues under investigation, and that reporters be thoroughly trained to operate drones since it will go a long way toward enhancing their work.

Onyenankeya and Salawu (2020) examined the challenges facing investigative journalism using theoretical and empirically proven studies on variables that

decrease journalistic autonomy. Twenty-five structured interviews involving journalists, journalism teachers, and civil society activists were conducted in Lagos and Abuja. These two cities are where most media content is produced and consumed, where frictions and struggles for information control, communication, political opinions, and social viewpoints take place, and where substantial political malfeasance, rampant sleaze, and widespread pillage of the Nigerian commonwealth exist, but go largely unreported. According to the findings, investigative journalism is hampered by a slew of socio-cultural and economic variables as well as professional deficiencies. The ownership of publications by politically exposed persons, as well as the near-zero security afforded to journalists, have hampered investigative journalism. These inclinations jeopardise the press's position as a watchdog.

Apata and Ogunwuyi (2019) examined media social responsibility and the problem of investigative journalism among media professionals in Osun State Southwest Nigeria. The purpose of this study was to fill a knowledge gap by examining the difficulties and challenges associated with the inadequacy of investigative journalism among media professionals in Osun State, to identify challenges to the practice of investigative journalism, to determine whether there are variations to the practice of investigative journalism in Osun State, and to determine the benefits associated with the practice of investigative journalism. To achive this, and by the Social Responsibility Theory upon which the study is based, A survey approach was employed with a sample size of 136 respondents gathered from print, broadcast, and online media who were chosen at random. According to the findings, the majority of respondents believe that improper implementation of the freedom of information act, ownership influence, and official secrecy act, a lack of funds, threats to the lives of media professionals, and a lack of adequate training are impediments to the practice of investigative journalism in Osun State.

Suleiman (2017) studied investigative reporting and press coverage of corruption in Nigeria (1999-2012). The objective of this research was to look at how much corruption is covered in Nigerian media and what role investigative reporting plays in that coverage. The study employed content analysis to examine front-page news coverage in a sample of 2746 newspapers from four national daily over twelve years, choosing every sixth issue from 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2012. This is supplemented by a total of 8 weeks of two newsroom observations in two dailies in Abuja and Lagos, as well as in-depth interviews with 24 respondents, including investigative reporters, political reporters, editors, two

members of staff of anti-corruption agencies, and one official of a non-governmental organisation promoting investigative journalism in Nigeria. This research discovered that corruption is widely and strongly reported in the press, accounting for more than 8% of total front-page news coverage, or an average of more than two corruption stories per week during 12 years. This presents itself first via the development of additional anti-corruption agencies, investigative committees, and inquiry panels at all levels of government, and then by their high-profile investigations and findings, which create the majority of the corruption headlines in the newspapers.

Anyadike (2013) examines the problems and prospects of investigative journalism in Rivers State, Nigeria using the survey research method. A total of 56 journalists (43 from The Tide and 13 from The Hard Truth) were interviewed. The findings suggested that investigative journalism is practised in Nigeria, but the degree of activity is abysmally low due to a slew of issues that plague the discipline. However, with the signing of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Bill into law in 2011, there is a better chance of its implementation. As a result, the study recommends a proactive approach to investigative journalism while capitalising on the opportunities provided by the FOI Act.

Asemah (2012) studied investigative journalism, corruption and sustainable development in Nigeria. The research focused on how to combat corruption in Nigeria using investigative journalism in order to promote development at all levels. The survey research method is used in this study, with focus group discussions used as a data collecting tool. According to the findings, the press plays a crucial role in enhancing democratic governance, raising awareness, and putting a stop to corrupt practises and the abuse of government authority. The study further revealed the various obstacles impeding the efficient practise of investigative journalism in Nigeria. to include commercial meddling, harsh press regulations, political interference, media gatekeepers, economic limits, technology limitations, and limited access to information. Based on the finding, the study recommends, among other things, that investigative journalists be given full access to information so that journalism may be utilised to expose corruption and bring about sustainable development in Nigeria.

Theoretical Review

This study is based on the social responsibility theory postulated by Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm in 1956. Social responsibility is a normative theory based on structural-functionalism that aims to promote solidarity and stability among diverse social units and institutions, particularly in a democratic society

(Macionis, 2017) The idea emphasises the moral and social duties of those who manage the media as well as the institutions that do so. These obligations include the need to enlighten the public about critical social concerns. as well as the avoidance of behaviours that are detrimental to public welfare and state security. Although, it recognises press freedom with no restriction, it relies on the maturity of proprietors, editors, and reporters to follow specified norms.

The social responsibility idea falls between authoritarian and libertarian theories in that it allows unlimited media freedom on one hand while imposing external regulation on the other. According to Onyenankeya and Salawu (2020), this means that the press is free to carry out its societal responsibilities. However, the press is not fully free of government controls and interference, contrary to popular belief.

Theorists of social responsibility urged the press to prioritise the public interest over personal gain and to provide public access to information. According to this view, the press is required to provide information to political leaders by putting the public good before party allegiance; the media should be free of partisanship but not of principle; and the media should actively promote communal welfare (Daramola, 2005). According to McQuail (2010), the media should self-regulate within the context of legal and established institutions; the media should avoid offensive content that may incite crime, violence, or civil disorder, or cause harm to minorities; and journalists and media experts should be accountable to society as well as employers and the industry.

In the case of Nigeria, as Ciboh (2017) points out, the branches of government can employ monetary incentives, intimidation, and violence to weaken the press's independence and, as a result, its ability to accurately represent public opinion.

This theory, however, is appropriate for this study because it explains the normative responsibility of the Nigerian press and media professionals in regards to the political, social and economic needs of society; it states that the media has an obligation to society and expects some kind of stewardship of media resources on behalf of the public; and, most importantly, it assumes the media to be educators and avoids describing in detail structural changes that would allow the effectiveness of these functions.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study indicate that investigative journalism is practiced in Nigeria but the level at which it is practiced is diminishing, owing to several

issues that restrict investigative reporters' ability to do their jobs (Anyadike, 2013). Suleiman (2017) agreed with this assertion, stating that, more than 8% of total front-page news coverage, or an average of more than two corruption stories featured in newpapers per week within 1999 to 2012. This was achived through the development of additional anti-corruption agencies (EFCC and ICPC), investigative committees, and inquiry panels at all levels of government, and then by their high-profile investigations. Okocha, Terhile and Ola-Akuma (2021) proposed the full adoption of drones in investigative journalism practice to improve the completion time of issues under investigation, as drones allow journalists to cover stories with pictorial evidence. Drone also assist journalists to uncover events in restive and hazardous environments.

The issues impeding the practice of investigative journalism include threats to the lives of investigative journalists and their families; lack of appropriate security for journalist on duties; lack of necessary legal backing in a court of justice, particularly if a court case arises during performing their duties; and, at times, abuse of government powers against investigative journalism by security agencies and government bodies (Asemah, 2012; Onyenankeya & Salawu, 2020). Some of these obstacles confronting investigative journalists are often promoted by some media regulating institutions or agencies, which makes it harder for investigative journalists to do an extensive investigation.

Furthermore, investigative journalism is frequently confronted with challenges like official secret acts, press laws, constitutional challenge and corruption among journalists, ownership structure, lack of professionalism and a lack of morality on the part of journalists, insufficient information, and restricted access to files and records (Anyadike, 2013; Apata & Ogunwuyi, 2019) This demonstrates that investigative journalism in Nigeria has several hurdles. Investigative reporters are critically endangered in the media landscape because they are frequently attacked even while on duty.

However, the media has a social responsibility to uphold, that is, the duties and the need to enlighten the public about critical social concerns. as well as the avoidance of behaviours that are detrimental to public welfare and state security. Performing these responsibilities requires the moral and social duties of relevant institutions and those who manage information (media owners, new agencies, regulatory bodies, editors, and reporters) to follow specified norms. The theorists of social responsibility urged the press to prioritise the public interest over personal gains and to provide public access to adequate and timely information.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The media has the societal responsibility of informing people about current events and also acting as a "watchdog", that is, keeping the authorities on their toes. In the case of Nigeria, investigation journalism is being practiced but at a very low level due to several constrains, raninging from funding to press laws, corruption, ownership structure and official secret acts and lack of unprofessionalism on the part of the journalists. Despite these difficulties, some media outlets such as Channels TV, Premium Times, and The Cable are sustaining the terrain.

Investigative journalism in Nigeria is still growing in strength. The journalists and media owners are aware that if they are to uncover some hdden truths, be it crime, corruption or politics, they must “go the extra miles” in performing their duties.
The following are recommended based on the findings of the study:

1. Media organisations must accept the reality of the media's societal responsibility, which is to present the truth objectively, covering all shades of opinion and facts pertinent to the matter at hand. This is what is required of investigative journalism.They should recall that they serve as a "watchdog" for the public, allowing the people to advocate for reforms or better understand the society in which they work and live.
2. Journalists should continuously participate in conferences, training, symposia, workshops, and the like to assess the practice of investigative journalism in the nation and discuss the way forward.
3. Media organisations should explore alternative sources of funds to finance their ambition of exposing the corrupt practices of those in positions of public trust. This could be done through partnership with anti-corruption agencies and financial institutions.
4. Government at all levels must guard against secrecy in governance, repressive laws, and ensure the proper implementation and recognition of the freedom of information act, which was passed into law by the national assembly, to provide unrestricted access to information by intending journalists undertaking investigative journalism and to guarantee adequate protection for journalists against threats to their lives.

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