Media Practice and Framework for Building Resilience Among Journalism Students

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Abstract
Effective media practice is essential for the overall functioning of society. This assumption has been acknowledged in the literature. For example, effective media practice is associated with democratic advancements, health promotion, growth in commerce, improved security, improvements in education, public enlightenment, as well as advances in science and technology. Despite the benefits derivable from effective media practice through the free flow of information, there are concerns that the traumatic environments through which journalists operate limit their effectiveness. This means, therefore, that building resilience in journalism students must be made a top priority to prepare them for trauma-ridden environments which they will face after school. The objective of this study was to provide a framework for building resilience in journalism students. The questionnaire-based survey research was carried out in South-East, Nigeria. The sample was made up of 384 (192 journalism teachers and 192 practising journalists). The researchers made use of a combination of descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the data for the study. Results show that both journalists and journalism teachers agreed that a significant relationship exists between exposure to PTEs and journalism practice. Also, our result suggest that Maslow's theory offers a useful framework to guide media owners in motivating journalists to put in their best in the job and making the environment less traumatic; and for the training of journalists so that they can better cope with the trauma associated with journalism in Nigeria.
Keywords: media practice, re-training, journalism students, training

Introduction
Free flow of information is a requirement for effective journalism practice. Free flow of information is also needed to assist people in making decisions. Additionally, it is through the instrument of a free flow of information that the press will be able to hold the government accountable to the people. It is often said that information is power. This is to say that those who have information invariably have power. Information is required to educate people so that they can make informed decisions. An example of the power of information can be seen in the study of Reinikka and Svensson (2003), wherein they sought to ascertain the impact that accesses to information has in the reduction of corruption. The study drew from late 1990sefforts by the government of Uganda, which made use of campaigns in the newspaper to increase the ability of parents and schools to monitor persons who were handling school-grant. Their results showed that there was an overwhelming reduction in corruption from 80% in 1995 to 20% in 2001. This result highlights the vital role of information in people's lives as well as its role in making the society a better place. Another example on the crucial role of information is from the study of Banerjee *et al.,* (2004) who conducted a study to examine how information can assist the government of Indonesia in improving on its food subsidy programme. Therefore, the researchers tested how information influences the distribution of aids in an experiment involving 550 villages in Indonesia. Their result showed that exposure to timely and relevant information plays a role in influencing the reduction in the leakages in the distribution chain. Evidence from these studies points to the fact that communication is vital in every society.

In modern society, journalists are regarded as critical stakeholders in information dissemination. It is in recognition of the role of journalists in information sharing that they are called the fourth estate of the realm. Journalists are equally called the 'watchdog of the society'. Within the watchdog role of the media, they are required to survey the society and report issues that may pose a serious challenge to society for necessary action. Agbo and Chukwuma (2017) say that the watchdog role requires that the press should make efforts to ensure that the government is accountable in the overall interest of the general public. Idumange (2013) cited in Agbo and Chukwuma reveals that within the context of the watchdog role, the media are required to mount surveillance regarding activities of the government and report the same to the society. Amodu *et al*., (2016) examined the

extent through which the media in Nigeria have performed their watchdog role and found that the media in Nigeria have not significantly fulfilled their social responsibility to the Nigerian people.

While it may sound justifiable to blame the media for not sufficiently playing their watchdog role to the Nigerian society, it is also essential to consider the traumatic environment which media workers operate. Gever (2019) avers that the safety of journalists is one of the serious problems facing journalism practice in Nigeria. Gever adds that the environment under which journalists practice is hostile, and this can be traumatic. Such a hostile environment has the potential of discouraging students who are trained as journalists from practising. The situation, therefore, makes a strong case on the need to develop a consistent and robust spirit of resilience into journalism students so that they can be able to practice after school effectively.

Despite the traumatic environment that awaits journalism students who may wish to practice the profession after school, there is a lack of attention in the literature on a framework that could guide in injecting resilience into them. Considering the current environment in which journalists practice, strength is essential because it will enable trainee journalists to prepare themselves for the herculean task ahead. The situation in Nigeria is particularly deserving of attention because of the prevalence of human rights abuse, which journalists are not exempted. The increasing cases of crimes and criminality, terrorism, and coordinated attacks all make journalism practice in contemporary Nigeria traumatic and hence, the need for the current study.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study was to provide a framework for building resilience in journalism students with particular reference to South-East Nigeria. To drive this objective, the researchers attempted to compare the responses of both journalism teachers and practising journalists to provide a more in-depth understanding of the issue. This study also aims to suggest a framework that will be used to instil resilience into journalism students.

Literature Review

The environment in which journalists practice is traumatic globally because those who perpetrate evil act regard journalists as enemies who may expose their illicit activities. People in this category can go any length to ensure that they clear any obstacle in their way. In electorate centred democracies, journalists are sometimes victims of electoral violence mostly because of the disagreements that characterize political contests. The nature of the Work of journalists makes them vulnerable to traumatic events. MacDonald *et al.*,(2017) affirm that journalism practice, with particular attention to newsgathering and production, is susceptible to trauma because it involves interacting with the larger society. Pyevich *et al.*, (2003) say that when journalists make efforts to provide current information on issues like crimes and criminality, disasters, as well as other violent events in the society, they are likely to be exposed to trauma. Such constant exposure has the propensity to shape the psychology of journalists; thus result to a complete change in world view, utilization of substance, as well as post-traumatic stress disorder and depression symptoms (MacDonald *et al.*,2015). It is noteworthy that the issue of the trauma of journalists is of essential consideration to managers because it could shape the view of journalists regarding the readiness of their media organizations to protect them on their job. Beam and Spratt (2009) corroborate that journalists who are frequently exposed to physical danger will likely not consider their organization as supportive enough. Such a situation might make journalists feel that their need for security is compromised; hence performance may be affected. The argument here is that journalists require protection from their organizations to be motivated to perform better. Where that is lacking, it may affect the input on the job (see theoretical framework section for Maslow's Hierarchy of needs).

Bonanno and Gupta (2012) argue that knowledge of the type of traumatic events journalists get exposed to in the process of doing their jobs is needed to assist them with ways of addressing the problem. MacDonald *et al.*, (2017) define a situation as Potentially Traumatic Event (PTE) if it constitutes a threat to the life of journalists or if it is capable of resulting in psychological discomfort. Bonanno and Gupta (2012) say that the word 'potentially traumatic' is used because people generally differ in their psychological make-up, as such, an event that may be traumatic to one person may not be to another. In this study, we defined PTEs as those occurrences that may trigger fear, anxiety and internal discomfort as well as reduces the boldness of journalists. On the other hand, we represented journalists to cover different roles that are related to the production of media contents. This includes newspapers reports, programmes presenters, programmes producers, camera persons, editors and sound technicians, among others who belong to the category of news and programmes production.

Over the years, exposure to PTEs has been examined in the literature, and varying degrees of figures have been reported. For example, Mills *et al.*, (2011, p. 407) report that exposure to PTEs varies

among journalists and ranges from 16–90%. Within the context of Australian journalists, Mills *et al*., note that the exposure rate to PTEs is as high as   74.9%. Read *et al.* (2011) carried out a study within the context of a United States of America population and found that the prevalence rate of PTEs is 66%. Frans *et al*. (2005)conducted a study in Sweden to ascertain the prevalence of exposure to PTEsamong journalists and reported a prevalence rate of 80.8%.In Nigeria, International Press Centre (2015) carried out a study to determine the state of safety and security of journalists and reported that there is a significant gap between the magnitude of conflict and the ability of journalists to handle such challenges that come with reporting conflict. The result showed that journalists who are reporting or covering conflict do not have the required knowledge to function in such roles effectively. Also, the Work revealed that journalists covering disputes do not have adequate coping strategies to assist or deal with challenges that come with conflict reporting. Gever (2019) corroborates that journalists who are on election duty are on a challenging and sensitive assignment because the environment is volatile. For some time now, journalists have experienced severe attacks in the process of carrying out their legitimate duty. Some of them have even lost their lives in the process. The Committee to Protect Journalists (2018) notes that in the Czech Republic, media workers who are reporting elections experience physical, emotional and verbal assaults. It adds that in some instances, the journalists are prevented from freely covering political events. The situation is not any different in Nigeria. For example, the *Premium Times* of March 13, 2019, reported a story with a title: 'Nigerian Elections: Journalists detained, harassed, assaulted' in which the instances of journalists' horrible experiences during the election was captured. The reports note that many Nigerian journalists went through horrifying experiences when they were covering the 2019 general elections. Many of them went through assault; some were even arrested and detained. Another example worth mentioning here is the case that took place in Bangladesh. The *Premium Times* (2018) reported a story where it revealed that many journalists in that country not fewer than ten journalists sustained injuries when they were covering the election. Many journalists were prevented from covering the election in that country. Apart from attacks on journalists during elections, increasing cases of insurgency and terrorism have made journalism practice even more traumatic.

An excellent example of one of the attacks on the media is that which occurred on January 7, 2015, on offices of Charlie Hebdo, a publication in Paris, France that has enraged Muslims for publishing cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad. In Nigeria, there are also instances of attacks on the media. For example, on April 27 2012, there were terror attacks on *ThisDay* and *Daily Sun* newspapers. The *Vanguard* newspaper captured the attacks thus:
 'Campaign rocking northern Nigeria yesterday turned fatal against the Nigerian media with simultaneous bomb attacks on *ThisDay* newspapers in Abuja, Kaduna as well as the *Sun* and *Moment* offices. ..'. However, in response to the attack, The *Vanguard* quoted the Managing Director of *ThisDay,* Mr Eniola Bello in a statement thus,

> We regard the coordinated bombings as an attack on journalism and free speech. However, we want to assure our readers and advertisers that we remain committed to the fundamental principles on which the newspaper is founded: democracy, free enterprise and social justice. We will not be deterred in our pursuit of truth and reason. No amount of threat or intimidation will weaken our resolve.

On its part, the *Sun* newspapers released a statement through its Managing Director/Editor-in-Chief, Mr Tony Onyima as stated:

> Despite this seeming set back, The *Sun* Publishing Limited remains undeterred and refuses to be intimidated in its quest for a better and safer Nigeria. We will continue to report without fear or favour and with the utmost sense of responsibility and patriotism.

In addition to physical attacks, the media in Nigeria have also been threatened. A good example of such threats which the Boko Haram has sent to the media in Nigeria is captured below:

> We are also sending a red signal to all media houses who relentlessly gave prominence to what Sheikh Dahiru Bauchi said in respect of the purported dialogue to accord similar treatment to what we said. Any media organization that fails to give us the right of reply should have itself to blame because we would target it even if such a medium is not among the ones we earlier promised to attack. This is a warning to all radio, television and newspaper houses (*ThisDay*, 2012).

From the analysis so far, it can be said that PTEs can be classified into two, namely: physical and psychological situations. McMahon (2017) avers that physical safety and psychological safety are inseparable because a combination of both determines the performance of journalists. It is essential to note here that even though studies on exposure to PTEs have been conducted in other parts of the world with varying results found, the situation is not the same in Nigeria as there is scarce evidence on the

exposure to PTEs among journalists. Additionally, previous studies, even at the global level, paid less attention to the association between exposure to PTEs and journalism practice. Also, a prior attempt at investigating exposure to PTEs did not do so by paying attention to psychological and physical trauma. Based on the above, the following hypotheses are articulated:

H1: There is a significant relationship between exposure to PTEs and journalism practice in Nigeria.

The Need for Resilience for Trainee Journalists

Developing and sustaining coping strategies are essential for journalists to be able to handle trauma, both physical and psychological. Maxson (2000) avers that training journalists to manage trauma is very important. The researcher interviewed 41 graduate students of journalism and found that they were of the view that training them for trauma was required to make them successful on the job. The researcher, however, did not expand his study to include how to motivate journalists to perform better in their career. Buchanan and Keats (2011) researched to examine the strategies which journalists from Canada adopt to cope with exposure to trauma. They examined a total of 31 journalists as well as photojournalists to achieve the study aim. Their result showed that the coping strategies used included the utilization of nervous humour, controlling of one's emotions, avoiding a task that may expose one to trauma, as well as memories, exercise and other physical activities. While the study has provided specific evidence on the coping strategies, the issue of resilience among trainee journalists was not covered in the survey.

Lee *et al.* (2017) carried out a study to determine post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms with particular reference to journalists in Korea. The researchers paid attention to exposure, social support, optimism, negative beliefs, traumatic coping strategies, as well as the perception of the occupation of journalists. They examined 367 journalists in Korean and found that they seriously suffer from PTSD symptoms. Also, they found that variables such as the number of years of journalism practice, the degree of exposure to a traumatic event, the utilization of dysfunctional coping technique, absence of social support as well as negative beliefs significantly correlated. Although the study of Lee *et al*. examined coping strategies, they ignored trainee journalists. They did not also suggest how to inject resilience into journalists. Anderson (2017) in a doctoral thesis which was submitted to Murray State University focused on how to train journalism students to cope with trauma on their job and suggested what he called trauma journalism which is to be taught within four weeks. Accordingly, Anderson notes in the first week; students should be taught what trauma journalism is. In the second week of the trauma training, a case study should be provided to offer a more in-depth understanding. In week three of the training, journalism students should be taught lessons from particular trauma events. Finally, the last week, students should be taught how to cope with the physical and psychological effects of trauma. Although Anderson suggested evidence on how to build resilience in journalism students, the study was conducted in faraway the United States of America, which is different in culture and technology from Nigeria. However, in the current study, the researchers made use of variables developed by Anderson to determine if they could be applicable in Nigeria using both practising journalists and journalism teachers.

Theoretical Framework

In this study, the researchers made use of Abraham Maslow's theory of needs as a framework to articulate how to build resilience into trainee journalists to enable them to practice in a traumatic environment. Abraham Maslow postulated this theory in 1943to articulate the human needs that induce performance among workers. Abraham Maslow had written an article which he titled 'A theory of human motivation' which was published in *Psychological Review*.He notes that people are generally motivated based on if their needs are met or not. These needs were classified into five such as physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem and prestige needs and self-actualization needs. Maslow arranged these needs orderly in a manner that when one need is met, it gives room for another. According to Maslow, physiological needs, safety needs, and love and belonging needs are considered as basic needs, while the last two are considered as advanced needs. For example, everybody wants to feel secure; nobody wishes to have a sense of insecurity. This means that safety is one of the first human needs. Journalists, just like any other human being required to have a sense of safety; they need to be guaranteed that their profession is not a death sentence. Additionally, journalists need to be loved as well as treated with acceptance. This is particularly important because newsgathering requires interacting with members of the public. Also, just like any other person, journalists require a sense of self-esteem. They need to feel important to enable them to perform their jobs. Finally, there is a need to provide a conducive environment for journalists so that they can attain a state of self-actualization in their career. Scholars (Akinyele 2007; Arthur, 1994; Benkhoff, l997; Meyer & Smith 2000) who have tested Maslow's theory confirmed its postulations and concluded that human motivation is part of security consideration that influence workers performance. The argument

that advanced in this study is that variables from Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of need could constitute a viable framework for building resilience into trainee journalists to enable practice. Based on the theory above, the researchers hypothesized:

H2: Variables from the hierarchy of human needs will significantly determine the performance of journalists and make the environment less traumatic.

Materials and Methods

To conduct this study, the rsearchers made use of a descriptive survey design. The researchers considered a descriptive survey most applicable for the study because it is usually suitable for studies that seek to explore or describe or explain a phenomenon. Therefore, the researchers made use of a descriptive survey to describe and explain a framework for building resilience into trainee journalists with particular reference to South-East Nigeria.
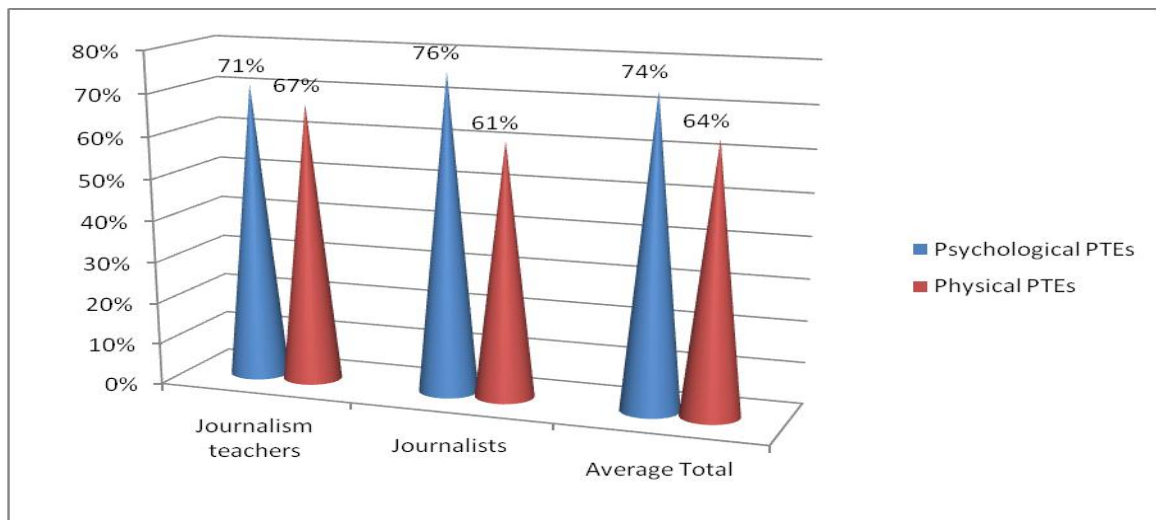
The researchers sampled 192 journalists and 192 lecturers in the Department of Mass Communication from the universities in South-East, Nigeria. The researchers made use of three sampling techniques. The first sampling technique used was stratified. The strata were lecturers and journalists. Each stratum had 192 samples. The second sampling technique that was used was purposive. Therefore, through a purposive sampling approach, the researchers selected one federal university and one state university for the sample. To sample the individual respondents, the researchers visited each school and made use of simple random sampling to sample the lecturers. Regarding the journalists, the researchers administered the instrument during their zonal meeting of the Nigerian Union of Journalists, South-East Zone. The researchers randomly sampled those who were at the meeting to take part in the study. To qualify for inclusion, a respondent was either a journalist or a lecturer.

The researchers made use of the questionnaire to collect data for the study. The questionnaire contained both the demographic and psychographic information of the respondents. The validity of the instrument was ascertained by giving it to three communication experts at the Department of Mass Communication, University of Nigeria. The experts did not take part in the actual study. The reliability of the instrument was determined with the utilization of test re-test approach. Consequently, 20 copies were administered to respondents in Kogi state. After two weeks, the same measure was repeated, and the correlation coefficient was .81, an indication that the instrument was reliable.

To analyze data for the study, the researchers made use of descriptive statistics like mean and simple percentages. Also, the researchers made use of chi-square analysis and t-test among the inferential statistics. The results were presented in tables.

Results

The researchers administered 192 copies of the questionnaire to journalists and 192 to journalism teachers. One hundred eighty-seven copies were filled and returned by journalists. This represents a 97% return rate. For journalism teachers, 181 copies representing 94% were returned. The average percentage return rate was 96% return rate. The sample was 67% male and 33% female for journalists. For journalism teachers, it was 62% male and 38% female. The result is presented below:

Figure 1 Exposure to PTEs

In Figure 1, the researchers ascertained the exposure to Potential Traumatic Events (PTEs) as determined by both journalists and journalism teachers. The researchers categorized PTEs into physical and psychological trauma. The result of the study revealed that the average percentage of exposure to physical PTEs was 64%. However, the average percentage of exposure to psychological PTEs was 74%. This means that the respondents are more exposed to psychological trauma than a physical one. This is a surprising outcome, but it may be because the psychological trauma can take place almost every day at work, unlike the physical.

Table 1: Chi-Square test analysis of the relationship between exposure to PTEs and Journalism practice

Journalists	$\chi2$cal	Df	Critical value	Decision
Exposure to PTEs Journalism practice	429.150	12	3.841	Sig
Journalism Teachers	**$\chi2$cal**	**Df**	**Critical value**	**Decision**
Exposure to PTEs Journalism practice	401.201	12	3.841	Sig

The essence of Table 1 was to determine the relationship between exposure to PTEs and journalism practice. It was found that both journalists and journalism teachers agreed that a significant relationship exists between exposure to PTEs and journalism practice. The result for journalists reveals that the calculated $\chi2$ value (429.150) is greater than the critical value (3.841) at 12 degrees of freedom (df) and 0.05 confidence level. The result for journalism teachers reveals that the calculated $\chi2$ value (401.201) is greater than the critical value (3.841) at 12 degrees of freedom (df) and 0.05 confidence level. The first hypothesis is therefore supported for both journalists and journalism teachers.

Table 2: T-test results on Variables from Maslow's Hierarchy of needs that could influence the performance of journalists

	Items	$\overline{x}_j$	SD_j	$\overline{x}_L$	SD_L	P-value	Decision
1	Psychological needs	3.1	.81	3.0	.62	.02	Sig
2	Safety needs	3.2.	.27	3.2	.67	.03	Sig
3	Love need	2.7	.99	3.0	.96	.04	Sig
4	Self-esteem	3.2	.93	3.2	.56	.01	Sig
5	Self-actualization	3.8	.65	3.7	.86	.02	Sig

Note: $\overline{x}i$ = mean scores for journalism; SDj= standard deviation scores for journalists; $\overline{x}L$ = Mean scores for journalism teachers; SDL= Standard deviation scores for journalism teachers

In Table 2, the researchers tested variables from Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs to ascertain if they influence journalism practice and make the environment less traumatic. The result showed that variables such as psychological need, safety need, the need to belong or be loved, self-esteem and self-actualization significantly predict and motivate journalists in the performance of their jobs. Therefore, the second assumption was supported, and the researchers conclude that Maslow's theory offers a useful framework to guide media owners in a bid to motivate journalists to put in their best in the job and make the environment less traumatic.

Table 3: T-test results on framework for building resilience in trainees journalists

	Items	$\overline{x}_j$	SD_j	$\overline{x}_L$	SD_L	P-value	Decision
1	Defining what trauma journalism is with sufficient examples	2.9	.55	2.7	.34	.01	Sig
2	Providing instances of traumatic journalism for the students	3.0.	.34	3.1	.66	.02	Sig
3	Guiding students to gain lessons from particular trauma events	3.6	.56	3.3	.77	.03	Sig
4	Guiding students on how to cope with the physical and psychological effects of trauma	2.9	.98	2.9	.88	.02	Sig

5	Exposing students to likely traumatic events and observing their reactions	2.8	.39	2.9	.82	.01	Sig

Note: $\bar{x}i$ = mean scores for journalism; SDj= standard deviation scores for journalists; $\bar{x}L$ = Mean scores for journalism teachers; SDL= Standard deviation scores for journalism teachers

Table 3 determined the framework for building resilience into trainee journalists so that they can better cope with the challenges of the job. The result showed that all the five items presented significantly correlated as items that could be included in the training of journalists so that they can better cope with the trauma associated with journalism in Nigeria.

Discussion

In this study, the researchers sought to suggest a framework that could be used to prepare trainee journalists by building resilience in them that will assist them on how to better manage traumatic situations that characterize journalism practice in Nigeria. In doing this, the researchers focused on the exposure to Potential Traumatic Events (PTEs) among journalists in South-East Nigeria; the impact of the traumatic environment on journalism practice among Journalists from South-East Nigeria as a framework that will build resilience into trainee journalists; and also, the impact of journalists' motivational needs on their performance. The researchers also made use of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs to determine if variables from the theory can be linked to the performance of journalists. The result of the study showed that 74% of the journalists who took part in the study reported exposure to PTEs. Additionally, we found that exposure to PTEs is significantly associated with journalism practice. The result also showed that Abraham Maslow's theory provides a sufficient framework that could guide media owners on how to motivate journalists with a view to improving their performance. The result of the study also showed that the framework for building resilience into trainee journalists must take into account five items such as defining traumatic journalism in a clear manner, exposing the learners to instances of traumatic journalism, providing a guide so that students can derive lessons from the instances explained, directing them on how to develop coping strategies and finally, exposing students to possible PTEs and observing their reactions.

The result of the current study has extended previous studies (Anderson, 2017; MacDonald *et al.*,2017; Pyevich *et al.*, 2003; Spratt 2009) that examined issues related to trauma in journalism practice. This is because the current study has suggested a specific way of building resilience into trainee journalists. Even though Anderson suggests how to train journalism students vis-à-vis management of trauma, his study did not take into account how to motivate journalists to perform better on the job. However, in the current study, the researchers have shown that apart from building resilience into trainee journalists, media owners will need to motivate them based on Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This is an aspect that has not been considered by previous studies related to trauma.

Additionally, the researchers were able to compare physical and psychological trauma to determine which journalists are exposed to most. The outcome showed that journalists are exposed to psychological PTES than physical. This aspect has not been significantly explored by previous studies of Mills *et al.*, (2011); Read *et al.*,(2011); Frans *et al.*, (2005). This addition has contributed to our understanding of the trauma that journalists face as it will shape future debates in this direction. Our result also showed that an association exists between exposure to trauma and journalism practice. This is another new addition that has not received significant attention from previous studies, especially from developing countries like Nigeria.

Conclusion

Journalists are exposed more to psychological trauma than physical trauma. Both journalists and journalism teachers are on the same page regarding the framework for building resilience in trainee journalists. This study has contributed to journalism practice by suggesting how to prepare the trainee to face trauma as well as motivate them to perform better on the job. It is hoped that the results of this study will be useful for preparing future journalists to practice journalism better. It is also the expectation of the researchers that media houses may also find the result helpful in re-training already practising journalists for better performance. To this end, there is a need for a modification in journalism training curriculum to accommodate ways of building resilience into students. Lastly, media owners are suggested to adopt Abraham Maslow's hierarchy needs in a bid to motivate journalists to perform better. Further studies should be conducted in other parts of the world for a better understanding.

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