

An Assessment of Training of Investigative Journalism Among Journalists in Bauchi State, Nigeria

AHMAD ABUBAKAR

Department of Mass Communication, Abubakar Tatari Ali Polytechnic, Bauchi

Abstract- *Investigative journalism plays a critical role in promoting transparency, accountability, and good governance. However, limited empirical evidence exists regarding the training and practice of investigative journalism among journalists in Nigeria's North-East, particularly Bauchi State. This study examined the extent to which journalists in Bauchi State received training in investigative journalism during tertiary education and through post-graduation professional development. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining a structured questionnaire administered to all 157 registered journalists in the state with in-depth interviews of six editors purposively selected for their supervisory experience. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were thematically analyzed using NVivo. Findings indicate a consistently low level of training, with mean scores ranging from 1.9 to 2.3 across eight Likert-scale items, reflecting minimal exposure to formal instruction, practical exercises, and professional development opportunities. Qualitative insights corroborated these results, highlighting inadequate university curricula, limited access to workshops, and low confidence in applying investigative skills. The study applies Human Capital Theory to interpret how insufficient training diminishes professional competence and investigative capacity. The findings underscore the urgent need for enhanced tertiary curricula, regular in-service training, and institutional support to strengthen investigative journalism, thereby improving media accountability and democratic governance in Bauchi State.*

Keywords: *Investigative journalism; Training; Bauchi State.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Investigative journalism has long been recognized as a core component of the journalistic profession. According to Hunter and Hanson (2011), it involves uncovering information deliberately concealed by powerful actors or hidden within complex circumstances, requiring journalists to draw on both open and confidential sources. As a distinct genre within the news media (Bjerknes, 2020) and often described as the spearhead of journalism (Karadimitriou et al., 2022), investigative reporting traces its roots from the muckrakers of the nineteenth

century to today's digital and data-driven investigative practitioners (Hahn & Stalph, 2018; Konow-Lund, 2020). Across time, its central purpose has remained constant: to dig for vital information, expose hidden truths, and reveal patterns that would otherwise remain obscured.

The role of investigative journalism in promoting good governance, transparency, and accountability is widely acknowledged (Makharesh, 2023). It embodies the democratic ideal of the press as a watchdog (Carson & Farhall, 2018), holding institutions accountable and scrutinizing the exercise of power (Carson, 2019). By exposing crime, corruption, and abuses of office, investigative journalism can serve as a catalyst for reform, informing the public, equipping civil society to demand accountability, and providing evidence that supports law enforcement and policymaking processes (Hrvolova, Katz & Alexander, 2021; Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, 2021).

Bauchi State, created in 1976 from the former North-Eastern State, is home to approximately 7.5 million people and more than 55 ethnic groups. Geographically diverse, it spans 49,259 sq. km across the Sudan and Sahel savannah zones. As part of Nigeria's North-East geopolitical region, Bauchi is embedded within broader socio-economic and security challenges that have shaped the region since the rise of insurgency in 2009 (Abubakar & Abubakar, 2020). The state is not immune to national issues such as governance deficits, corruption, illicit financial flows, institutional weakness, and threats to human development (United Nations Nigeria Common Country Analysis, 2022). These conditions underscore the critical importance of robust investigative journalism capable of illuminating systemic problems and strengthening democratic accountability.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Ideally, media organizations and journalists are expected to institutionalize investigative journalism as a mechanism for exposing corruption, mismanagement of public resources, illicit financial and arms flows, the financing of terrorism, and other forms of organized crime. Through this function, the media sets the agenda for transparency, accountability, and good governance (Pate & Dauda, 2013; Pate, 2022a; 2022b; Bawa, 2023). However, evidence shows that investigative journalism within the Nigerian media landscape has steadily declined in recent years (Suleiman, 2017; Pate, 2018; Onyenakeya & Salawu, 2020; Gainaka, Alsagoff & Ghazali, 2020; Musa & Antwi-Boateng, 2023). This decline has weakened the media's watchdog role, diminishing its capacity to hold power to account (Trappel & Tomaz, 2021).

The consequences of this decline are particularly pronounced in Nigeria's North-East, where persistent socio-economic, security, and human development challenges driven by grand corruption, illegal financial flows, arms trafficking, and the financing of terrorism continue to undermine governance and stability (United Nations, 2022). Bauchi State, as part of this region, is not exempt from these challenges. Addressing them requires a vibrant, well-equipped, and professionally grounded media sector capable of practicing rigorous investigative journalism. Yet the extent to which journalists in Bauchi State possess the training, skills, and institutional support necessary to fulfil this role remains unclear. This uncertainty underscores the need for empirical investigation into the training and capacity of journalists to engage effectively in investigative reporting.

Research Objectives

To address this concern, the following research objective and corresponding research question were developed:

1. To find out whether journalists in Bauchi State had any training on investigative journalism while in a tertiary institution and thereafter.

Research question

Also, the following research question was formulated:

1. To what extent did journalists in Bauchi State receive investigative journalism training during their tertiary education and through post-tertiary professional development?

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Existing scholarship on investigative journalism in Nigeria provides valuable insights into its evolution, challenges, and contributions to democratic governance. However, despite substantial academic interest in the field, there remains a notable gap concerning the training and practice of investigative journalism specifically among journalists in Bauchi State. Much of the available literature either examines investigative journalism at the national level or focuses on thematic areas such as corruption reporting, media performance, and institutional constraints, with limited empirical attention to regional contexts like Bauchi.

A review of foundational studies shows that research on investigative journalism training in Nigeria is outdated and insufficient. For example, Yushau's (2009) work on the coverage of corruption scandals in the Nigerian press, although influential, is now more than a decade old and does not address contemporary dynamics shaped by digital transformation, insecurity, and evolving newsroom practices. Similarly, Okereke (2000) examined the place of investigative journalism in Nigeria's democracy, but his study predates significant socio-political developments, including the rise of online news platforms, social media verification tools, and advanced data journalism techniques.

Subsequent studies by Yushau (2010), Asemah (2012), and Anyadike (2013) focused on scandal reporting, corruption, and challenges confronting investigative journalists. These studies collectively highlight systemic constraints such as lack of resources, weak institutional support, and threats to journalists' safety. However, they offer limited insight into the quality of training journalists receive during and after tertiary education. Okon's (2017) assessment of collaboration between investigative journalists and the EFCC provides useful context on inter-institutional partnerships but does not address capacity-building needs within media organizations. More recent studies, such as Suleiman (2017), Suntai and Shem (2018), and Iman (2019), emphasize the critical role of investigative journalism in tackling

corruption and enhancing transparency. Ntibinyane (2018), in his exploration of nonprofit investigative journalism models in Africa, underscores the challenges of funding, sustainability, and skill gaps across the continent. Gainaka, Alsagoff, and Ghazali (2020) further observe a significant decline in watchdog journalism in Nigeria's broadcast media, attributing it to commercial pressures and insufficient investigative training. Musa and Antwi-Boateng (2023) discuss the impact of promotional politics on investigative media practice, noting that journalists often lack the professional autonomy and capacity required to pursue in-depth investigations.

Despite these contributions, none of the aforementioned studies explicitly measure or evaluate the level of training of investigative journalism among journalists in Bauchi State. Existing research tends to focus on broader national trends, organizational constraints, or thematic issues related to corruption and governance. This creates a clear gap in the literature, particularly given the complex socio-economic and security challenges in the North-East region, where strengthened investigative journalism could play a crucial role.

Therefore, the absence of contemporary, region-specific studies on investigative journalism training in Bauchi State highlights a significant knowledge gap. Addressing this gap is essential for understanding the preparedness of journalists to perform investigative roles and for informing policy interventions aimed at enhancing investigative reporting capacities in the region.

Theoretical framework

This study is anchored on Human Capital Theory (HCT). The theory emerged in the early 1960s, primarily through the work of Theodore W. Schultz, who is credited as its founder in 1961. The theory was further developed and popularized by notable economists such as Gary Becker (1964) and Jacob Mincer, who expanded its application to education, skills acquisition, labour productivity, and economic development. The central idea of HCT is that education, training, and professional development are forms of investment that enhance an individual's knowledge, competencies, and productivity, thereby increasing their contribution to organizational and societal advancement. One of the major strengths of Human Capital Theory is its strong explanatory capacity; it clearly links training and skill acquisition

to improved performance, professional competence, and efficiency. It also provides a useful framework for understanding why institutions and individuals benefit from continuous learning. However, a key weakness of the theory is its tendency to treat humans as economic units, sometimes oversimplifying the social, cultural, and institutional variables that affect learning and performance. It also assumes that individuals always benefit from education and training in predictable ways, which may not hold true in contexts with poor work environments, limited resources, or weak institutional support.

In relation to this study, Human Capital Theory provides a strong foundation for understanding the extent to which journalists in Bauchi State received adequate training in investigative journalism during tertiary education and after graduation. Since investigative journalism requires specialized skills such as interviewing, data analysis, research methods, ethical reasoning, and digital security the theory helps explain how insufficient training can limit journalists' professional capacity and their ability to perform the watchdog role effectively. By assessing the level of training journalists acquired, the study indirectly evaluates the strength of their human capital. Therefore, Human Capital Theory aligns with and supports the study's objective by illustrating how gaps in training translate into reduced investigative competence and weakened journalistic performance in Bauchi State.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a mixed research design that integrated both quantitative and qualitative methods to examine the training of investigative journalism among journalists in Bauchi State. The quantitative component involved the use of a structured questionnaire, while the qualitative component consisted of interviews with six editors purposively selected for their supervisory experience and insight into newsroom practices. The study population comprised all 157 journalists registered with the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) Bauchi State Chapter, and due to the relatively small population size, a census approach was employed. A questionnaire and an interview guide were used as instruments for data collection. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations via the Statistical Package for the Social

Sciences (SPSS), while qualitative interview data were transcribed and thematically analyzed using NVivo software.

Data presentation

RQ: To what extent did journalists in Bauchi State receive investigative journalism training during their tertiary education and through post-tertiary professional development? To respond to the research question, responses were sought from table 1 and 2:

Table 1: Training on investigative journalism while in a tertiary institution and thereafter (quantitative)

S/N	Statement	A	O	S	R	N	M	SD	Remark
1	I received formal training on investigative journalism during my tertiary education.	5	8	20	50	74	2.1	1.2	Low
2	My tertiary institution provided practical opportunities to develop investigative journalism skills	3	7	25	60	62	2.0	1.1	Low
3	The investigative journalism training I received during tertiary education was adequate.	2	5	20	55	75	1.9	1.1	Low
4	I have attended professional courses, workshops, or seminars on investigative journalism after tertiary education	4	6	18	50	79	2.3	1.2	Lo1
5	I actively seek additional training or resources to improve my investigative journalism skills.	6	10	25	60	56	2.1	1.2	Low
6	I regularly apply the investigative journalism skills I learned in my professional work.	3	8	30	55	61	2.1	1.1	Low
7	I feel confident in conducting investigative journalism as a result of my training	2	5	22	50	78	1.9	1.1	Low
8	The training I received (during or after tertiary education) has helped me produce high-quality investigative reports.	3	7	20	55	72	2.0	1.1	Low

Keys: 1 – Never, 2 – Rarely, 3 – Sometimes, 4 – Often, 5 – Always, M-mean, SD-standard deviation

The findings of this study reveal a consistently low level of training in investigative journalism among journalists in Bauchi State. Quantitative results show that the majority of respondents selected “Rarely” and “Never” across all eight Likert items, demonstrating limited exposure to both formal and informal training opportunities. Mean scores ranging from 1.9 to 2.3, which fall significantly below the mid-point of the scale, further reinforce the conclusion that journalists are not receiving adequate training in investigative reporting. This pattern suggests systemic gaps in both institutional and professional development structures.

The qualitative findings align strongly with the quantitative trends. Four of the six participants explicitly described the absence or inadequacy of investigative journalism training during their tertiary education. Their reflections highlight a range of deficiencies, including lack of practical sessions, insufficient instructional resources, and minimal

encouragement from instructors. These experiences mirror the numerical data indicating that most journalists had no structured training during their university years.

Furthermore, the qualitative responses reveal that post-tertiary training opportunities are also scarce. Several participants stated that workshops and seminars are either inaccessible, irregular, or too costly. This aligns with quantitative findings where only a small proportion of respondents reported “Often” or “Always” for attending post-graduation training programmes. Consequently, many journalists lack confidence in performing investigative tasks, which is reflected in low scores for items related to confidence and application of investigative skills.

Thus, the integration of both datasets reveals a coherent narrative: the training pipeline for investigative journalism both pre-service and in-

service is weak, leaving journalists underprepared for investigative work.

Table 2: Training on investigative journalism while in a tertiary institution and thereafter (qualitative)

S/N	Theme	Participants (who mentioned the theme)	Frequency (6/6)
1	Inadequate Training During Tertiary Education	P1, P2, P3	3/6 (33.33%)
2	Limited Access to Post-Tertiary Professional Development	P2, P6	2/6(22.22%)
3	Low Confidence and Limited Application of Investigative Skills	P2, P3, P4, P5,	4/6(44.44%)

The qualitative findings presented in Table 2 show that journalists in Bauchi State experience substantial gaps in investigative journalism training, both during tertiary education and afterward. The most frequently mentioned theme was Low Confidence and Limited Application of Investigative Skills, cited by 4 out of 6 participants, indicating that inadequate training has directly affected journalists' ability to carry out investigative tasks effectively. This is reflected in statements from participants such as P3, who noted a lack of practical exposure and tools, and P4, who acknowledged difficulty producing quality investigative reports due to insufficient foundational knowledge. The second most common theme, Inadequate Training During Tertiary Education, was identified by 3 participants, highlighting systemic shortcomings in journalism curricula. Participant 1 reported that investigative journalism was hardly taught beyond a few lectures, while P3 emphasized the absence of institutional support for practical learning. Additionally, Limited Access to Post-Tertiary Professional Development was mentioned by 2 participants, demonstrating that even after graduation, journalists struggle to access meaningful training opportunities. Participant 2 explained that workshops are often too costly or geographically inaccessible, and P6 added that the few available trainings are irregular and insufficient for building strong competence. Overall, the themes and participant narratives demonstrate a consistent pattern: journalists lack structured training pathways, resulting in low confidence, limited investigative skills, and minimal preparedness for investigative reporting.

V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study demonstrate a persistently low level of investigative journalism training among

journalists in Bauchi State, a pattern that aligns closely with the broader scholarly discourse on the decline of investigative reporting capacity in Nigeria. Quantitatively, respondents overwhelmingly selected “Rarely” and “Never” across all training-related Likert items, with mean scores ranging from 1.9 to 2.3 well below the midpoint of the scale. These results indicate limited exposure to both formal instruction during tertiary education and post-graduation professional development opportunities. Such deficiencies reflect what several scholars have identified as systemic constraints within Nigeria’s media training infrastructure, including inadequate curriculum design, weak institutional support, and insufficient investment in professional capacity-building (Asemah, 2012; Gainaka et al., 2020; Mohammed & Ahmed, 2022; Suleiman, 2017).

Qualitative responses strongly corroborate the quantitative trends. Participants consistently emphasized that investigative journalism received little emphasis during their university education, echoing earlier studies showing that journalism programmes in Nigeria often lack practical, skills-oriented training (Anyadike, 2013; Yushau, 2010). As Participant 1 noted, “*Investigative journalism was hardly taught... no practical exercises,*” while Participant 3 similarly explained the absence of instructional tools and motivation: “*We didn’t have the tools or encouragement to practice investigative journalism during school.*” These statements reinforce literature suggesting that Nigerian journalism education remains largely theoretical and insufficiently aligned with the demands of investigative reporting (Suntai & Shem, 2018; Musa & Antwi-Boateng, 2023).

The study also found that post-tertiary professional development opportunities such as seminars,

fellowships, and workshops were infrequent, inaccessible, or financially burdensome. This mirrors observations by Ntibinyane (2018) and Gainaka et al. (2020), who argue that limited funding, lack of institutional support, and shrinking newsroom budgets restrict journalists' ability to develop investigative competencies. Participants highlighted these barriers directly: *"Most of the opportunities I hear about are far from Bauchi or too costly"* (Participant 2), and *"I occasionally attend trainings... but they are irregular"* (Participant 6). Such constraints help explain the persistently low training scores recorded in this study.

As predicted by Human Capital Theory which posits that investment in education and training enhances professional competence and productivity (Becker, 1964; Schultz, 1961) the inadequate educational and developmental opportunities reported by respondents appear to have weakened their investigative capacity. Journalists openly acknowledged that insufficient training undermined their confidence and ability to carry out investigative assignments. Participant 3 stated, *"I don't feel equipped to handle investigative assignments confidently,"* while Participant 4 added, *"I rarely apply investigative journalism... I was not trained properly."* These outcomes align with scholarly claims that weak human capital in journalism diminishes the effectiveness of watchdog reporting, ultimately contributing to the decline of investigative journalism in Nigeria (Pate, 2018; Onyenakeya & Salawu, 2020).

Collectively, the findings confirm and extend existing literature by demonstrating that the decline of investigative journalism in Nigeria is not only a national issue but also strongly evident at the regional level in Bauchi State. The pervasive lack of structured training from university classrooms to in-service professional development has resulted in journalists who are underprepared to conduct rigorous investigative reporting. This gap is particularly concerning given the socio-economic and security challenges in the North-East, where robust investigative journalism is critically needed (UN, 2022). The study therefore highlights an urgent need for targeted institutional reforms, curriculum updates, and expanded training opportunities to strengthen investigative journalism capacity in Bauchi State and beyond.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that journalists in Bauchi State exhibit a consistently low level of training in investigative journalism, both during tertiary education and through post-graduation professional development. Quantitative and qualitative findings reveal limited exposure to formal instruction, scarce practical opportunities, and infrequent access to workshops or seminars, resulting in low confidence and minimal application of investigative skills. These gaps reflect systemic weaknesses in journalism education and professional capacity-building, underscoring the relevance of Human Capital Theory, which links training to professional competence. Addressing these deficiencies through targeted curriculum reforms, expanded in-service training, and increased institutional support is essential to strengthen investigative journalism, enhance media accountability, and support democratic governance in Bauchi State.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Strengthen Tertiary Journalism Education: Universities and colleges in Bauchi State should integrate comprehensive investigative journalism modules, including practical exercises, data analysis, and ethical reporting, to equip students with the skills required for rigorous investigative work.
2. Expand Post-Tertiary Professional Development: Media organizations and professional bodies should provide regular, accessible, and affordable workshops, seminars, and mentorship programs to enhance journalists' investigative competencies and confidence in applying these skills in the field.

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