

Are New Media Tools Strengthening Investigative Journalism in Nigeria?

By

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Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of the MA in Journalism & Media Communications, is my own; based on my personal study and/or research, and that I have acknowledged all material and sources used in its preparation. I also certify that I have not copied in part or whole or otherwise plagiarised the work of anyone else, including other students.

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Abstract

New media tools are increasingly being applied to various aspects of journalism practice. Investigative journalists the world over are finding in these tools new opportunities for easing and improving their performance. In Nigeria where there is obviously need to improve investigative journalism culture, there seems to be little focus so far by scholars on how much investigative journalism may be benefitting from these tools. Against this backdrop, this study focused on the extent new media tools may be strengthening investigative journalism in the country; that is, roles these tools may be playing in promoting this sort of reportage among practitioners. The research objectives were to find out: how informed Nigerian journalists are about the utility of new media tools in investigative journalism; whether they utilize these tools for investigative journalism; the ways the journalists possibly utilize the tools in advancement of investigative journalism; and factors possibly affecting use of new media tools for investigative journalism in the country. Ten investigative journalists working in print, broadcast and online-only news organisations were interviewed. Findings indicated that the journalists are informed about roles of new media tools in investigative journalism. The respondents were found to have actually utilised some of these tools in the reportorial aspects of their investigative journalism engagements including fact-finding, fact verification, story writing, photo taking, and storage of data, as well as for non-reportorial aspects like accessing training, applying for grants, and entering for awards. They have, however, yet to adequately explore these tools for crowdsourcing and collaboration with colleagues as well as for shielding the identity of anonymous sources, encryption of conversations with sources, data organization, data analysis, and monitoring of the Internet for trending issues and developments. Results further revealed that factors like poor phone and Internet networks, unsteady electricity supply, financial handicaps, nonchalance of employers towards updating skills of journalists, and laidback attitude on the part of journalists themselves hinder adequate utilization of new media tools for investigative journalism in the country. The study concluded that the growing Internet culture in Nigeria will have the effect of exposing journalists to more knowledge and skills for stronger adoption of new media tools, giving hope for a much better future for investigative journalism in the country.

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List of Abbreviations

AIT:	Africa Independent Television
FRCN:	Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria
ICIR	International Centre for Investigative Reporting
ICFJ:	International Centre for Journalists
IJ:	Investigative Journalism
IJNET:	International Journalists' Network
IMS:	Institute for Media and Society
IPC:	International Press Centre
MRA:	Media Rights Agenda
NTA:	Nigeria Television Authority
NUJ:	Nigeria Union of Journalists
PAMED:	Partnership for Media and Democracy
PTCIJ:	Premium Times Centre for Investigative Journalism
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VON:	Voice of Nigeria
WSCIJ:	Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation titled “Are New Media Tools Strengthening Investigative Journalism in Nigeria?” comes up against the backdrop of the observed weak culture of investigative journalism in Nigeria (Ibe, 2019; Pate, 2018) and the need for improvement leveraging the latest technologies available to journalism globally. Secondly, as a developing country seeking to strengthen democracy and enhance overall national growth, Nigeria ideally should be need of a media sector vibrant in the best investigative journalism practices (Famuyiwa-Alaka, 2018; Daramola, 2013). Generally, a key role of the media in the modern democratic society is to serve as a social watchdog, thereby protecting public accountability and upholding other values cherished by society. This role is amply formulated under the social responsibility theory of media (Siebert, Peterson & Schramm, 1956; Daramola, 2003; McQuail, 2010), and it is the central element in media’s position as the Fourth Estate of the Realm (McQuail, 2010).

This role is realized in the surveillance function of the media wherein the media beam their searchlight on all sectors and persons (particularly leaders) in society to ensure that their activities are consistently kept in the public domain. Through this process, the media become the major agenda setter in society, dictating the tone of public discourse (Baran, 2010). This is what is meant when the media are described as a mirror that reflects society; an agent of self-awareness and self-scrutiny of society (McQuail, 2010).

An important tool traditionally employed by the media in this process is investigative journalism. This is an approach to reporting that seeks to unearth the fact behind the fact, thus reporting issues and events beyond what is ordinarily visible on the surface (Kaplan, 2013; Baggi, 2011; Gaines, 2007). Hence, investigative journalism is potentially subversive, probing into facts and issues to the extent that may unsettle certain influential interests in society (Gaines, 2007). This is evident in the following definition offered by UNESCO:

Investigative journalism involves exposing to the public matters that are concealed – either deliberately by someone in a position of power, or

accidentally, behind a chaotic mass of facts and circumstances that obscure understanding. It requires using both secret and open sources and documents (Kaplan, 2013, 10).

Through investigative journalism, the watchdog role of the media is more optimally realized as media surveillance is more aggressively brought to bear on various institutions and actors, thus exposing them to greater public scrutiny (Ntibinyane, 2018). It is on this account that investigative journalism becomes a very important requirement in a clime like Nigeria where a poor culture of public accountability has been a key drawback to **democratic and economic development** (Ado, 2016; Ogbondah, 2011; Oso, Odunlami & Adaja, 2011).

A country on the west coast of Africa, Nigeria has battled with a myriad of developmental challenges. The extent to which she has so far failed to deal with these challenges is only perfectly illustrated by the fact that she still bears the inglorious tag of an “underdeveloped country” (Ado, 2016). It is generally agreed that the nation’s development burden is principally a function of failure of governance basically due to corruption and general lack of transparency in the public sphere (Ado, 2016). The first military coup in the country on January 15, 1966, was, according to its leaders, motivated by the quest to flush out the corrupt politicians and enthrone a government defined by transparency.

Perpetrators of subsequent military coups had similarly pointed at corruption and the imperative of ending it as a justification for their act (Ogbondah, 2011). Nonetheless, as observed by former president of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, with reference to these “messiah” coup plotters, “unfortunately, the cure often turned out to be worse than the disease” (Obasanjo, 2000, 4). **In his inaugural speech on taking over as president on May 29, 1999, he promised that corruption, “the greatest single bane of our society today will be tackled head on at all levels... andstamped out” (Falode, 2013, 11).** Similarly, successive leaders in the current democratic dispensation have not failed to avow their determination to confront and defeat this perennial monster of corruption. Significantly, the present government of President Muhammadu Buhari has, perhaps more than all before it, emphasized fight against corruption as its major priority

(Ado, 2016). Buhari's avowal on the day of his swearing-in on May 29, 2015 is a serious pointer to how much corruption has remained a national burden 16 years after Obasanjo made his firm promise:

At home we face enormous challenges [including] corruption... While the Federal Government cannot interfere in the details of ... [local governments] operations it will ensure that the gross corruption at the local level is checked. As far as the constitution allows me I will try to ensure that there is responsible and accountable governance at all levels of government in the country. For I will not have kept my own trust with the Nigerian people if I allow others abuse theirs under my watch (Buhari, 2015).

Against this backdrop, it is easy to see how corruption and general weak culture of public accountability have become a key and persistent problem in the Nigeria's development story, just like in other developing countries. Definitely, the nation requires the media as she battles this hydra-headed monster. The media, as a societal watchdog, can help in exposing cases of corruption or potential corruption, thus upholding accountability in the public sphere. This role of the media in holding society accountable is a key element in the social responsibility role of the media (McQuail, 2010; Siebert *et al.*, 1956).

As earlier stated, investigative journalism stands out as one form of reporting that amply serves society's quest for public accountability. This is because it enables the media to probe beyond the official façade and dig up issues, facts and dealings that have occurred outside the public view, thus helping to steer the society on the path of transparency and accountability. (Mustapha-Koiki & Ayedun-Aluma, 2013; Kaplan, 2013). Besides, investigation journalism is also useful for calling society's attention to certain development-related issues not related to public accountability. For instance, it can expose a possible outbreak of disease, a possible natural disaster, a defect in the justice system, and a systemic ordeal of a minority group, among others (Nazakat and KAS Media Programme, 2010). However, while Nigeria definitely requires investigative journalism, there is still a popular belief that she is yet to adequately benefit from this kind of reportage.

In fact, one of the shortcomings observed of journalism practice in Nigeria is poor investigative culture (Pate, 2018). Research shows that news on public events and issues is largely anchored on government releases, press briefings and other forms of official communication, with the implication being that the government does more of the agenda setting, while the media remain largely reactive (Duru, 2019; Ibe, 2019; Pate, 2018). The clear consequence of the foregoing is that the media's watchdog role is significantly curtailed.

An important factor behind this investigative deficiency among the Nigerian media is inadequate availability of funds (Pate, 2018; Mustapha-Koiki & Ayedun-Aluma, 2013). Many media organisations, in a bid to prioritise investigative journalism, have adopted the practice of establishing a unit designated as Investigative Desk and dedicated to this kind of reportage. Nonetheless, funding generally remains a persistent burden limiting optimization of this initiative (Pate, 2018). Added to this is the increasing competition from online platforms which, like experienced globally, is detrimentally affecting income and financial stability of traditional media establishments in Nigeria (Agusiobo, 2018; Eze, 2017; Amuka, 2015; Blake, 2013; Egbochukwu, 2013). Naturally, this general financial strain will also take its toll on the already depleted investigative strength of these media organisations.

Another factor hindering investigative journalism is restrictive access to public information (Abone & Kur; 2014; Akinwale, 2010). Incidentally, not even the passage of the Freedom of Information (FoI) Act in 2011, following years of persistent advocacy, has meaningfully ameliorated this challenge. So, information that should ordinarily be accessible to investigative reporters is often inaccessible (Uzoma & Onwukwe, 2012; Akinwale, 2010). **Added to this is the persistent challenge of press freedom generally as journalists in the country have remained under threat of harm from both official and unofficial quarters. The killing by a parcel bomb of Mr Dele Giwa, an illustrious journalist and founding editor of *Newswatch* magazine, in 1987 by persons suspected to be government agents is till date a classic case in the gloomy history of press freedom in Nigeria. However, the advent of democracy in the country since 1999 has not satisfactorily guaranteed freedom for journalists. There have been several cases of harassments of journalists and media organisations by agents of the state (Daramola, 2013; Adedeji, 2009).**

Among several journalists that have been detained in recent years is Jones Abiri who was incarcerated for two years without charges in what local and international activists saw as mere persecution (Amnesty International, 2020).

Little wonder, Nigeria has continually scored low in World Press Freedom Index as annually released by Reporters Without Borders. For instance, in 2018 the nation was ranked 119th out of the 180 nations surveyed (Reporters Without Borders, 2018) and 115th out of the same number in 2020 (Reporters Without Borders, 2020).

The entry of new media tools into the sphere of journalism has been viewed as a positive development for this journalistic practice (Abdenour, 2017). New media refers to the array of computer and Internet-based tools and platforms that enable interactive communication in a multimedia mode (Omenugha & Duru, 2019). The distinguishing features of new media are interactivity, multimediality/convergence, flexibility, vast increase in the volume of communication and greater ability to transcend space and time (Uzochukwu & Ekweugha, 2014; McQuail, 2010). New media tools include social media, email, world wide web (WWW), computers and smartphones. Armed with smartphones and Internet connection, journalists have got a powerful enabler towards strengthening their investigative capacity, as these tools could help them reduce cost and space constraints, minimize certain risks due to increased ability to operate without actually being at the scene of an event, and enhance access to information generally (Abdenour, 2017; Posetti, 2013). For instance, in 2019, a Nigerian newspaper reporter, Samson Folarin, was able to carry out investigations into a case of certificate forgery and plagiarism by a senior academic of a federal university, leading to exposure and eventual dismissal of the man and earning the reporter an award as the Investigative Journalist of the Year (Folarin, 2019). Interestingly, the investigation, which spanned several months, was carried out from the Lagos base of the reporter, over 400 kilometres from the university, as aided by telephony and social media. Throughout the nine-part report, Folarin indicated how he used phone calls, SMS and WhatsApp to conduct interviews and obtain vital documents from persons at the university and other locations all over the country (Folarin, 2019). Similarly, in 2020, the

same journalist investigated another case of false academic claims by former Director-General of the Federal Institute of Industrial Research, Mr Chima Igwe. Social media was another vital resource as the reporter, working from his Nigeria base, obtained views and documents from Universite d'Abomey Calavi across the border in Benin Republic where the purported academic degree was obtained (Folarin, 2020). Another journalist, Gabriel Alonta, investigated probable misappropriations of budgetary allocations to magistrate courts in Anambra State of Nigeria. His report shows how he employed the Internet to obtain information regarding annual budgets of the state judiciary over a period of 10 years (Alonta, 2019).

The above examples give some insight into what new media could contribute to investigative journalism in the face of systemic hindrances such as experienced in Nigeria. This contribution, as evident in the above instances, include cost and time saving and general seamlessness in information gathering. Besides, other factors hindering investigative journalism in the country – such as poor press freedom culture – may be circumvented using these tools. For instance, journalists can, via social media, connect with eyewitnesses and victims in the dangerous North-East zone of Nigeria where the military and other security agencies have been accused of human rights abuses in the fight against the Islamist terrorist group, Boko Haram (Amnesty International, 2017). This way, they can bypass the usually self-justifying press releases and briefings by official sources and tell the tale as it really happened.

However, beyond the foregoing, it may be pertinent to also pay attention to possible contributions new media resources may make in advancing locally in Nigeria some of the new global trends in investigative journalism. These include inter-organisation collaborations in investigative journalism, obtaining of grants for investigative journalism projects, participation in investigative journalism trainings and applying for investigative journalism competitions (Baggi, 2011; Kaplan, 2013; Ntibinyane, 2018). Given new media's capacity for creating networks and strengthening engagement, one can imagine that it is potentially of some assistance to journalists and media organisations as they seek for collaborations, pursue local and international grants, explore training opportunities and participate in competitions locally and globally. This is more

so given the fact that openings for some of these engagements are commonly found online these days.

It is against this backdrop that this dissertation will interrogate new media tools as an investigative journalism resource in Nigeria. Literature shows that new media tools have become an important component of journalism practice in Nigeria as media organisations respond to the imperative of a computer and Internet-permeated era (Eze, 2017; Edegoh, Ezeh & Aniebo, 2015; Nkemdilim, 2015; and Layefa, Johnson, & Taiwo, 2016). However, it appears not much attention has been paid to role of these tools in investigative journalism specifically. Hence, this study will seek to find out whether journalists in Nigeria are aware of the utility of new media tools for advancing investigative journalism. It will also probe whether and in what ways journalists in the country may be utilizing new media tools for investigative journalism. Furthermore, the study inquires into factors possibly affecting use or non-use of new media tools for investigative journalism in the country.

In view of these objectives, the following research questions are formulated to guide the research:

1. How informed are Nigerian journalists about the utility of new media tools in investigative journalism?
2. Do Nigerian journalists utilis new media tools for investigative journalism?
3. In what ways do the journalists possibly utilise these tools in advancement of investigative journalism?
4. What factors affect use or non-use of new media tools for investigative journalism in the country?

This dissertation is segmented into five chapters. The Chapter One: Introduction presents the overview and the study context as well as states the research objectives and questions. Chapter Two: Literature Review presents a critical analysis of conceptual, empirical and theoretical discourses related to new media tools and their place in investigative journalism, both universally

and with particular reference to Nigeria. Chapter Three: Methodology puts forward and argues the study design, population, sample, data collection instrument, and method of data collection and analysis. Chapter Four: Results and Analysis presents, analyses, interprets and discusses the data collected by the researcher, while Chapter Four: Conclusion gives the summary of the work, concludes it and gives recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptualising Investigative Journalism

Investigative journalism has been generally recognized as an approach to journalism that digs into issues and events in order to expose facts lying beneath ordinarily accessible facts (Famuyiwa-Alaka, 2018; Posetti, 2013; Nazakat & KAS Media Programme, 2010). Several definitions have been offered for this form of news reporting.

Okon (2017), in defining investigative journalism, notes that such reporting regularly explores and exposes “crimes, corrupt practices and other forms of deliberately concealed events that can potentially harm public interest” (p.27). In this definition is found a potentially misleading, albeit very common, approach to explaining investigative journalism, which is the tendency to lay emphasis on crime, corruption, scandal and other negative occurrences as what investigative reporters aim at uncovering. Nonetheless, investigative journalism is more than that; anything that is worth uncovering is uncovered as can be seen in the definition by Nazakat & KAS Media Programme (2010) that sees investigative Journalism as “a form of journalism in which reporters go in-depth to investigate a single story that may uncover corruption, review government policies or of corporate houses, or draw attention to social, economic, political or cultural trends” (p.5). Thus, this sort of journalism can aim at calling attention to something positive which circumstances have hitherto concealed from the eyes of the public. Rather than merely pandering to our inclination for scandal, investigative journalism can actually be a means of

solving social problems (Nazakat & KAS Media Programme, 2010). Hence, information revealed by investigative journalism “may aim to activate social, corporate or political change” (Posetti, 2013, p.88). **And such revelation may not necessarily relate to corruption, crime or scandal.**

There is a common trend to view investigative journalism in a narrow sense of an antagonistic reportage; a sort of an “adversarial journalistic practice” (Okon, 2017). This assessment appears to stem from the earlier noted misconception of investigative journalism as essentially focused on uncovering social ills like crime and corruption, in which case an investigative reporter assumes a role akin to that of a detective attempting to outwit some criminally minded adversaries. **While this sort of task is a legitimate and indeed very significant constituent of investigative journalism, it does not exhaustively represent it. The UNESCO’s definition of investigative journalism (cited in Chapter One) aptly captures this universalism of investigative journalism.** It presents investigative in a holistic sense, not restricted to any subject matter, be it corruption, crime, or scandal as common with a lot of definitions. While UNESCO notes that investigative journalism is concerned with “concealed” matters, it recognizes that such concealment is not necessarily deliberate as erroneously assumed by certain definitions (such as Okon, 2017 and Ohaja as cited in Anyadike, 2011), but that the investigated matter could have evaded public knowledge merely due to circumstances that are unintended.

Very importantly, UNESCO’s definition underlines the place of public interest in investigative journalism – any subject being investigated must be in public interest. The reporter does not just go around uncovering any hidden fact; such fact must meet the basic standard of news as a public

interest-oriented communication. Thus, Ohaja (as cited in Anyadike, 2011) is right in affirming that an investigative report “must be of public importance.”

There is, however, a problem posed by the word “investigative” being that every instance of journalism ought to involve some form of investigation – fact-finding (Mustapha-Koiki & Ayedun-Aluma, 2013). Reporters routinely investigate situations, issues and events in their everyday engagement. For instance, when reporters visit an accident scene and seek out eyewitnesses to interview or when they look at a map to ascertain where an event had taken place, they are involved in investigation. Therefore, what does the investigative journalist do differently? The explanation by Nazakat and KAS Media Programme (2010) that investigative journalism involves going “in-depth to investigate” and similar observation by Posetti (2013) that it entails “deep research” offers some insight towards resolving the problem. On this basis, one may say that what distinguishes the “investigation” done by an investigative reporter and that done by any other reporter is the “in-depth” and “deep-searching” nature of the former. This is what Famuyiwa-Alaka (2018) tries to capture when he describes investigative journalism as “thorough and incisive” (p.9). In other words, the penetrating and aggressive nature of its inquiry distinguishes it from the routine form of reporting.

But some commentators question the appellation “investigative” on the grounds that what investigative journalism stands for is what journalism should ideally be. In other words, what so-called investigative journalists are doing is what every journalist that is worth their salt ought to be doing (Forbes, 2005). However, one way of faulting this criticism is to point to the fact that

not all news events ordinarily lend themselves to such in-depth investigation implied by what has been traditionally called “investigative journalism”. Some news events are just so routine and quite ordinary that they basically lend themselves only to immediate straight reporting. For instance, when an electoral body is releasing voting results, the ordinary professional response of a media organisation is to go on disseminating the figures, being mindful of the time-bound nature of the development. Investigative journalism demands more time for research and which may not suit the higher demand of timeliness associated with routine news events that unfold minute by minute daily.

Investigative Journalism in Nigeria

Instructively, there is a general agreement among scholars that the culture of investigative journalism in Nigeria has not been impressive enough (Ibe, 2019; Pate, 2018). Remarkably, Anyadike (2013), following his research in this regard, describes the level of investigative journalism practice in the country as still “abysmally low”. Hence, just like in most countries of Africa, the investigative approach to journalism is yet to become vibrantly entrenched in the Nigerian news industry (Adum, Ekwonchi, Chukwuemeka & Okolie, 2019; Pate, 2018; Okon, 2017; Anyadike, 2013).

The study of the agenda setting function in regard to news media in many African countries including Nigeria has consistently revealed that most times the news agenda comes from the government as media organisations rely mainly on official information from public quarters for their reports, meaning that news, most of the times, turns out to be mere regurgitations of

official communications (Duru, 2019; Ibe, 2019, Pate, 2018). Thus, Pate (2018) observes that in the West where the culture of investigative journalism has been much more robust, the media have proved more capable of driving the public agenda as they have always dug up something to report besides what the government is willing to say.

Little wonder discourse on investigative journalism in Nigeria has been dominated by how this approach to reporting is faring in the face of hindering systemic factors. Thus, researchers appear to be mainly interested in how investigative journalism is being undermined in the country. The most cited among the hindering factors, apparently, is the country's poor press freedom atmosphere (Ciboh, 2017; Dogo, 2014; Anyadike, 2013; Asemah & Asogwa, 2012; Akinwale, 2010). Though there has been some improvement with the advent of democracy in 1999 (Adeniji, 2017; Abone & Kur, 2014), recent statistics still shows that the situation is far from the desirable (Reporters Without Borders, 2018; Reporters Without Borders, 2020). This hindrance manifests by way of insecurity of the life of journalists, harassment by government agents (Ciboh, 2017; Anyadike, 2013), and ownership influence (Anyadike, 2013). **The survey by Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, OECD (2018) across 43 countries found that this is also the case elsewhere. This implies that this fate of investigative journalism is a global phenomenon, even though journalists in developing countries where democratic structures are still relatively weak have been shown to suffer more in this regard (Reporters Without Borders, 2020; Reporters Without Borders, 2018).**

However, literature on the effect of poor press freedom culture on investigative journalism in Nigeria has tended to take a one-sided view that focuses only on its hindering effect. On the contrary, lack of press freedom may also be seen as an important driving force for investigative journalism; the tendency of authorities and other interests to suppress the truth is in the first place a key philosophical, moral and professional rationale for investigative journalism. Several definitions of investigative journalism reflect this fact (see for instance UNESCO as cited in Okon, 2017; Posetti, 2013; Nazakat & KAS Media Programme, 2010). Thus, rather than be viewed solely as a demotivating factor or an outright justification for failure, repression of free press becomes a condition summoning journalists to show the courage required by investigative journalism. As rightly noted by Forbes (2005, v), “journalists who strive to reveal hidden truths are generally courageous individuals concerned with protecting the public’s right to know.”

Also, Nigeria’s long experience of repression of the press has tended to affect how investigative journalism is conceptualized and even practised in the country, as scholars and practitioners seem to see it more in terms of an adventurous endeavour to outdo a powerful adversary. Several explanations of investigative journalism (for instance, Famuyiwa-Alaka, 2018; Okon, 2017; Anyadike, 2013) reflect this tendency. **Government in Nigeria, especially under the military era and to a lesser extent under the current democratic rule, has been widely accused of circumscribing the right of the press to free reportage by way of blockage of access to public information, harassments, arrests and incarceration (Amnesty International, 2020; Ciboh, 2017; Anyadike, 2013).** The particularly bitter experience under the long years of military dictatorship gave rise to gorilla journalism, and a veteran journalist, Ray Ekpu, once had cause to counsel that

with democracy and a supposedly freer press now, Nigerian journalists ought to be leaving gorilla journalism behind (Ekpu, 2012). As earlier noted in this chapter, such adversarial understanding of investigative journalism does not adequately reflect its complete nature and objectives.

One of the most notable moves made towards addressing the press freedom challenge in Nigeria is the enactment of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act in 2011. Stakeholders had vigorously campaigned for this legislation in the hope that, among other advantages, it will strengthen the culture of investigative reporting in the country. However, despite this popular optimism as well as predictions of some scholars (such as Anyadike, 2013), the FOI Act (which came into effect after years of tortuous struggle) is, as shown by many studies, largely yet to make the desired impact (Adum *et al.*, 2019; Agba, Ogri & Adomi, 2018; Adeniji, 2017; Abang, Okon & Henshaw, 2016; Abone & Kur, 2014; Dunu & Ugbo, 2014; Uzoma & Onwukwe, 2012).

Adeniji (2017) found that NGOs as against journalists are even the ones attempting to utilize the FOI Act in their quest to access public information. Earlier studies had also affirmed this non-utilisation of the law among practitioners (Dunu & Ugbo, 2014; Nnadi & Obot, 2014). Factors found to be responsible for this include lack of government cooperation, loopholes in the legislation itself, delay in judicial processes which discourages practitioners from pursuing cases in court in the event of denial of access to information as required under the law (Adum *et al.*, 2019; Agba *et al.*, 2018), and poor culture of public record keeping (Abang, Okon & Henshaw, 2016). Nonetheless, awareness of this law is high among journalists (Agba *et al.*, 2018; Abone & Kur, 2014; Dunu & Ugbo, 2014; Uzoma & Onwukwe, 2012). The several years of sustained

stringent campaign that preceded the passage of the legislation may have contributed to this wide awareness. Generally, however, traditional barriers to accessing public information in the country remain despite this supposedly enabling law (Agba *et al.*, 2018; Nnadi & Obot, 2014).

Other factors identified as responsible for the weak culture of investigative journalism in Nigeria include an unprofessional relationship between journalists and official news sources which makes the former susceptible to being compromised (Abang, Okon & Henshaw, 2016), other forms of corruption within the media (Ciboh, 2017; Asemah, 2012; Yusha'u, 2009), influence of advertisers (Asemah, 2012), financial challenges on the part of news organisations which limits funding of investigative reporting (Ntibinyane, 2018; Anyadike, 2013; Asemah, 2012; Yusha'u, 2009), and poor motivation of journalists due to widespread poor remuneration and non-existence of insurance cover (Ciboh, 2017; Anyadike, 2013).

Potentially, non-profit organisations working in the field of investigative journalism represent one way of mitigating some of these resource-related challenges among Nigerian journalists. Now considered important players in the field globally, these “groups are a diverse array of actors that includes reporting organizations, training institutes, small grant-making bodies, and regional and global networks that link journalists in person and online. Some organizations combine several of these roles” (Kaplan, 2013, 25). In Nigeria, a few non-profit organisations exist and are involved with funding, training and providing other forms of technical support to journalists and media organisations involved in investigative journalism. These include Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism (WSCIJ, 2020), Premium Times Centre for Investigative Journalism

(PTCIJ, 2020), International Press Centre (IPC, 2020), Partnership for Media and Democracy (PAMED), Media Rights Agenda (MRA, 2020), and Institute for Media and Society (IMS, 2020).

In his study of non-profit organisations promoting investigative journalism in Africa, Ntibinyane (2018) found that while the role of these organisations, including Nigeria's Premium Times Centre for Investigative Journalism, has been crucial to strengthening of investigative reporting in their respective countries, their "overreliance" on overseas funding hampers their flexibility. In all, it remains a popular view in literature that much more is still required towards developing investigative journalism in Nigeria (Agba *et al.*, 2018; Ntibinyane, 2018; Ciboh, 2017).

New and Media and Investigative Journalism

New media, according to McQuail (as cited in Nwanne, 2012, 87), is a "disparate form of communication technologies that share certain features apart from being new, made possible by digitalization and being widely available for personal use as communication devices." This definition is arguably vague being that while it emphasizes the "disparate" and "new" nature of the technologies in question, it fails to capture exactly the import of these attributes. Thus, it still leaves unanswered the question; what is "disparate" and new about "new media"? At best, it is able to state that the technologies are made "possible by digitalization".

Lister, Dovey, Giddings, Grant & Kelly (2009) observe that there is something ideological about the "new" in new media, as there is an underlying assumption that newness is the same thing as being better. The "new" is thus the "the cutting edge", the "avant-garde", the ideal standard. In

other words, when new media is mentioned, a more efficient, more ideal medium of communication is implied.

Many definitions have emphasized the Internet as being at the heart of what is known as new media (Bilal, 2014). While there is some good logic in this approach, it may be faulted on the ground that certain functions generally associated with new media such as multimediality and interactivity can still be achieved off-line, at least to some extent. Many definitions also emphasise interactivity, multimediality (convergence), hypertextuality, simulation, access on demand and user-control (Bilal, 2014; Nwanne, 2012; Lister, Dovey, Giddings, Grant & Kelly, 2009) as constituting new media. These are largely accommodated in Friedman and Friedman's (2008) five Cs – communication, collaboration, community, creativity, and convergence. All these features are adopted in conceptualizing new media in this dissertation. Instructively, the fact that enumerating these features has been a popular approach to explaining new media among scholars only points to the difficulty of defining the concept (Friedman & Friedman, 2008).

An important factor responsible for this recurring difficulty is the multi-layered nature of **the new media concept**. **The term** refers at the same time to a form of message, a form of medium, a form of technology, a particular time in history, and a social context. So there is this tendency for scholars to fall into confusion as to the exact object of study (Friedman & Friedman, 2008). Therefore, the “new” in new media is loaded with meaning and one's choice among the various strands of meaning will be dependent on the focus of their investigation.

The potential usefulness of new media tools to investigative journalism is arguably underscored by their proven role in investigations generally, including criminal investigations, as law enforcement agencies and prosecutors are now finding them an indispensable resource (Keisler, Daley & Hagy, 2007). One repeatedly cited effect of new media on investigative journalism is the ability of reporters to leverage social media networks for information gathering. Journalists can now utilize their large network of social media contacts and followers for sourcing information, thus saving cost and vastly extending their investigative reach. This is what is known as crowdsourcing and it is becoming an important means of fact-finding and fact-checking for investigative reporters (Posetti, 2013; Bunz, 2010; Bradshaw, 2008). This practice is altering the dynamics of investigative journalism as more and more reporters employ it for getting hints and verifying facts. They inform their contacts about an ongoing investigation and ask them what they know about the subject matter and who could be talked to. It was this approach that helped *Talking Points Memo*, a political blog, to expose the political intrigues that informed sudden removals of state prosecutors during the George Bush administration. Readers were able to supply evidence from across the country regarding what happened, and which helped the news site to put up a good story (Bradshaw, 2008). Similarly, a post made on a blog by a Canadian resident in China sparked off testimonies about contaminated pet food from Optima, a US producer, and which *Shanghai Times* and *Associated Press* picked up and made stories from (Bradshaw, 2008). In the same vein, Paul Lewis of the *Guardian* successfully employed tweets to generate materials from users concerning the death of Ian Tomlinson which helped to reveal police involvement in the death (Bradshaw, 2008). These examples represent successful utilization of crowdsourcing by investigative journalists. While the Internet has not “replaced

getting out and talking face to face to people during an investigation, but in a time of information overload, asking readers for help can direct a reporter to a piece of information or a direction of investigation that has been overlooked” (Bradshaw, 2008, 139).

A variety of new media tools are proving useful to investigative journalist in regard to fact finding. For example, Tweetdeck helps journalists maximize Twitter for getting information. It helps in tracking issues and following up on feedbacks from one’s followers in a very flexible and efficient manner (Tweetdeck, 2020). In the same way, CrowdTangle aids in monitoring what is trending on Facebook and in engaging other users (CrowdTangle, 2020), while Wayback Machine is used for tracking information that was previously published on a website and later pulled down (Wayback Machine, 2020).

Verification of information obtained is also a key engagement of an investigative journalist. A variety of new media tools have been developed to aid this task. An example is FotoForensics which helps to verify the genuineness of images. The app provides an in-depth analysis of an online image, thus revealing hidden pixels. It does error level analysis and exposes metadata details. All this helps one determine whether an image is real or doctored (Stellino, 2019). Serelay is another tool that works by performing a series of tests to determine a doctored image. It also reveals which part of an image has been modified, if any. Interestingly, even a single-pixel edit on an image is detectable by this software (Serelay, 2020).

However, much as new media has opened up more possibilities for journalists and media organisations in regard to sourcing information from members of the public, it has also come with some risk in terms of the security of those giving out sensitive information (Chen, 2019; Sierra, 2016). While privacy and anonymity may be enjoyed by new media users, these communication channels are not completely shielded from surveillance of whoever that possesses the means and technical know-how (Sierra, 2016). But interestingly, these problems are also being confronted employing some emerging new media tools. Examples of such tools include apps that enable anonymous upload of data on a media company’s website. This enables media organisations shield the identity of whistleblowers who send information to them by, for instance, making the IP address of the computer from which they send in their data invisible to a third party (Intercept, 2020; O’Donovan, 2014). Tor is an example of such tools that hides IP address as explained by O’Donovan (2014):

Tor is a decentralized network of servers that helps people bypass internet censorship, evade internet surveillance, and access websites anonymously. If you connect to Twitter while you’re using Tor Browser, Twitter can’t tell what your real IP address is — instead, they’ll see the IP address of a random Tor server. Tor servers are run by volunteers. And even if any of the servers bouncing your data around are malicious, they won’t be able to learn both who you are and what you’re doing.

Another good example is SecureDrop, which is “an open source whistleblower submission system” which may be installed by a media organisation to enable it receive documents from anonymous sources without exposing them to the danger of being discovered. This tool which is available in 20 languages was developed by Aaron Swartz and is currently managed by Freedom of the Press Foundation (SecureDrop, 2020).

The Intercept is an example of an organisation utilising such source-protecting mechanisms described above. Their platform integrates anti-surveillance tools to achieve this. Apart from using these tools, the organization has gone further to provide on its website information aimed at guiding whistleblowers and potential whistleblowers on how they can personally protect their identity, including by avoiding using their office network or regular personal computer and social media accounts for whistleblowing (Intercept, 2020).

Anonymous gossip apps like Whisper and Secret help users anonymously post all sorts of materials, personal or otherwise, and which journalists may find useful in their investigative effort. Whisper is already partnering with media organisations for distribution of content generated via their platform (O'Donovan, 2014). However, some serious questions of ethics and professionalism may arise regarding the use of such apps. As argued by O'Donovan (2014), while in the conventional practice of anonymity of sources journalists enjoy the privilege of knowing who their sources are, but in the case of some of these apps not even the editor or reporter knows the identity of the veiled source. In other words, both the journalists and their audience are equally at risk of being misled (O'Donovan, 2014).

There are also tools that enable journalists to encrypt their communication with sources to avoid surveillance. These technologies became popular a few years back following the revelation by Edward Snowden, an erstwhile US government security contractor, regarding the extent the government goes in pursuing surveillance of its citizens (Chen, 2019). Sierra (2016), nonetheless, observes that many journalists are reluctant to encrypt their messages due to the

characteristically complex technicality of many encryption tools, so they choose to risk their messages being tapped (Sierra, 2016). However, International Centre for Journalists (ICFJ) recommends some easy-to-use tools for encrypting email messages, and they include OpenPGP, RiseUp, ProtonMail, Mailvelope, Hushmail and Peerio (Sierra, 2016). Also, messaging apps like WhatsApp and Signal provide journalists with encryption options in order to keep their communication confidential (Chen, 2019).

Furthermore, new media technology has made open data possible. Open data, an important resource for investigative journalism, refers to information stored in digital format and infused with the technical and legal features that enable free use, re-use, and redistribution by anyone, anytime, anywhere. Open data is crucial in combating corruption as it enhances transparency and accountability as well as enables availability of information that can help detect and deal with corruption (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development OECD, 2018).

Generally, data journalism is assuming a prominent position as our communication culture increasingly embraces evidence and accuracy as a defining value. Here lies the worth of big data in modern journalism (Gray, Bounegru & Chambers, 2012). As observed by Lewis (2015, 321), “large-scale datasets and their collection, analysis, and interpretation are becoming increasingly salient for making sense of and deriving value from digital information, writ large.” Julian Assange’s WikiLeaks is a classic example of how new media has aided utilisation of big data for investigative journalism. This is notwithstanding the fact that his radically unorthodox method

has been controversial as some critics adjudge it politically destabilising and a threat to the push for online availability of government information (Lynch, 2012).

Based on the foregoing, it is admitted that new media, especially social media platforms, are altering journalistic norms and values in regard to what objectivity means. The journalist's work is today more strongly subjected to public scrutiny as members of the public now have more say in determining what is true and objective. There is thus "the mainstreaming of 'open journalism' models, which promote collaborative research and reportage; and even upending established verification processes" (Posetti, 2013, 88). In discussing how Twitter is used by investigative journalists, Posetti (2013) summarizes the fact-finding value of new media as follows: helping to contact sources, helping in building source database, crowdsourcing and verification.

Investigative journalism also benefits from new media in the area of message presentation and dissemination. Much transformation has occurred in this area as a result of application of new media tools. The multimedia orientation of these tools has ensured that print media organization now also present their messages in both audio and video forms, while electronic media outfits can now make more extensive use of texts. With this, print organisations are no longer restricted in terms of validation and evidence as they can now work with audio and video materials. This is what is known as convergence which, according to Siapera and Veglis (2012), is radically changing the face of modern journalism.

Convergence has also contributed significantly to modern journalism is in the area of infographics where a variety of new media tools has brought about much efficiency and flexibility (Okafor, 2019). Infographics, a short form of “informational graphics” are “visual representations that blend data and design to present complex information quickly and clearly to the viewer using charts or maps” (Henriquez, 2014, 4). Infographics has become a key part of today’s journalism (Okafor, 2019; Henriquez, 2014). With new media tools, including hardware like smartphones and computers and a variety of software, journalists can now more quickly, more efficiently and more flexibly process huge sets of data into infographics for quicker, easier and more exciting consumption by audience (Okafor, 2019). This is evidently a boost to investigative journalism where journalists are, many a time, likely to work with large and sometimes complicated datasets.

New media also affect investigative journalism by enhancing collaboration among journalists and media organisations. Gearing (2014) observes that journalists have been able to effectively achieve collaborations across national borders. Examples of such collaborations include the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) and the Center for Investigative Reporting (CIR).

These are two out of more than 40 non-profit bodies providing funding for investigative journalism projects in the US through donations from philanthropic bodies and individuals. Reflecting on how much new media has accentuated this sort of collaboration, Bunz (2010, 1) notes that previously, collaborations “on any significant scale” required “the power of institutions

and organizations. Now they require only a good idea and the right tools.” A classic example of result of such collaborations was the Panama Papers investigation, wherein a five-year joint investigative effort by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists uncovered incidents of financial malpractices involving firms and individuals across many nations. This transnational journalistic collaboration, which won the Pulitzer Prize for Explanatory Reporting in 2017, involved journalists from 107 media organisations across 80 countries (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2018). **Some new media tools help investigative journalism in collaborative such work. A popular example is Google Docs which provides resources for collaborative writing and brainstorming (Google Docs, 2020). Similarly, CrowData is useful for collaborating with other Internet users for extracting, verification and analysis of data (CrowData, 2020).**

Furthermore, investigative journalism also benefits from new media in the area of message presentation. The multimedia features of online platforms enable newspaper organisations, for instance, to include video and audio clips that lend more credence to reports. Alongside their finally edited reports, media organisations leverage new media resources to publish raw documents and other raw data as well as provide hyperlinks that may deepen insight on reports (Chen, 2019; Posetti, 2013).

New media in Nigerian journalism

There is ample evidence in literature that new media has permeated journalism practice in Nigeria (Hassan, Azmi & Nasidi, 2018; Eze, 2017; Emmanuel, 2017; Obalanlege, 2015; Ganiyu,

2014; Chukwu, 2014; Ganiyu, 2014; Chukwu, 2014; Ekwugha & Nwammuo, 2013). These studies generally show that journalists and media organisations in the country have started responding to the imperative of the current era where computer and the Internet are becoming the norm of doing business in the communication industry. Thus, while traditional media organisations have integrated online platforms for disseminating their content, use of new media tools like smartphone and social media for contacting sources, conducting interviews, making professional contacts, and networking with colleagues have become a routine among journalists (Ganiyu, 2014; Eze, 2017; Nwanne, 2016).

Nonetheless, there is a general agreement that new media use is yet to be optimized in Nigerian due to some systemic factors (Nwanne 2016; Didiugwu, Ezugwu & Ekwe, 2015; Ekwugha & Nwammuo, 2013). Often cited among these limiting factors include the level of Internet penetration among the population, inadequate Internet infrastructure, financial challenges and unsteady power supply (Nwanne 2016; Ganiyu, 2014; Ekwugha & Nwammuo, 2013). However, there appears to be a general opinion that journalists and their organisations have been moving on impressively in the face of these hindrances. For instance, Nwanne (2016) avers that despite “the challenges, the media people have coped well, leading to what has been described as media convergence” (p.86).

Notwithstanding, literature suggests that there has been little effort to narrow the inquiry to investigative journalism in order to interrogate the possible role of new media in this approach to reporting. The fact that journalists in the country have embraced new media tools would

naturally lead to the assumption that they are likely to be extending the use to their investigative journalism endeavours. This assumption needs to be tested empirically. However, a few studies (such as Obalanlege, 2015; Mustapha-Koiki & Ayedun-Aluma, 2013; Yusha'u, 2009) that have attempted this have limited their scope to the role of new media in the actual process of news gathering alone, thus leaving out other (wider) roles such as enhancing collaboration with colleagues, accessing of grants and applying for awards. There is evidence that some of these novel practices that strengthen investigative journalism today are happening in Nigeria; bodies like the Premium Times Centre for Investigative Journalism (PTCIJ) and the International Centre for Investigative Journalism (ICIJ) give grants to investigative journalists, while the Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism and some other bodies give awards annually to outstanding investigative reporters in the country (Famuyiwa-Alaka, 2018; Ntibinyane, 2018). However, studies have not inquired into how new media may have enhanced journalists' participation in some of these activities. Also, crowdsourcing – an Internet-based innovation that is globally revolutionalising investigative journalism practice and values – was notably marginalised in the existing studies.

- edit

- and this dissertation will look at theses issues and fill this gap in the literature ...

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Technological Determinism Theory and Diffusion of Innovations Theory. The theory of Technological Determinism holds that technology is at the root of social

evolution; our social life and all activities thereof are determined by the nature of the technology we have at any point in time (Leonard, 2008). The term “technological determinism” is believed to have been coined American sociologist, Thorstein Veblen. Technological Determinism theorists see technology as an irresistible force shaping human life and human existence. It is the primary determinant of the social order. Writing on the theory, Croteau and Oynes (2003)

- **typo**

observe that:

Technological Determinism is a reductionist theory that presumes that a society’s technology drives the development of its social structure and cultural values.... an approach that identifies technology, or technological advances, as the central elements in processes of social change (p.13).

Canadian scholar, Marshal McLuhan, applied the theory to communication in 1962. He argues that media technology conditions how individuals think, feel and act as well as “how the society operates as we move from one technological age to another” (McLuhan, 1962, p.45). McLuhan (1962) affirms that, in communicating, individuals are not free to do as they like but must employ whatever means used by their society to communicate. Stated differently, they “will adapt to the medium common in the society so that they can send and receive messages like everyone else” (Griffin, 2000, p.47). It is this means of communication that ultimately conditions the nature and quality of message – the medium is the message (McLuhan, 1962).

Technological Determinism has been applied to the study of new media wherein scholars note that new media technology has brought about fundamental changes in our communication

culture, redefining its inner dynamics. In other words, a shift in technology has led to a shift in our communication culture. Thus, new media technologies have imposed a radical shift on the modern communication culture, and which manifests in a number of ways such as explosion in the quantity of content, enhanced multimediality, greater user control, cost effectiveness, and increased interactivity among others (Fill, 2011; Salman, Ibrahim, Hj.Abdullah, Mustaffa & Mahbob, 2011; Aggarwal, 2002). Hence, in the context of new media's role in investigative journalism in Nigeria, Technological Determinism Theory will help view new media tools as an important shaper of journalism in the present world, and which investigative journalists in Nigeria ought to embrace to be efficient in the present context. Conboy (2012, 148) argues that "technology brought journalism into existence and that journalism is very much defined by its continuing ability to react and adapt to changes in the technological environment."

However, it is still the truth that while new media may be shaping modern journalism, certain factors peculiar to a country (such as Nigeria) might in turn determine the effect of new media on its journalism. For instance, Franco (2009), in his study of the effect of digital technology in Latin American and the Caribbean, found that unequal rates of Internet penetration within and between nations led to unequal effects of digital technology in the region. Here lies the major weakness of Technological Determinism; it brings everything to rest on technology without factoring in the effect of other social variables on technology. Making this point, Köchler (2017) affirms that it "is an anthropological truth" that human beings are not passive assimilators of "the effects of every new technology," rather they have "often proven to be resilient to technologically induced forms of social engineering." He cites the example of the failed prediction

that information technology would finally bring about a shared global identity, observing that multiplicity of social identities has remained with us, despite massive technological penetrations worldwide.

As seen in the work of Franco (2009), an important variable moderating technological effect is the extent of penetration and acceptance of such technology in the society in question. A technology requires effective presence and adoption to make its effect felt in a place. Consequently, we turn to the Diffusion of Innovations Theory to be able to factor in variables related to technological adoption in our interrogation of effect of new media on investigative journalism in Nigeria. This theory, propounded by Carl Rogers in 1962, attempts to offer explanation as to “how, why, and at what rate new ideas and technology spread through cultures” (Lewis, 2009, p.201). It postulates that four major elements influence the spread of a new idea: innovation, communication channels, time, and a social system. Innovation refers to an idea, practice or object considered new. Communication channels are means through which messages about an innovation are transmitted from person to person. Time refers to how long it takes for one to take decision regarding adopting an innovation. Then, social system means the communal and cultural context of an innovation. These four elements dynamically interact with each other to bring about the spread of an innovation (Rogers, 1962). So, whether and how Nigerian journalists would utilize new media tools for investigative journalism is tied to these elements. Importantly, the journalists’ social and cultural context would exert a lot of influence here, underscoring the need to avoid any quick assumption that what obtains elsewhere will necessarily obtain in the country.

However, Rogers (1962) notes that in deciding whether to adopt an innovation, individuals judge whether the innovation is better than what it is about to replace (relative advantage), how much it suits the values, experiences, and needs of such a person (compatibility), the extent of difficulty one may encounter trying to understand and/or utilise the innovation (complexity), how much one may be able to test the innovation before committing to adopting it (trialability), and how much the outcome of the innovation can be concretely observed (observability). Hence, new media technology would not impose itself on Nigerian journalists but could be adopted by them based on certain judgments regarding its characteristics. In other words, while new media may have the potential to make investigative journalism more efficient, the judgment (perception) of journalists themselves is critical to whether new media is brought in to play this role.

Importantly, the Diffusion of Innovations Theory acknowledges that all individuals and segments of a population do not adopt an innovation simultaneously; some do this faster than others. Rogers (1962) thus puts forwards what he terms five different “adopter categories” based on their speed of adopting an innovation. These are innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards. In the global context, new media adoption did not occur at the same time across nations; some nations adopted faster than others, and while some are advanced in this adoption, others, including Nigeria, are lagging behind to various extents (Internet World Stats, 2019). This factor may be critical to the role of new media in investigative journalism in Nigeria.

Finally, Rogers (1962) notes that in adopting an innovation, individuals usually go through five stages – knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation and confirmation. One stage will lead to the next depending on how the preceding stage went. The “decision stage” is the most difficult of all as it is when the individual evaluates an innovation, its advantages and disadvantages, and resolves to adopt or reject it.

In all, the theories of Technological Determinism and Diffusion of Innovations provide a theoretical framework for interrogating new media’s role in investigative journalism in Nigeria. While Technological Determinism places new media technology as a strong determinant of standards, practices and values in contemporary investigative journalism, Diffusion of Innovations theory factors in the human element by considering the would-be users of the technology, their social circumstances, judgment and preferences. Combining the two theories allow for a two-dimensional inquiry that takes into consideration both the technology itself and the social circumstances affecting its use.

Thus, in applying these theories to this study, the researcher is paying attention to two key elements: technological imperative and human behaviour. Technological imperative derives from Technological Determinism; it refers to the new standards and values as well as new opportunities brought about by new media technologies in today’s investigative journalism. On the other hand, human behaviour derives from Diffusion of Innovations, and it refers to the response of humans to technological imperative. In other words, it is concerned with how much the new standards, new values and new opportunities brought about by new media technologies

have been embraced by journalists. Stated differently, while Technological Determinism will help to view investigative journalism from the perspective of its technological necessity, Diffusion of Innovations will help interrogate how investigate journalists have engaged this necessity.

Summary of Literature

The discussion so far, in summary, shows that new media is radically altering practices and values in journalism practice. Investigative journalism has been a notable beneficiary of this trend (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development OECD, 2018; Posetti, 2013; Bunz, 2010; Bradshaw, 2008). While the role of new media in investigative journalism has been known globally, not much has been done by way of empirical investigation to evaluate this phenomenon in the Nigerian local context. Therefore, whether and in what ways new media tools may be affecting this approach to reporting in the country is yet to be adequately understood. This constitutes the research gap necessitating this study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the methodology adopted by the dissertation. Askia (2017) notes that methodology maps the path which a study will follow to get to its intended destination. Methodology ensures discipline and logicity in a research process, which help to control errors and biases (Sarstedt & Mooi, 2019). Thus, this chapter provides direction for the study in terms of the research design, area of study, population, sample and sampling procedure, instrument of data collection and method of data analysis.

Research Design

This research was designed as a qualitative study. The greatest strength of the qualitative approaches, according to Mooi, Sarstedt and Mooi-Reci (2018, 33), is “their richness, as they have the potential to offer detailed insights into respondents’ perceptions, attitudes, and intentions.” The researcher aimed at such detailed and in-depth insight, thus his choice of a qualitative study. Data was generated through key informant interview (KII). Key informant interview (KII) allows a researcher to collect data, via unstructured, in-depth question and answer sessions with certain selected individuals who, given their vocation, position and/or training, are in a position to provide reliable information on the specific subject of interest (Kumar, 2011). This is simply a form of in-depth interview where some special expertise, calling and experience are considered in determining who is qualified to be a respondent. Considering that the domain of this research is a specialised one – journalism or more precisely investigative journalism – the researcher

considered in-depth interview of professionals as appropriate for realising the objectives of the study. Besides, the researcher considered the fact that in-depth interviews permit posing of several questions to an interviewee on a one-to-one basis, “which fosters interaction between the interviewer and the respondent.” They also allow a researcher the flexibility of adjusting questions for each interviewee (Mooi *et al.*, 2018, p.15).

Area of the Study

The study area was the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It is a country on the west coast of Africa distinguished by its large population which, according to the last national census in 2006, is 140, 431, 790 people. However, more recent official estimates put the nation’s population at over 180 million as at March 2018 (National Population Commission, 2018). Nigeria is Africa’s most populous country and the sixth most populous nation in the world (Ayatse, & Akuva, 2013; Nwafor, 2015). It is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious enclave. After New Guinea and Indonesia, Nigeria ranks as the most ethnically and linguistically diverse country in the world (Blench, & Dendo, 2003). However, there are three major indigenous languages in the country by virtue of the number that speak them – Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. Two major religions dominate the country; Islam concentrated in the northern part and Christianity concentrated in the southern part of the country. Other fringe religions including traditional religions are equally present (Salawu, 2013).

Politically, Nigeria is a federal entity structured into 36 states and a federal capital territory. The nation’s commercial hub and former capital, Lagos, is also the hub of media activities in the

country. Most of the leading national newspapers as well as the leading television and radio stations have their headquarters in the city (Eze, 2017; Adedeji, 2009).

Population of the Study

Sarstedt and Mooi (2019) explain a population to mean a “group of units about which we want to make judgments. These units can be groups of individuals, customers, companies, products, or just about any subject in which you are interested” (p.38). The population of the study was all registered journalists practising in Nigeria. The records of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), the central professional body of journalists, show that there are 32, 342 registered journalists as at September 2018 when the union’s database was last updated (Nigeria Union of Journalists, 2019). These journalists are spread across print, broadcast, and online media as well as news agencies and government press offices.

While there are journalists not registered with the union, the union’s database remains the most reliable source for reaching the “key informants” targeted by this study. First, obtaining a formal training in journalism or mass communication is a prerequisite for becoming a member of the union (Nigeria Union of Journalists, NUJ, 2012), which gives the assurance that any person selected from the database is a qualified journalist by virtue of training. Second, only a minority of journalists in the country are not registered with the union (Nigeria Union of Journalists, NUJ, 2020).

Sampling

The most important requirement in sampling is that a sample must be representative of the population (Mooi *et al.*, 2019; Sarstedt & Mooi, 2018; Asika, 2017). Being representative “means that the characteristics of the sample closely match those of the population” (Mooi *et al.*, 2019, 39). This consideration primarily guided the researcher’s sampling process. Journalists were sampled from across the major categories of media organisations that make up the Nigeria’s mediascape. They are

1. Newspaper organisations
2. Magazine organisations
3. Television stations
4. Radio stations, and
5. Online-only news organisations

The sampling was in two stages. In the first stage, two media establishments was selected from each of the categories listed above, while in the second stage, one journalist was selected from each of the media establishments.

- **Stage One: Selecting Media Establishments**

- i. Newspaper Organisations**

Two newspaper organisations were selected from the list of national dailies circulating in the country. The national dailies constitute the mainstream of the Nigerian newspaper industry given their size, market strength and nationwide circulation (Eze, 2018). They are all privately owned and are all quality (broadsheet) newspapers in terms of content philosophy. The researcher

employed the simple random technique to select two newspaper establishments. Following the method recommended by Asika (2017), the researcher listed out the newspapers alphabetically, and then employed a table of random numbers to select two. The newspapers selected via this process were *The Sun* and *This Day*.

ii. Magazine Organisations

Nigeria has an array of magazine organisations. In the mainstream, however, are nationally circulating newsmagazines that began to make waves since the establishment of *Newswatch* in the early 1980s by a group of journalists led by Mr. Dele Giwa (Eze, 2018). From this group, two magazines were selected using the same simple random procedure described above. Thus, *TELL Magazine* and *The News Magazine* were selected.

iii. Television Stations

Nigeria's TV sphere has a strong presence of both government and private players. The Nigeria Television Authority (NTA), Africa's largest TV network, and the only federal-government owned station, was automatically selected to represent public TV broadcasting. Then, the researcher randomly selected one from private news television stations who broadcast nationally. The stations selected were Channels TV and Africa Independent Television (AIT).

iv. Radio Stations

Like with the television sphere, the Nigerian radio industry has a strong presence of both government and private players. The Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN), also known as

Radio Nigeria, was selected to represent public radio. The FRCN was selected ahead of the other federal government-owned radio station, the Voice of Nigeria (VON), given that the latter has more international than local presence as it is a foreign propaganda organ of the government. Secondly, the FRCN is much bigger; it is the largest radio network in Africa, and with more journalistic versatility as the VON is primarily concerned with news related to government policies (Adedeji, 2009). Furthermore, the researcher randomly selected one from the private radio stations who broadcast nationally. The selected station was Ray Power FM.

v. Online-Only News Organisations

There are several online news sites operating in Nigeria. However, the researcher restricted his selection to only those sites that practise professional as against citizen journalism. Thus, blog sites are excluded while attention was focused on those sites with a formal organisational character and a gatekeeping structure but disseminate their content only on the Internet. Two news sites were thus randomly selected as follows: Premium Times and TheCable.

- **Stage Two: Selecting Journalists**

The researcher employed judgmental sampling for selecting individuals to be interviewed in the above selected media organisations. Mooi *et al.* (2018, 47) note that judgmental sampling “is based on researchers taking an informed guess regarding which individuals should be included.” Here a researcher is looking out for certain characteristics viewed as qualifying a person to participate in a study. In this study, the researcher was interested in journalists who had done at least two investigative reports in the last one year. The researcher relied on the database of the

Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) to access the reporters. This database is accessible to members of the public upon demand. It shows the name and other details of each journalist including his/her chapel. Journalists in individual media establishments form the NUJ Chapels, the smallest unit in the national governance structure of the union. Thus, applying the judgmental sampling procedure, the researcher selected one journalist per media establishment (chapel) to make a total of 10 interviewees. The researcher contacted via phone calls the chair of each of the selected chapels (media organisations) requesting for help in scouting for any member of the chapel who met the criterion (of having worked on at least two investigative stories in the last one year) and was willing to participate in the study. In the instances where a chapel chair declined to assist, the researcher sought the help of any other member of the chapel. **The approach of using insiders for contacting respondents was targeted at leveraging the familiarity between a contact person and his/her colleagues to increase chances of securing consent. This appeared to have worked as each of the contact persons was able to return a positive result, even though three of them reported that there were refusals by the first persons they approached, meaning that they had to approach other colleagues before consent was obtained. This was in line with the instructions of the research to the contact persons.**

Instrument of Data Collection

The researcher relied on key informant interview (KII) guide (see Appendix I) as the data collection tool. The guide was designed in line with the study objectives. It contained questions and their respective probes to guide the researcher in the interview process.

Method of Data Collection

Face-to-face interview would have been preferable given its promise of enhancing trust and committed involvement on the part of the interviewee (Sarstedt & Mooi, 2018), however, the geographical distance between the researcher and these respondents made it impracticable at the time of the research. Therefore, the interview sessions were conducted via phone calls. The interview sessions were recorded and the researcher also took notes to capture salient points that would be useful for the analysis. Each session lasted last between 20 and 30 minutes.

Method of Data Analysis

The researcher adopted the thematic method of data analysis. This is “a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail. However, it also often goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.6). Thus, the analysis was based on themes emerging from the responses of the interviewees. These themes were identified by critically listening to the recorded sessions. This approach to qualitative analysis was preferred in view of its flexibility and open-endedness; it is not tied to any particular theoretical or epistemological orientation and so makes for eclectic approach in data reading and analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Challenges

Challenges encountered by the researcher include potential difficulty in getting the consent of the would-be respondents and successfully having a session with them. Journalists are characteristically busy and mobile in their operation, so pinning each respondent down for an

interview may constitute a challenge. The researcher resolved this problem by letting each respondent choose the time and mode (Skype or phone call) of the interview,

Furthermore, the researcher anticipated desirability bias in the course of data collection. This occurs when a respondent gives answers intended to impress as against answers that reflect the true state of things as they know or believe them; in other words, the respondent is trying to give an answer that is desirable, an answer that is “ideal” (Asika, 2017). It is normal for an average professional journalist to want to be seen as competent and up to date with innovations in the field, such as represented by use of new media for investigative reporting. Such a journalist may therefore want to give answers that will portray them in this light, thus possibly undermining genuine information. However, to address this bias, the researcher assured the respondents, earlier and immediately before each interview session, of their anonymity and the strictly academic purpose of the interview.

Ethical Implications

This study revolves round a subject that has more to do with the professional than the private life of the respondents, so may not pose too difficult ethical problems.

Notwithstanding, the researcher still recognised the fact that eliciting personal information (even if of professional nature) from the respondents may still be of some ethical implication. Consequently, the researcher made effort to comply with the minimum ethical standards

associated with research of this nature. These include obtaining the due consent of the respondents before interviewing them. The researcher ensured that this consent was truly an informed one by clearly disclosing to the respondents why they were being interviewed and how their answers would be used.

Further, the respondents were also told that they reserved the right to withdraw their consent at any point in the course of the interview. Secondly, the researcher endeavoured to be faithful to all the promises made to the respondents regarding anonymity and utilisation of their responses. This, the researcher did.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses data collected in the field. The presentation and analysis was done under specific themes relevant to the study objectives. In line with the anonymity pledge made to the interviewees, the researcher assigned numeric identifications to each of them in place of their names. Thus, the two newspaper journalists were designated as Respondent 1 and Respondent 2; the magazine journalists as Respondent 3 and Respondent 4; the radio reporters as Respondent 5 and Respondents 6; the TV reporters as Respondent 7 and Respondent 8; and the online news reporters as Respondent 9 and Respondent 10. **The anonymity decision was informed principally by the fact that use of new media tools or not by journalists is not just a function of their individual will and capacity but also has a lot to do with what happens within their offices in terms of support, policy and culture. Thus, as will be seen shortly, the answers of the respondents touched on issues related to their workplace and attitude of their employers and even colleagues. So, given that such sensitive responses were foreseen, anonymity pledge became necessary. Furthermore, the researcher considered the fact that pledge of anonymity might be an important incentive to the journalists in deciding to grant or withhold consent (Asika, 2017).**

Awareness of Role of New Media in Investigative Journalism

The respondents' answers clearly showed that they are not oblivious of roles new media tools can play in investigative journalism. Each of the 10 interviewees answered in the affirmative the

question as to whether these tools have any contribution to make to investigative reporting. One of the contributions identified precisely by the respondents is in the area of obtaining story idea.

“The Internet helps you in finding a story idea. Something trending online might give you some idea to work on,” said Respondent 10, a journalist with an online-only medium. Similarly, Respondent 1, a newspaper reporter, noted that the Internet has become “a very rich repository of information where one, almost unfailingly, would find something on which to build an investigation.”

All the respondents were of this same opinion that the Internet expands an investigative reporter’s source of story ideas. Being a public forum where various issues of public concern are constantly brought to the fore, chances are that a journalist can anytime identify any he/she may consider good for investigation. In the words of Respondent 7, a television reporter, “Once you are committed to investigative journalism and you are Internet-savvy and willing to find story ideas online, you are certain to succeed from time to time.”

It is important to explain here that by referring to the Internet as a resource for finding story ideas, the respondents appeared to be referring to an aspect of the online technology – the world wide web (www). While the WWW is an integral part of the Internet that makes interconnectivity possible, it does not account for the entire technology. However, its development in the early 1990s by Tim Berners Lee remains a watershed in the evolution of the Internet we have today (Agba, 2011; Baran, 2010).

Apart from helping with story idea, the Internet, according to the respondents, also helps in the actual process of developing a story. Also helpful in this regard are smartphones, tablets and similar new media tools. For instance, Respondent 5, a radio reporter stated:

The Internet and these gadgets have a great role to play (in the process of writing one's story). Sourcing for data is one big area... You cannot really do investigative journalism without data being handy. Smartphones have reduced the stress of having to meet people physically, breaking the barrier of time. Sometimes investigation processes are very risky, your going to a particular place may be unsafe. In such cases, phone calls and phone recording may help you.

The other respondents in the main agreed with this view. They spoke a lot about smartphones and how they have integrated, in one device, various tools required to function effectively in the field of investigative reporting. These tools include voice recorder, electronic jotters and notebooks, emails, WhatsApp, Facebook and other social media tools that are useful for interacting with news sources, camera (for still and motion pictures), online information sources, and storage devices for preservation of information and data that may be retrieved by the journalist from time to time. Incidentally, all these correspond to some of the contributions of new media to investigative journalism as identified in literature (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2018; Posetti, 2013; Bunz, 2010; Bradshaw, 2008). A survey by Chen (2019) found that "smartphone was the most vital work tool among journalists. Many reporters relied on smartphones for recording interviews and turned to A.I.-powered apps like Trint and Rev to automatically transcribe interviews into notes." On how much smartphones in conjunction with online tools is transforming journalism, Chen (2019) states further:

In the world of dining, digital photography and platforms like Instagram have become the main method that restaurants use to communicate with patrons. Rocket launches are now live-streamed online, which let our space reporter watch from his phone instead of heading to the space station. And in the entertainment world, video streaming has opened doors to a wealth of new content — so much that reporting on movies and TV shows has become an art of curation. What’s ahead? If tech has invaded everything, the answer is: even more transformation (Chen, 2019).

Regarding camera in particular, the respondents observed that with smartphones, a reporter no longer has to carry bulky cameras about. Respondent 4, a magazine reporter, for instance, said “bulky cameras may not always be ideal for an investigative journalist who sometimes may have to take shots secretly.”

The foregoing indicates that the respondents are aware of the role of new media tools in investigative journalism. Stated differently, they appreciate what these tools offer to an investigative reporter in terms of improving the efficiency of their work process. This somehow is in line with results of previous studies which show that journalists in Nigeria are aware of new media’s role in contemporary journalism, even though investigative journalism was not specifically considered by these studies (Hassan, Azmi & Nasidi, 2018; Eze, 2017; Emmanuel, 2017; Obalanlege, 2015; Ganiyu, 2014; Chukwu, 2014; Ganiyu, 2014; Chukwu, 2014; Ekwugha & Nwammuo, 2013).

However, it may be argued that since role of new media in finding story ideas, fact-finding and fact verification etc is not restricted to investigative reporting alone, for any journalist to be said to be really aware of role of these tools in investigative journalism, he/she ought to show an

understanding of what is unique about what investigative journalists do with them. The respondents were generally able to show this understanding as seen in their responses to the question of whether and how they personally utilize these new media tools which the next sections treat.

Utilisation of New Media for Reportorial Activities

New media's role in investigative journalism, as seen in the literature review, covers both reportorial engagements and non-reportorial engagements relevant to investigative journalism such as training, grants and awards. Interestingly, all of the respondents affirmatively stated that they utilize new media tools for all the reportorial purposes for which they earlier indicated they may be used for. These include finding story ideas, fact-finding, and fact verification.

Regarding story idea, the interviewees recalled some of the personal experiences they found interesting. Respondent 10 stated that sometime in 2019 he investigated a claim by a state government that it was providing free maternal health care to residents. His story exposed the inaccuracy of this claim. However, he emphasized that it was the Internet that helped him to find this story idea. "I was surfing the Net and I stumbled on this claim by the state government. I had a reason to doubt it. I therefore wrote a pitch, submitted it and won a grant to do the story," he said.

Other respondents had similar experiences to share. Respondent 5 recalled how participating in social media chats gave him the idea that illegal miners were operating in his state, and this

became a story to be investigated. Respondent 1 also stated that he got his idea to investigate activities of young Internet fraudsters popularly called “yahoo yahoo boys” in Nigeria through posts made in a WhatsApp group he belonged to. Similarly, Respondent 9, an online journalist, recalled that information he saw on a government website regarding budget spending helped him with an idea to investigate the extent of transparency in the implantation of budgets of legislators. Respondent 8, a TV journalist, also noted that her idea to investigate a fraudulent teachers’ welfare scheme was got via the Internet. It is important to observe that some of these pieces of information that yielded story ideas for these journalists are reports done by other journalists – professional or citizen. And such reports, from the perspective of ordinary kind of reportage, may be considered concluded and resolved, but for an investigative journalist, it merely presents an opportunity for even a deeper reportorial engagement. Such is the uniqueness of the role new media plays in investigative journalism in terms of providing story idea, and the respondents showed not just their understanding of this uniqueness, but their attempts to actively explore it.

Interestingly, a closer scrutiny of the respondents’ answers indicated that their obtaining of story ideas via the Internet happened either as a result of deliberate search or by chance. When it is by chance, then it may have required little or no effort, which further underscores the usefulness of the Internet to investigative journalism in terms of finding a story idea. Respondent 3 said this much when he averred that “once you are active online, you are likely to stumble on story ideas from time to time. You don’t necessarily need to put in any effort.” Story idea is critical to

investigative journalism; it is the first crucial step that paves way for and defines the subsequent stages (Owuamalam, 2009).

Moving on from story idea to development of story proper, the respondents equally found new media useful. Fact-finding by these reporters benefits a lot from new media tools at their disposal. Respondent 10 noted that even when you may have to physically go in hunt of facts, new media tools may become useful in leading you to the location. He recalled that while pursuing his story on the purported free maternal health care of a state government, it was through the Internet that he was able to study and understand the geography and demographics of the state, knowing which parts he was supposed to visit. Respondent 3, who did a story on the apparent disconnect between the huge budgetary allocations to customary courts of a state and the dilapidated conditions of the court infrastructure, said that the Internet helped him to obtain information on the amounts budgeted for the courts over the past 10 years.

Some of the respondents could not give specific examples but recalled that working with new media tools, especially Internet-based resources like webpages and social media, have crucially assisted them in fact-finding. They identified the advantages offered by new media in this respect to include rich availability of information, currency of information, multimedia format of information and convenience of accessing information in terms of space and time barrier. Incidentally, these are key advantages identified by scholars as flowing from new media as far as fact-finding in investigative journalism is concerned (Posetti, 2013; Bunz, 2010; Bradshaw, 2008).

The respondents were equally emphatic in pointing out one important advantage offered by new media to fact-gathering in investigative reporting. New media gives one some special help when it comes to secret gathering of information. Here the respondents were particular about camera and record device built into their smartphones. This is convergence in the service of investigative journalism. Respondent 5 recalled that while doing his investigative report on illegal mining, he took his photos from afar using his smartphone camera and its zoom function. These tools came handy being that it was dangerous to come close to the illegal miners. He was excited by how these new media tools helped him avoid the inconvenience of carrying a bulky camera about which would have made him conspicuous in a potentially unfriendly environment. "Some of the terrains I needed to go through were very bad, and my smartphone with its Internet connection was helpful for conducting and recording interviews with eyewitnesses without having to go to their locations," he added.

Respondent 3 similarly agreed to have benefited in the same manner from new media. He said he had encountered many situations when he had to record the voice of news sources covertly. In some of such situations, he said, he would put his phone on record before knocking on the door of an office. So, once the source started speaking on sighting him, his/her voice would be recorded. He admitted this to be unethical but insisted that it was what he had to do for sake of truth and public interest. His phone camera has also come handy in such situations; he recounted:

When I did a report on use of torture for eliciting confessions from suspects, I would enter a police station under the guise of wanting to see someone. While seated and waiting, I would be clandestinely taking photos. This was made possible because I was using my phone camera. It

would have been absolutely impossible to do this with the conventional camera. It comes with risks but you need courage and craftiness. Since they are shielding information from us, we have to devise other means of accessing such information. That is what investigative journalism is all about.

Respondent 9 recalled that while working on his story on unreported rape cases, most of the victims were more comfortable speaking to him on phone. “They knew they were being recorded but phone interview helped them avoid the tensions of face-to-face encounter,” he noted, adding that his smartphone with its Internet connection also came handy amidst the movement restrictions of the COVID-19 era. Respondent 1’s testimony may pass as a summary of all that Internet and smartphone represent for these reporters:

They have helped me in particular. It is not everywhere the reporter will visit physically. You may need to dig up data, past publications, fact-checking (like dates, names, places etc). Smartphones are very helpful. They do everything. We now use it as our jotter, camera, tape recorder and a lot more... You may ordinarily be speaking to someone without any journalistic intention at first, (but along the line) you may see an idea, you may even record. You may run into a scene and take photos, later on you may start to work on the story. So, having this small gadget in your pocket is like carrying an entire work tool, your office, library, everything you need, wherever you go.

While doing fact-finding, verification of such facts is often necessary, and the respondents noted that this process has equally benefitted from new media. They informed that new media now helps them in fact verification, especially given the rich availability of information online. “All sorts of facts, data and statistics are available there,” said Respondent 8, “and these have made our job much easier”. Respondent 1 recounted one of his experiences which is instructive:

Two years ago (2018), I did a story on an airport project of the government which people had started suspecting to be a failed promise. I tried to reach the Chinese company Sinoking Enterprises Limited meant

to handle the project. I searched online and found that the company was real. You know people were already rumouring that even the company is fake. I sent an enquiry email to them (having found their email address on their website). Even though they failed to reply to the enquiry, it still shows how far the Internet can take one in terms of investigating events that transcend one's national borders. I was able to do all that because I have access to the Internet.

Respondent 10 recalled his experience regarding his investigation of disparities in the official figures of COVID-19 infections in the country. A state governor had in his speech stated that there were 66 cases and nine deaths in the state. However, this contradicted the information given by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) which is the body coordinating national response to the pandemic. The Centre had it that only 36 cases and one death had been recorded in this state. He had to search the Internet to track the rise of the COVID-19 cases from the day the nation's index case was announced in February 2020. Through this he was able to establish that the figures given by the NCDC were wrong. "On the same day I published the report, the NCDC changed their figures to 66 cases and nine deaths which corresponded with the figures given by the state government. It was merely a case of poor coordination between the agencies. Interestingly I was able to do this fact verification through online research only. I interviewed no source, I visited no office. It is amazing," he said.

The respondents mentioned that they employ Internet tools for verifying videos and photos. Respondent 1 noted that the series of trainings he has undergone on investigative journalism has exposed him to some of these novel tools. In the same vein, Respondent 3 and Respondent 5 affirmed that they make use of these tools very often.

Interestingly, relying on the Internet for fact-finding also brings about a novel challenge of reliability of facts, especially given the gateless nature of the Internet that makes manipulations easier (Chukwunwike, 2017; Chinedu-Okeke & Obi, 2016). However, response to this challenge has come by way of development of software tools for verifying online information. These tools give one clues for determining authenticity of a piece of information such as by showing the date and place of its origination, or by indicating whether a document, photo, video etc might have been doctored. The respondents gave names of some of these tools known to them to include FotoForensics, InVID Verification plugin, Serelay, SunCalc, TinEye, Truepic, and FFmpeg.

Respondent 10 cited a recent example of his application of these tools:

There is a trending video online and people have been sharing it claiming that it is evidence that Fulani herdsmen are raping people. However, I have verified this video and found out that it originated from one of the French-speaking West African countries. So, it is very unlikely that the rape incident in question happened in Nigeria.

Incidentally, one strategy of fact-finding and fact verification the respondents appeared not to have really explored is crowdsourcing. This is the practice where a journalist seeks for information from the online public especially via social media. It may involve the journalist specifically requesting that whoever has information on a particular issue should oblige him/her. This strategy has been exploited to impressive results by investigative reporters in various places (Posetti, 2013; Bunz, 2010).

Notwithstanding, the respondents admitted that they have not deliberately sought to utilize this. Some of them stated that they had on some occasions requested information from colleagues on

professional WhatsApp forums they belong to. “I have only made requests for colleagues to supply me with a name or other facts I was in need of, and I also know that many other colleagues of mine do same,” said Respondent 1. But crowdsourcing is much bigger than relying on colleagues for routine information. It involves utilizing as extensively as possible, for fact-finding purposes, the geographical, cultural, knowledge and experience diversity of online “crowd”. The implication is that the respondents have not started benefitting from crowdsourcing tools like CrowData which is useful for collaborating with other Internet users for data extraction, verification and analysis (CrowData, 2020) and CrowdTangle which helps in monitoring what is trending on Facebook and in engaging users (CrowdTangle, 2020).

The respondents further stated that they utilize new media tools for other purposes such as compressing pictures and videos as well as converting documents from one format to another. They also stated that new media tools are valuable for purposes of preserving evidence in anticipation of legal actions that may arise from a story. Very large quantities of documents, voice, photo, and video data can be stored on devices like smartphones, laptops and tablets, and these can equally be backed up online to better assure their safety. Respondent 1 narrated an experience that is instructive in this regard:

Earlier this year (2020) I decided to follow up on my previous story on the government airport project. When I got to the town, I was denied access to the project site by the people I met there who said government instructed that no one, including journalists, should be allowed access. When I returned, I visited the Commissioner for Works under whose jurisdiction the project falls and he blamed me for going there and warned that I was lucky to leave the site with my life. It was a subtle threat. When I did my story, I included this encounter with the commissioner. Immediately the story was published, he denied saying that I was lucky to leave the airport site alive. He did not know I

surreptitiously recorded him using my phone. I was invited by some government officials and I played the tape to them. This must have saved me from any contemplated libel suit.

Evidently, the respondents' use of new media tools for investigative journalism did not extend to some other purposes reflected in the literature review section. These include protection of identity of anonymous sources, encryption of conversations with sources, and data organization and analyses. For identity protection and encryption of conversations, tools like Tor, SecureDrop and ProtonMail have been useful (SecureDrop, 2020; Sierra, 2016).

Utilisation of New Media for Non-Reportorial Activities

Apart from in their actual reportorial activities, the respondents also stated that new media tools have helped them in some non-reportorial engagements relevant to advancing in investigative journalism. One of these is obtaining grants for investigative projects. Their contributions in this regard are illuminating. Respondent 10 said:

Yes (I use them to apply for grants) because most grant givers, local and international, now require you attach links and figures related to your proposed investigation. Right now, my latest online application for grant has been shortlisted by the Transparency International. It is a grant for investigative reporting regarding human rights issues surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic.

Respondent 5 stated:

Of course everything (my applications) was online. For years now, I can't run out of data because data is everything to me now. I have applied for more than 100 grants. Whenever such opportunities come, if you are not connected, you will not know. Over the years the Internet has enabled me to make application for grants to bodies like the International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR), International Journalists' Network (IJNet), and Premium Times Centre for Investigative Journalism (PTCIJ).

The latest grant I received which was for my investigative story on assault against teenagers was, like others, made possible by the Internet.

Respondent 3 offered:

The Internet helped me in this regard. There are lots of grant opportunities online. We have international bodies such as McArthur Foundation that support local grant givers.

Respondent 1 similarly agreed:

Yes of course (I make my applications online). In fact, these days, nobody does offline applications that require you to physically courier your papers to the grant giver. It has been made easier with Google doc. They send you a form and you fill. Some come as emails as well.

What is more instructive is that all the respondents said they had succeeded in receiving grants more than once. Applying for these was made cheaper and more convenient by new media tools, especially the Internet, smartphones and computers. Again, while there is limited number of local grant givers, the Internet has greatly widened the options of the reporters by making tens of foreign donors accessible to them.

Similarly, the respondents noted that new media tools have proved useful to them in growing their investigative journalism skills by affording them opportunities for continuous training. Respondent 7 stated that all trainings he has participated in were online, including very recent ones from the Premium Times Centre for Investigation (PTCIJ), Global Rights Foundation and ECONigeria. Also, Respondent 5 recalled he has participated in webinars organized by the PTCIJ and very recently in a three-week course on investigative journalism in the COVID-19 era organized by a US university free of charge. Respondent 3 said online training has become a

recurring part of his investigative journalism experience. “For instance, there was one on reporting gender-based violence. I was also among five journalists trained on contract reporting by the International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR).” Respondent 10, while admitting that he has been applying for training online, added “I know a colleague who has been quite successful in this respect. He has also traveled to Germany for fellowship and is right now in South Africa for a similar engagement.” However, Respondent 1 added that even when training is physical, one is still told to come with an Internet-connected laptop or any other device. “For example, in a recent training I attended on ‘data journalism, fact-checking and investigative journalism’ organized by the PTCIJ; as they are showing you something on projector, you are to be demonstrating the same thing using your laptop.” Truth is that given the increasing role of new media in journalism, journalism training has naturally become new media-permeated.”

The respondents equally admitted that new media tools have opened up a lot of opportunities for them to participate in competitions for awards locally and internationally. Respondent 2 said he has made several applications via the Internet. “Truth is that without the Internet I would not even have known about the calls for entries,” he stated. Both Respondents 6 and 7 made the same assertion regarding the indispensable role of new media here. In the same vein, Respondent 10 noted that he has “applied for many (awards) online.” The same assertion came from Respondents 1, 3 and 5, with Respondent 1 informing that he was once nominated for the Investigative Journalist of the Year Award (print category) by the Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism (WSCIJ), though he failed to win eventually.

Regarding use of new media tools for collaboration with colleagues and other media organisations on investigative projects, the respondents admitted that they had done little or nothing in this regard. While these tools have helped them in routinely connecting with familiar colleagues in their daily course of work, there has not been a deliberate and coordinated effort to use them for collaborated projects, which is one of the novel investigative journalism practices making impact globally (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2018; Gearing, 2014). The issue is less of ignorance than of culture gap; this journalistic culture is yet to gain roots in Nigeria, as rightly observed by Respondent 1:

This is one practice that is still very much new here. In fact, it is yet to become part of what we do. I haven't done that. Being able to get colleagues locally and globally is a problem. Ghost-writers.com has made it easy, I was just told. You can get collaborations.

The respondents' answer shows that he had not actually gone to check the said ghostwriters.com he heard about. The researcher's visit to the site revealed, however, that it belongs to a company that consults for clients on their writing projects and has nothing in particular to do with journalism (Ghost Writers LLC, 2020).

Incidentally, the only reporters from Nigeria who participated in the famous Panama Papers investigation were of *Premium Times*, an online-only medium. Respondent 9 who works for this medium informed, however, that he was not among the reporters that took part in that global collaborative work.

Adequacy of Utilisation of New Media

The respondents were asked to give their view on whether their colleagues have adequately explored the opportunities represented by new media in their investigative journalism endeavours. Instructively, all the respondents gave negative answers. For instance, Respondent 10 stated:

No they have not. For instance, when I applied for grants advertised by uprightnigeria.com on transparency in regard to COVID-19 management, I discovered that no single journalist from Enugu State applied, in spite of the fact that the state was among the few selected for the grant... This is because they are not aware and a few that are aware will just share to others and will not apply.

Similarly, Respondent 5 noted:

No, and this “no” should be in capital letters. I look around and go online, there are hundreds of opportunities for grants and trainings, but only a handful of journalists here apply. In my office, for instance, out of 15 or 16 journalists, only two of us have applied in the last two to three years. People sit back and wait for office to send them on training. Most occupy themselves with Facebook and WhatsApp. I would say we have not utilized up to 30% of what is out there.

While the above responses were seemingly restricted to the training and grant opportunities of new media, some other respondents were clear that many of their colleagues are yet to start exploring new media tools in other aspects of their work as they should. Respondent 1 said “We have not optimally utilized new media tools. We have been able to do this only to about 30% or 40%. If anything has been done, it is about 30% or 40% of journalists that have done it. We do not use online opportunities.” Similarly, Respondent 3 affirmed: “No, personally I don’t think we have been able to harness new media tools adequately.” These verdicts are precisely in relation to investigative journalism, but previous studies have shown high awareness and appreciable level of utilization of new media among journalists and media organisations in Nigeria (Hassan,

Azmi & Nasidi, 2018; Eze, 2017; Emmanuel, 2017; Obalanlege, 2015; Ganiyu, 2014; Chukwu, 2014; Ganiyu, 2014; Chukwu, 2014; Ekwugha & Nwammuo, 2013). So, the inadequacy appears restricted to utilization for investigative journalism, even though most appear to use it in going about other forms of reportage. Hence, the issue may not be about ignorance or unwillingness but about mere failure to embrace investigative journalism; after all, data shows that only a handful among Nigerian journalists practice investigative journalism (Duru, 2019; Ibe, 2019).

Factors Hindering Utilisation of New Media in Investigative Journalism

The respondents identified factors they think are hindering the capacity of Nigerian journalists to adequately explore new media tools for investigative journalism. One of them is the poor quality of phone and Internet networks. Respondent 8 averred that “What we see in adverts from the service providers is not what we get. It is really discouraging. The speed is discouraging.”

Respondent 10 recounted an experience:

It (poor network) frustrates applications for grants. Sometimes it takes you days to articulate your proposal only for what you have written to fail to deliver and get wiped out due to network failure. Currently, I have a problem with an application I just submitted because the Internet was messing up and I mistakenly clicked North-East instead of South-East as my location. I have called the people to complain of the unintended wrong information and they are not giving me any assurance.

Evidence from literature shows that network issues have remained a consistent challenge to new media use in Nigeria (Nwanne, 2016; GSMA Intelligence report, 2014). However, most of the respondents were also of the view that network problem should not be an excuse for failure given that most times it can only cause delay but not completely derail an action. Nonetheless, it must be emphasized that whatever is the case, poor network ought to be viewed as a serious

problem all the time given that enhanced speed is one of the innovations that makes new media “new”. So failure to always enjoy this feature is a gap in one’s exploitation of new media.

The respondents also identified electricity as a problem hindering adequate use of new media for investigative journalism purposes. Electricity supply in Nigeria has over the decades remained unsteady; power is interrupted usually on daily basis, which affects smooth and effective utilization of new media (Ibekwe, 2010; Osunade, 2013; GSMA report, 2014; Pew Research Centre, 2015).

Funds are another challenge identified by the respondents as hindering adequate utilization of new media for investigative journalism. Respondent 5 noted that fund “is a problem. Some journalists find it difficult to expend 2, 000 naira [4.4 Euros] or 3, 000 naira [6.7 Euros] on data... The Internet charges are very expensive.” Respondent 1 recounted: “This morning, I sent a video to a colleague to watch for a possible journalistic purpose, he said he could not afford to watch because it was over 150mb. Another colleague had once asked me to help him compress a video and send to him via WhatsApp to enable him save cost.” According to Respondent 5, “The gadgets themselves are expensive. Your one month salary may not get you a good 4G-enabled smartphone.” While salaries of journalists in Nigeria vary widely depending on medium and one’s rank, estimates have put average pay at 30, 000 naira [67.1 Euros] – 100, 000 naira [223.8 Euros] monthly, even though a few news organisations pay much higher than this (Eze, 2018). The sort of smartphone referred to by Respondent 5 sells between 40, 000 naira [89.5 Euros] and 70, 000 naira [156.6] on the average, depending on the brand.

The above responses are to be understood against the backdrop of poor remuneration generally associated with journalism profession in Nigeria. In fact, many media organisations are struggling to pay regular wages with some of them owing their reporters months of salary arrears (Eze, 2018; Adaja, 2012). This problem has persisted, and in 2019, the President of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Mr. Chris Isiguzo, who became assumed office eight months earlier, pledged to engage relevant stakeholders on this perennial challenge in regard to journalists working in government-owned outfits. According to him the “issue of enhanced media salary is one of our major agenda. It is one of the foundational challenges facing the union and media practice in Nigeria. It is important that we engage other stakeholders... to work out something better” (Nigeria Television Authority, NTA, 2019). In many cases, there are no provisions for operational expenses and logistics for journalists by way of transport allowance, tools (cameras, laptops, voice recorders, etc), and phone call and Internet subscriptions (Nwanne, 2016).

Besides, the respondents also accused employers of nonchalance towards training of journalists to develop requisite new media skills. Respondent 3 stated: “Our mainstream media organisations do not encourage us. When you want to go for training, they wouldn’t like it.” This was corroborated by Respondent 1:

There is this inability of our employees to train and retrain us. Some journalists have worked for 10, 20 and 30 years. As at the time they were employed, their papers were perfect (based on the prevailing standards), but with the Internet culture of today, their papers are no longer okay. Rather than train and upgrade people like this, employers would chose to upgrade the look of their offices.

There is evidence that there are still journalists who lack computer and Internet literacy in Nigeria. A study by Adum, Odogwu Nwosu, and Duru (2015) confirmed this deficiency, while further establishing that this crop of journalists do “experience operational difficulties in gathering, writing, editing and filing their reports as a result of this” (p.2). However, the researchers found that this group is mainly made up of old journalists who should be nearing retirement.

The respondents, however, also blamed some journalists for being lethargic towards embracing the new media culture. Respondent 8 noted that “such journalists appear unmotivated towards career growth. Sometimes I feel they lack the true hunger for the profession; they just found themselves there by accident or they simply took refuge in the profession due to unemployment.” Respondent 5 reported that a few of such journalists work in the same office with him. He said such professionals never take personal steps to grow themselves, only waiting to be officially sent for training. This corresponds with the view of Respondent 2 who observed that some journalists can use the Internet ordinarily but “have not taken personal initiative to benefit from online training. If you are Internet-savvy, there are lots of training opportunities you can apply for and be trained free of charge. You may even be paid after the training.”

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

This study focused on how much new media tools may have strengthened investigative journalism in Nigerian. In other words, it investigated the role these tools may be playing in promoting this sort of reportage in the country.

The research objectives were to find out: how informed Nigerian journalists are about the utility of new media tools in investigative journalism; whether they utilize these tools for investigative journalism; the ways the journalists possibly utilize the tools in advancement of investigative journalism; and factors possibly affecting use of new media tools for investigative journalism in the country.

Findings indicated that the selected journalists are informed regarding roles of new media tools in investigative journalism. They appreciate what these tools offer to investigative journalism, precisely in regard to helping in fact-finding, fact verification and in other news development processes. Results show further that these journalists are actually utilising some of these new media tools in the reportorial aspects of their investigative journalism engagements including fact-finding, fact verification, story writing, photo taking, and storage of data, as well as for the non-reportorial aspects like accessing training, applying for grants, and entering for awards. **They have, however, yet to adequately explore these tools for crowdsourcing and collaboration with colleagues as well as for shielding the identity of anonymous sources, encryption of conversations**

with sources, data organization, data analysis, and monitoring of the Internet for trending issues and developments.

Factors hindering utilization of new media tools for investigative journalism in the country include poor phone and Internet networks, unsteady electricity supply, financial handicaps, nonchalance of employers towards updating skills of journalists, and laidback attitude on the part of journalists themselves.

Viewed from the perspective of the Technological Determinism theory, these findings tend to validate the position of the theory that technology influences social structures and practice (McLuhan, 1962). The emergence of new media is dictating new structures, new standards and new values in the journalism sphere in general (McQuail, 2010) and also in investigative journalism specifically (Posetti, 2013; Bunz, 2010). For instance, there have been changes in news practices and gatekeeping structures as news organisations attempt to integrate new media technologies, even as standards and news values are being altered in aspects such as objectivity and timeliness in line with new media possibilities (Welbers & Opgenhaffen, 2018; Murschetz & Friedrichsen, 2017). Previous studies revealed this trend in the Nigerian journalism industry generally (Hassan *et al.*, 2018; Eze, 2017; Emmanuel, 2017; Obalanlege, 2015; Ganiyu, 2014; Chukwu, 2014). However, Technological Determinism, due to its reductionist approach, cannot exhaustively account for these changes or any other form of social change for that matter. While technology surely influences social change, it is itself subject to social influence.

Diffusion of Innovations theory represents one attempt to demonstrate how technological effect may be predicated on social variables. From the perspective of the theory, these findings tend to align with the position that an innovation does not spread to all segments of a social system at the same time. Taking the global journalism sphere as a social system, it is clear that while new media innovation has appreciably diffused into Nigeria (a global sub-social system), the extent of penetration is still below what has been achieved in more advanced countries, judging at least by the finding that utilizing new media for data analysis, collaboration with colleagues, crowdsourcing, securing of identity of anonymous sources, encryption of communication with sources, data organisation, data analysis and monitoring the Internet is still not a very familiar culture in the country unlike as seen in these foreign climes. The Diffusion of Innovations theory posits that the tendency of an innovation to spread is reliant on several systemic factors in a society (Rogers, 1962). Thus, it could be stated that certain systemic factors, ranging from poverty to infrastructural deficiency, have hindered the adoption of new media innovation in Nigeria (Ibekwe, 2010; Osunade, 2013; GSMA report, 2014; Pew Research Centre, 2015), and by extension, in her investigative journalism sector as found by this study. Nonetheless, it is still observable that new media itself has been the channel through which this new media innovation is diffusing into Nigeria. The study found that it is through new media tools, especially the Internet, that the respondents get to know of some of these tools and their journalistic utilisations. Diffusion of Innovations theory recognizes the critical role of “communication channel” in spreading innovations; the strength of such a channel influences the speed and extent of spread (Lewis, 2009; Rogers, 1962). In this case, the Internet, with its phenomenal globalizing potentials, will surely prove crucial to adoption of best new media practices by

Nigerian journalists. In other words, Nigerian journalists' embrace of new media will have a self-reinforcing effect; the more they explore new media, the more they are led to new possibilities to explore.

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Appendix I

Interview Guide

Respondents' Name: _____

Designation: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Time: _____

S/N	QUESTIONS	PROBES
1.	Are you aware that new media tools are useful for investigative journalism?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Whether the respondents know that new media tools can be used to aid IJ. ➤ Whether they understand aspects of IJ work new media tools can be used in. ➤ Whether they appreciate the contributions new media tools make to IJ in terms of improving efficiency
2.	Have you been utilising new media tools in your investigative journalism tasks?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Whether the respondents have been applied new media tools in their IJ engagements. ➤ The aspects they have applied the tools to – fact finding, fact verification, crowdsourcing, encryption, protection of source anonymity, data analysis, collaboration with colleagues etc. ➤ Specific examples of when and how the respondents have utilised these tools in their IJ engagements.
3.	Have new media tools been useful to you for purposes of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Whether the respondents have applied for IJ training via new media tools.

	training in investigative journalism?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Whether they have participated in IJ training via new media tools. ➤ The particular training they have applied for or participated in and organisers of such training.
4.	Have new media tools been useful to you for purposes of getting grants for investigative journalism projects?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Whether the respondents have applied for IJ grants via new media tools. ➤ Whether they have won any such grants. ➤ The bodies they have applied for and/or won their grants.
5.	Have new media tools been useful to you for purposes of applying for investigative journalism awards?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Whether the respondents have applied for IJ awards via new media tools. ➤ Whether they have won any such awards. ➤ The bodies they have applied for and/or won their awards.
6.	How adequately have Nigerian journalists adopted new media tools for investigative journalism among?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Whether the respondents believe their colleagues have adopted new media tools for IJ. ➤ How satisfactorily they believe they have adopted these.
7.	Are there factors you believe are affecting positively or negatively the Nigerian journalists' ability to adopt new media tools for investigative journalism?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Whether the respondents believe there are factors affecting the Nigerian journalists' ability to adopt new media tools for IJ. ➤ What these factors are. ➤ Whether their effects are positive or negative or both.

Appendix II

INFORMATION SHEET

Title of Research Study: "Are New Media Tools Strengthening Investigative Journalism in Nigeria?"

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

Dear Interviewee,

I am a Master's student at Griffith College, Dublin, Republic of Ireland, and currently conducting a research for my dissertation titled "Are New Media Tools Strengthening Investigative Journalism in Nigeria?" I am by this medium inviting you to participate in the study as an interviewee. You have been chosen for this because of your profession and experience as a journalist. Before you accept this invitation, it is proper that you kindly note the following:

1. The objective of the research is to understand how much new media tools have been harnessed by journalists in Nigeria for advancing investigative journalism. The study expects to find out if the journalists see these tools as helpful, and whether and how they may have adopted them in their investigative journalism efforts. This is the ONLY purpose to which your answers in the interview will be applied.
2. You are free to decide whether to participate in the research or not. If you are willing to participate, you will be given a consent form to fill. However, you still retain the right to withdraw your consent at any time, even in the course of the interview itself.
3. The interview will be digitally recorded and later transcribed. In the event of your withdrawal of consent, the recording will be promptly deleted.
4. Your anonymity is absolutely guaranteed. You will not be identified by name in the course of reporting the interview in the dissertation.

Please feel free to contact me if you need further information.

Yours sincerely,

Chisom Igweze (michael.igweze333@gmail.com)

Appendix III

CONSENT FORM

Researcher: **Chisom Michael Igweze**

- The aim of this study is to examine whether and how much new media tools have been harnessed by journalists in Nigeria for advancing investigative journalism.
- You will be asked 10 questions (plus possible follow-up questions) about your work as a journalist in regard to harnessing of new media tools for investigative journalism. The session should last around 45 minutes.
- This research will be of benefit as it will expose areas of strength and failures in terms of harnessing of new media tools for investigative journalism by professionals in Nigeria. This way, it will potentially point the way forward for strengthening investigative journalism culture in the country by leveraging new media tools.
- All information will be anonymised with the key kept in a password protected computer.
- Your personal information will not be used for any reason and your identity will not be revealed in any way in the dissertation.
- Your participation in this research is absolutely voluntary and there will be no consequences for withdrawing.
- If you have any questions about this research, please contact:

Chisom Michael Igweze (Researcher), michael.igweze333@gmail.com

Barry Finnegan (Supervisor), barry.finnegan@griffith.ie

- This project has been approved by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee.

Participant's Declaration:

I hereby declare that I have read and understood the above information and do give my consent to participate in the research based on the terms stated above.

Participant Signature _____

Researcher Signature _____

Appendix IV

MEDIA ORGANISATIONS SELECTED FOR THE STUDY

S/N	Media Organisation	Category	Website
1.	<i>The Sun</i>	Newspaper	www.sunnewsonline.com
2.	<i>ThisDay</i>	Newspaper	www.thisdaylive.com
3.	<i>Tell</i>	Magazine	https://tell.ng/
4.	<i>The News</i>	Magazine	www.thenewsnigeria.com.ng
5.	Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria	Radio	www.radionigeria.gov.ng
6.	Ray Power FM	Radio	www.raypowerradio.com
7.	Africa Independent Television	Television	https://ait.live
8.	Channels TV	Television	www.channelstv.com .
9.	Premium Times	Online-Only	www.premiumtimesng.com .
10.	TheCable	Online-Only	www.thecable.ng