

# **Which is Impactful in Nigeria? Investigative or Social Justice Journalism Practice: Evidence from Fisayo Soyombo's Journalism Practice**

Journal of Management and  
Social Sciences  
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## **Abstract**

Nigeria, as a country in the global south, has media establishments and journalists covering socio-economic and political issues to hold stakeholders accountable. 'Fisayo Soyombo, an award-winning journalist, reports these issues using investigative and social justice journalism. He recently founded his own media organization to expand his investigative approach in collaboration with other media establishments. Leveraging on background and propositions of media practice model, goal orientation and fraud detection theories, this study examined 'Fisayo Soyombo's selected works in investigative and social justice journalism, considering their impact in Nigeria. "Impact" was measured by the attention each selected story received from stakeholders. Data were gathered using Open Profiling of Quality and Content Analysis, with Data Logging, Open Content Categories and Protocols guiding data collection. Results indicate the potential of these journalism practices for sustainable socio-economic and political development in Nigeria.

## **Keywords**

Fraud, investigative journalism, journalism practice, Nigeria, social, cheat

## **Introduction**

The criminal justice systems in many countries can be utilized to combat injustice, but their ineffectiveness exacerbates cases of injustice faced by citizens. In Nigeria, Olonisakin, Olanrewaju Ogunleye and Adebayo (2017) argue that Nigerians question the country's criminal justice system due to high levels of social injustice, indiscipline and lawlessness. Consequently, social

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justice organizations and individuals seek alternative ways to establish a social justice system, recognizing that a weak or failed criminal justice system cannot advocate justice. The belief is that an effective criminal justice system, one that ensures equitable justice regardless of class and transcends corruption, will maintain social order and address the problem of the socially or economically challenged being denied justice in favour of the wealthy (Iwarimie-Jaja & Lasisi, 2019).

In this study, the Criminal Justice System (CJS) refers to the available legal mechanisms to combat criminal activities in Nigeria, ensuring that offenders are tried in accordance with the laws they violate. On the other hand, Social Justice (SJ) describes the approaches society employs to hold perpetrators of injustice accountable and amplify the voices of powerless victims (Anyogu & Ozioko, 2019).

Investigative journalism exposes matters of public interest that certain individuals or organizations try to conceal. This practice requires extensive research, speaking with reliable sources and careful planning. Its primary objective is to reveal societal problems that necessitate public intervention, providing compelling evidence and analysis (Ismail, Ahmad & Mustafa, 2014). On the other hand, social justice journalism prioritizes the representation of marginalized voices, and reports on societal inequities and systemic abuses, fostering collective engagement and change (Nelson & Lewis, 2015). Social justice journalism also challenges those who wield power and create injustice, but it is less time-consuming and less costly than investigative journalism (Rothmund, Gollwitzer, Baumert & Schmitt, 2013). This argument suggests that the mass media such as the Foundation for Investigative Journalism (FIJ), can effectively practise Social Justice Journalism (SJJ).

FIJ, founded by Fisayo Soyombo in June 2020, is an independent, non-profit organization founded to combat injustice, hold power accountable, and amplify the voices of the voiceless (FIJ, undated). To understand the focus of this study, it is important to explore Soyombo's journalism practices during his studies in Animal Science at the University of Ibadan and his work with various online newspapers after graduation. Additionally, we need to examine how his journalism has evolved since the establishment of FIJ, where he aims to utilize journalism as a tool for positive change in Nigeria (FIJ, undated). Addressing these questions will provide context for the study's aim of empirically establishing the impact of Soyombo's investigative and social justice journalism on criminal and social injustice in Nigeria.

Therefore, the key issue addressed in this study is which of Fisayo Soyombo's journalism practices, investigative journalism or social justice journalism had a greater impact in fighting social and criminal injustice in Nigeria. By impact, we refer to which practice elicits more responses from the targeted stakeholders, who hold and use power over voiceless Nigerians. Overall, we sought to comprehend the nature of Fisayo Soyombo's investigative and social justice journalism practices, as well as how frequently

his reports reflect the socially, economically, institutionally, and politically exposed and vulnerable as status of cheats and victims. We also tried to uncover the extent to which the dimensions of cheats, which are primarily their socioeconomic, institutional and political status in Nigerian society, as well as the victims' status (socially, economically, institutionally, politically exposed and vulnerable), facilitate the attention of stakeholders mentioned in selected news stories.

## **Review of Empirical Studies**

Social justice encompasses the democratic process of dialogue and examining oppression, aiming to create equity and orderliness (Bell, 2016). It involves active participation to achieve fairness and balance in society (Buettner-Schmidt & Lobo, 2012). The goals are peace, justice, equity and orderliness (Buettner-Schmidt & Lobo, 2012). Fairness, power distribution, and collective action are essential in social, political, and economic interactions (Schenker et al., 2019). Social justice compels individuals to support others and fight injustices for the common good (CESJ, undated). It requires holding social criminals accountable (Anyogu & Ozioko, 2019). Media and journalists play a crucial role in reducing social injustices by supporting victims and providing information (Chiumbu et al., 2019; Vrama, 2020).

Dahmen and Walth (2021) argued that investigative journalists aim for impact and use creative storytelling to engage audiences. Lanosga and Martin (2017) studied investigative reporting in the US and found that it focuses on government and private sector issues, relying on various sources. Investigative stories prompted by tipsters and targeting the government had the greatest impact. Overall, investigative journalism holds institutions accountable and sets an agenda for policymakers, with far-reaching effects.

Lanosga, Willnat, Weaver and Houston (2015) found that investigative journalists in the United States go beyond traditional functions, influencing public affairs through controversial techniques like using documents without permission and hidden cameras. Lanosga and Houston (2016) surveyed 861 investigative journalists, who identified limited resources and time as challenges but recognized the positive aspects of their work, including promoting freedom and job satisfaction. Price (2017) analysed *The Ferret*, a Scottish investigative medium, which used grants, crowdfunding, training events and subscriber fees to fund their journalism. To Oyedele, Lasisi and Kolawole (2018), however, foreign aid and journalists' training influenced investigative reporting in Nigeria. Walth, Dahmen and Their (2019) explored combining investigative journalism with solutions journalism for impactful reporting on social problems.

In human rights activities and social work, social justice journalists must prioritize marginalized individuals and believe in their importance (Ife, Soldatić & Briskman, 2022). These media practitioners are fond of always correcting the notion that prominent individuals and groups can evade accountability (Anyago & Oziko, 2019). Social justice journalists support victims by providing unbiased justice and necessary assistance. They challenge the institutional power structure to amplify marginalized voices (Varma, 2020). Social justice journalism establishes connections between victims and society, garnering support for their pursuit of justice (Nelson & Lewis, 2015).

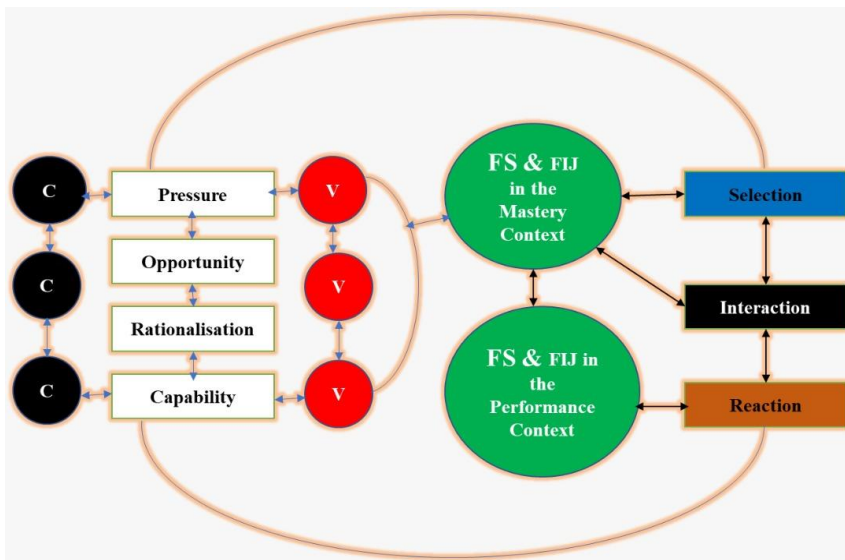
From these arguments, we can conclude that both investigative and social justice journalism focus on addressing societal issues and advocating solutions. However, social justice journalism has a more immediate impact compared to investigative journalism, as it is less time-consuming, less cost-effective, and less rigorous compared to investigative journalism. However, investigative journalism is an essential tool for social justice journalism. Therefore, incorporating investigative journalism skills into social justice journalism practices enhances its impact.

## Theoretical Framework

The study utilises goal orientation, fraud detection theories, and media practice model. We need to state that fraud theory encompasses the Fraud Triangle Theory of Cressey as well as the Fraud Diamond Theory of Wolfe and Hermanson. Goal orientation theory and media practice model enabled us to understand 'Fisayo Soyombo's motivations and interest in pursuing a career in journalism. Thus, through the model and the theory, the researchers were able to establish the nature and qualities of his investigative and social journalistic work. Additionally, the two variants of fraud detection theory provided insights into the illegal activities or actions of the individuals featured in his stories. From Cressey's fraud triangle theory to the fraud diamond theory, it was evident that actors investigated and reported by 'Fisayo Soyombo and his Foundation for Investigative Journalism engaged in various illegal activities or anti-social behaviours due to socio-political pressure, weakened social and political institutions, and their possession of specific knowledge and skills.

The fraud triangle and fraud diamond theories within the fraud detection theory describe four elements that capture this phenomenon. The first element is *pressure*, which suggests that people commit fraud or engage in illegal activities due to financial stress or belief that it would benefit them socially, economically or politically. The *opportunity* element, emphasizes the role of weak processes or systems that allow perpetrators to carry out their actions. The *rationalization* element highlights how individuals justify and accept their illegal actions. The *capacity* element stresses that people need strong skills and the ability to exploit their targets effectively (Sánchez-Aguayo, Urquiza-Aguilar & Estrada-Jiménez, 2021).

While perpetrators develop different strategies, the media has a social responsibility to investigate and report wrongdoings and hold relevant stakeholders accountable. ‘Fisayo Soyombo and the FIJ believe that reporting injustices and wrongdoings in political and economic institutions through investigative and social justice journalism practices will contribute to an egalitarian society. This aligns with the assumptions of goal orientation, which suggests that individuals typically have mastery and performance goals when striving to achieve certain accomplishments. The mastery goal guides them on the required skills and knowledge to achieve the expected performance (Kaplan & Maehr, 2006; Stavrou, Psychountaki, Georgiadis, Karteroliotis & Zervas, 2015). Furthermore, the media practice model helped the researchers to understand that ‘Fisayo Soyombo and his team select specific aspects of Nigerian society by leveraging investigative and social justice journalism practices. During this process, ‘Fisayo Soyombo and his team interact with concerned stakeholders and newsmakers. The reactions of these stakeholders to the published information, conceptualized as *full*, *partial*, or *no impacts*, largely depend on their personalities or identities (Steele & Brown, 1995). Figure 1 represents the theoretical and model analyses, with "C" denoting the cheats and "V" representing the victims. "FS" and "FIJ" depict ‘Fisayo Soyombo and the Foundation for Investigative Journalism, respectively, within the contexts of mastery and performance.



**Figure 1:** Research Model

**Source:** Researchers’ theoretical and model analyses (2023)

Based on these theoretical and model analyses, the study was driven by these research questions:

1. What is the nature of the investigative and social justice journalism practices of 'Fisayo Soyombo'?
2. To what extent do his reports reflect the socially, economically, institutionally, politically exposed and vulnerable as the status of cheats and victims?
3. To what extent do the five dimensions of cheats and victims' status facilitate concerned stakeholders' attention?

## Methods

Open Profiling of Quality (OPQ) was adopted as a research method to assess the quality of news stories and the reactions of interested parties. OPQ allows the use of quantitative and qualitative research approaches, specifically descriptive qualitative and quantitative evaluation (Strohmeier, Jumisko-Pyykkö & Kunze, 2010; Strohmeier, Jumisko-Pyykkö & Eulenberg, 2011). To answer the research questions, three sources of data were used: 1) extraction of relevant information about Fisayo Soyombo's educational background and career, 2) stories written by and about 'Fisayo Soyombo and published on different newspapers' websites, and 3) news reports on the Foundation for Investigative Journalism's website.

The data were selected using purposive and total population sampling procedures. Purposive sampling was used to select investigative stories published by previous employers and other newspapers, as well as social justice stories on FIJ's website. This approach was chosen because the researchers focused on stories exposing wrong-doings in Nigerian institutions and anti-social behaviour in society. A total sampling technique was used to select extracts that aligned with Soyombo's educational background and career growth. Investigative stories were extracted only from their original sources, while social justice stories from FIJ's website were logged from February to November 2021 using a Data Logged Sheet.

Thirteen stories were considered, including 8 relevant investigative stories and 5 series. For social justice stories, 66 input stories were tracked, highlighting various wrong-doings and anti-social behaviour. Out of these, 34 output stories were reported by Soyombo and his team, based on the reactions of the people mentioned and concerned stakeholders. Twenty-six input stories matched the 34 output stories tracked, while the remaining 40 output stories were not tracked from the input stories' perspective.

OPQ's sub-methods allowed the researchers to use their vocabulary for data collection. Open content categories were adopted as a research instrument, tracing relevant variables in the headlines and content of the news stories. Specific categories were developed to facilitate the qualitative and quantitative evaluation of Soyombo's journalism practice. For descriptive analysis of investigative journalism practice, OPQ's vocabulary-based approach was

extensively used, while quantitative content analysis with open categories and coding protocols was employed for social justice journalism practice. The stability approach was used to ensure the reliability of the open categories and coding protocols. The researchers read the selected news stories multiple times and agreed on the emerging vocabulary for quality evaluation of the two journalism approaches.

The vocabularies that emerged were grouped into five main categories: targeted aspects of society, status of cheats, status of victims, types of injustice, and stakeholder attention. Targeted aspects of society include business, child abuse, corruption, security, crime, education, governance, health, and property. The sub-categories for the status of cheats included socially exposed, economically-exposed, politically-exposed, and institutionally exposed, indicating that the cheats had socioeconomic and political power and were highly connected with various political institutions. These sub-categories also applied to the status of victims, with the addition of vulnerability. In the context of this study, the vulnerable referred to the victims of wrongdoings and anti-social behaviour identified and reported by Soyombo and his team. These victims lacked socioeconomic and political power and were not connected to political institutions where they could seek justice. Injustice type consisted of various sub-categories such as academic fraudulent, academic harassment, bank fraudulent, bribery, car theft, certificate forgery, court order disobedience, delay in releasing certificates, extortion in academia, extra-judicial killing, financial theft, forceful detention, forceful fund transfer, fraudulent transactions, illegal detention, investment fraud, investment scam, killing, payment refund fraud, police assault, police extortion, professional misconduct, property fraud etc. The concerned stakeholder attention category included sub-categories of partial impact, full impact, and no impact. Partial impact referred to stories that drew the attention of stakeholders, including actors, who responded by arresting wrongdoers or stating that the offenders would be prosecuted. Full impact denoted stories that resulted in the prosecution of perpetrators, return of unlawfully acquired assets, and release from unlawful incarceration, among other outcomes. No impact indicated that both interested stakeholders and actors did not respond to the stories or provide justice for the victims.

Qualitative data were analysed using narrative-textual and context map analysis. The narrative-textual analysis involved the use of extracted texts that established Soyombo's practice of the two journalism models and presented them using a prose approach. The context map was further used to depict the main elements of the narratives. Soyombo's educational history in relation to his investigative journalism career profile was analysed using a narrative method, with relevant quotes included. The context map was created to provide

a better understanding of the actors and stakeholders involved in investigative stories and to summarize the major outcomes of the stories. Simple frequency counts and percentages, as well as Pearson's Chi-square with Phi and Cramer's V statistics, were used to analyse data for social justice journalism practice and understand the relationship between categorical variables.

## Results

In this section, the outcomes of analyses carried out following the data collection procedure and methods of the analysis are presented thematically using each research question. Thus, the first part of the section focuses on the nature of Fisayo Soyombo's investigative journalism practice. In the second part, the nature of his social justice journalism practice is presented, while the third part entails the presentation of the impacts of the practice. The fourth part entails dimensions of cheats' and victims' status. Suffice it to say that the last two parts are predominantly presented using a quantitative approach, while the first part is presented using a narrative approach because of the small samples of his investigative journalism reports.

### *Nature of Investigative Journalism Practice*

Soyombo's dream of becoming a journalist started to materialize when he joined the University of Ibadan as a student of Animal Science. He chose the University of Ibadan to "benefit from the Arts community." With that vision, Fisayo Soyombo combined campus journalism with his course (Soyombo, 2020). His love for the profession earned him a writing position (reporter) at The Guardian in 2004 while at 100 level. He spent six years with the newspaper before moving to other transcontinental media as a writer, journalist, and editor.

His early investigative writing instinct earned him a nomination in 2011 for the "Investigative Reporter" category of the Nigeria Media Merit Awards (Ventures Africa, undated & Soyombo, undated). After editing *The Will Nigeria* for nine months in 2012, he became an editor at Flair Nigeria between 2012 and 2014, after which he joined *The Cable*, an online newspaper, from 2014 to 2017, also as an editor. From 2017 to 2018, he was with the International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR), where he published many investigative and undercover stories before joining *Sahara Reporters* in 2018. His journey to the Foundation for Investigative Journalism (FIJ) started in 2020 (Soyombo, undated).

Before venturing into social justice journalism, Soyombo had made a name for himself in investigative journalism in Nigeria with many published undercover reports. While working as the pioneer editor of *The Cable* and as an investigative journalist at the ICIR, he did a series of undercover reports, similar to Anas Aremeyaw Anas, a Ghanaian undercover investigative reporter. Lanosga, Willnat, Weaver and Houston's (2015) submission about

investigative journalists being "less risk-averse and more willing to confront powerful interests to expose hidden vices and change society for the better" was aptly shown in Soyombo's undercover work. For example, in 2015, he went undercover in Lagos to investigate the high level of corrupt practices, bribery, and forgery in the Nigeria Customs Service, providing evidence (Soyombo, 2015). That year, he was shortlisted as one of the winners of the Wole Soyinka Award (*The Cable*, 2015). The story won him the Kurt Schork Memorial Fund Award in International Journalism in 2016 (George, 2016) and a PricewaterhouseCoopers Media Excellence Award (*The Cable*, 2016).

In 2016, Soyombo wrote a five-part investigative story on how the Nigerian Army 'forgot' and abandoned soldiers who became vulnerable after suffering injuries in the course of fighting the Boko Haram sects on the battlefield (Soyombo, 2016). In 2018, he went undercover again to expose how Nigeria's health system was killing cancer patients more than the deadly disease itself, using two federal hospitals as cases (Soyombo, 2018a). That same year, he drove a car with no documents from Abuja to Lagos and back, as if it were a stolen car. All he did (to concretize his hypothesis of a corrupt security system) was pay a bribe of #46,000 (Soyombo, 2018b).

In 2019, his undercover investigation led him to Ikoyi Prisons, where he witnessed first-hand how the Nigerian Police perverted the course of justice in their pursuit of ill-gotten money. He also observed how the courts undermined the law and saw that the prisons themselves were a breeding ground for the very vices for which they held inmates. Additionally, he encountered drug abuse, sodomy, bribery, pimping, and cash and carry operations within the prison (Omilana, 2019 & Soyombo, 2019). In January 2020, 'Fisayo Soyombo embarked on another undercover story, this time posing as a psychiatric patient to expose the decrepit state of hospital facilities, a severe shortage of critical staff despite a bloated workforce believed to include ghost workers, substandard service delivery, and arbitrary charges imposed on patients. These issues stemmed from personal and institutional corruption and the hospital's implicit stigmatization of its patients (Soyombo, 2020). It should be noted that some of these undercover stories presented significant challenges, including instances where he was tortured after his cover was blown (Soyombo, 2019).

After publishing the 3-series story, he faced arrest and prosecution threats (Gesinde, 2019), which led to the trending hashtag #KeepFisyoSafe on Twitter (O Royal, 2019). In response to the threats, he went into hiding (Folarin, 2019). The Controller General of the Nigerian Correctional Service (Prisons), Ja'afaru Ahmed, later confirmed that a "high powered panel" had been established to investigate 'Fisayo's work (Omilana, 2019). Despite the threats, the Minister of Interior, Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola, praised Soyombo's investigation as "fantastic" (Ogunyemi, 2019). Additionally, his story won the 2020 Fetisov

Journalism Awards for outstanding investigative reporting (Asadu, 2021). Furthermore, his stories led to the release of five wrongly imprisoned individuals who had refused to pay bribes (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands, 2021).

Transitioning from undercover reporting, Soyombo adopted social justice journalism, which he describes as "activistic" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands, 2021). This form of journalism aligns with the mission of his organization, FIJ, to create a more habitable Nigeria, especially for the less privileged (FIJ, undated). To achieve this mission, FIJ aims to uncover the truth, bypass officialdom, neutralize propaganda, and make information accessible to the public, influencing their decision-making (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands, 2021). Soyombo's practice of social justice journalism heavily relies on his knowledge and investigative skills, evident in the stories covered by FIJ. Although investigative journalism is a tool for social justice journalism, both forms come with risks. For example, when his medium recently investigated police corruption related to non-existent police transit camp projects, the Police Force invited him and detained him for ten hours (Ogunjobi, 2021). He was later released on bail (Oyero, 2021), and an anonymous Facebook user threatened him (Ojukwu, 2022).

**Table 1: Soyombo's investigative stories, the stakeholders and impacts**

S/N	Investigative Story	Concerned Stakeholder(s)	Impact
1	Nigeria's 'Customs of Corruption, Bribery and Forgery'	Institution (Nigeria Customs Service)	Partial (The Service gave a 14-day ultimatum to declare their full assets)
2.	Broken limbs, shattered dreams: The 'forgotten soldiers in the Boko Haram war	The Nigerian Army	Partial (The Nigerian Army promised to investigate)
3.	FORGOTTEN SOLDIERS I: 'Maggots in my leg'... an amputee-soldier's 44 months of begging the army for 'original' prosthesis	The Nigerian Army	Partial (After the story was published, the Nigerian Army gave a prosthesis to a forgotten soldier; at least six soldiers were treated and discharged)
4.	FORGOTTEN SOLDIERS II: The bombed soldier who is now a 'vampire'... and others at the mercy of the army's 'blood-stained corruption'	The Nigerian Army	Partial (The Nigerian Army promised to investigate)
5.	FORGOTTEN SOLDIERS III: Inside military hospitals where soldiers fan their gunshot wounds and meals are served without fish or meat	The Nigerian Army	Partial (The Nigerian Army promised to investigate)
6.	UNDERCOVER: In Borno, children are dying at IDP camps, foodstuffs are 'disappearing' at SEMA store	Officials of <i>Borno State Emergency Management Agency</i>	Partial (The Government called it a malicious, cock and bull story)
7.	REPORTER'S DIARY: With N46,000 bribe, I drove a 'stolen' car from Abuja to Lagos, and back!	Security institutions	No Impact
8.	UNDERCOVER INVESTIGATION: Cancer is the disease, Nigeria's health system is the killer	Health institution	No Impact
9.	UNDERCOVER INVESTIGATION (I): Bribery, bail for sale... Lagos police station where innocent civilians are held and criminals are recycled	Institutions- Criminal Justice System (The Police and the Prisons Service)	Partial Impact (Soyombo was threatened by unrevealed sources; a panel was set up to investigate the undercover; the Minister of Interior commended the undercover)

S/N	Investigative Story	Concerned Stakeholder(s)	Impact
10.	UNDERCOVER INVESTIGATION (II): Drug abuse, sodomy, bribery, pimping... The cash-and-carry operations of Ikoyi Prisons	Same as above	Same as above
11.	UNDERCOVER INVESTIGATION (III): A reporter's diary — Living with a 'mad' cell mate, set up by prison warders, abducted by the police	Same as above	Same as above
12.	UNDERCOVER INVESTIGATION (I): Bed-space corruption, terrible food, well-fed rats... Many things not right at 'Yaba Left'	Health Institution (neuropsychiatric hospital)	Partial Impact (Health Minister, Osagie Ehanire, promised to look into the issues raised by Soyombo)
13.	UNDERCOVER INVESTIGATION (II): Staff shortage, ghost workers, principalities and powers... Many things not right at 'Yaba Left'	Management of the psychiatric hospital	No Impact

Source: Researchers' compilation (2023)

Data in Table 1 captures Soyombo's investigative stories, the stakeholders and impacts. These are further explored in Figure 2, where the mastery and performance goal components of goal orientation theory are compared with the descriptions. From the Figure, it can be deduced that Fisayo Soyombo used the mastery goal context to equip himself with the necessary skills, knowledge, and capabilities for investigative journalism practice in Nigeria. His goal was to produce strong investigative stories that would advance the institutionalization of equitable social and justice systems.

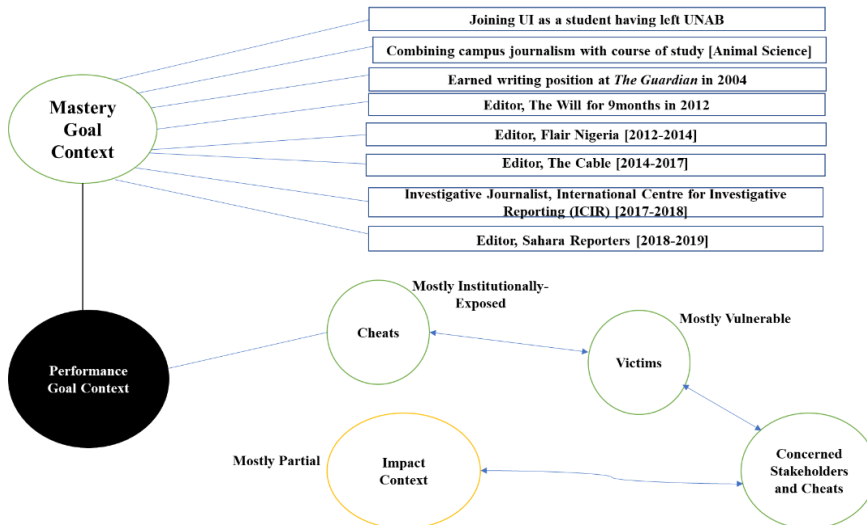


Figure 2: Context Map of Soyombo's Investigative Journalism Practice and Generative Interactive Impact of the Investigations

Source: Researchers' Conceptualisation (2023)

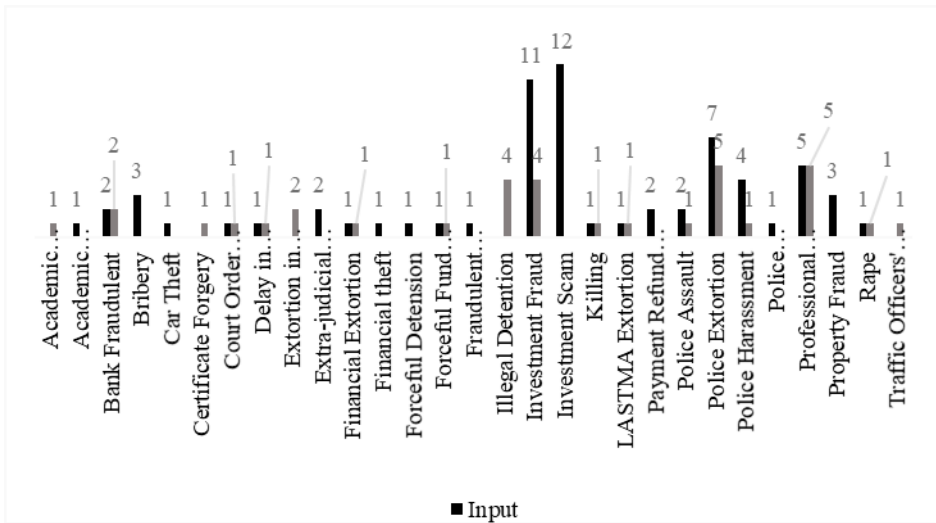
### ***Nature of Social Justice Journalism Practice***

It is significant at this point to profile 'Fisayo Soyombo from his selected social journalism practice, using *FIJ*, an online medium he launched in 2020. On February 1, 2021, *FIJ* published a story that detailed how an Inspector of Police raped his 15-year-old stepdaughter and how the Police Force covered up the incident. The story developed a partial CSA (Concerned Stakeholder's Attention) on the second day, as the police officer was reportedly detained. A day after (February 10, 2021) the platform reported an undercover story that unveiled how the medium's reporter departed Nigeria by air on an international trip, using a fake COVID-19 certificate, authorities of Lagos State University Teaching Hospital responded to *FIJ*'s undercover with "We're investigating." The medium exposed the story of how the daughter of Ireti Doyle, a prominent Nollywood actress, "duped hair enthusiasts of over N40 million" used the popularity of her mother as bait. The story which was reported on 4th March 2021 later had three different partial impacts. The first impact occurred on March 6 as the Nigerian Police apprehended two of Doyle's daughter's (Kachi) staff. The second impact was witnessed on March 24 when Kachi refunded 12 million Naira out of the 40 million Naira. The last impact was reported on October 11 of the same year, and that was the time Kachi's mother distanced herself from her daughter's scam she had earlier promoted. However, full attention was given by the targeted stakeholder when *FIJ* reported the story of SARS officers who extorted N46,000 from two brothers; in fact, they were made to withdraw the amount from the POS. The story was published on April 8, while the officers' refund of the exact money was reported on April 15, a week after *FIJ*'s story. From these stories, it is clear that Soyombo is pursuing issues and needs within the social justice context in relation to the socioeconomic status of the cheats and their victims. This is unsurprising, considering the mission of his *Foundation for Investigative Journalism*.

### ***Quantification of Social Justice Journalism Practice***

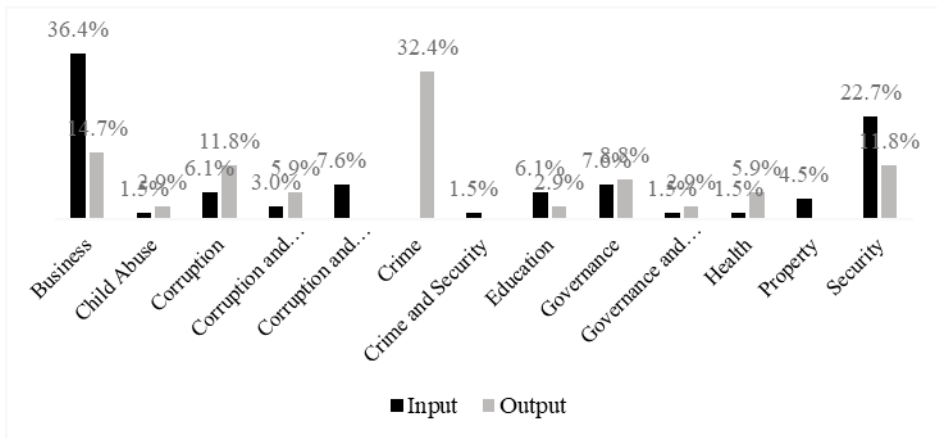
After presenting a few social justice stories using descriptive and narrative approaches, Figure 2 data includes the first set of vocabularies or categories considered for the nature of journalism practice. According to the data, the most frequently reported injustices out of the 29 identified injustices were investment fraud [11], investment scam [12], police extortion [7], professional misconduct [5], police harassment [4], and property fraud [3], which cut across input and output stories. Concerning the reactions of the concerned stakeholders and actors, particularly the cheats, which usually led to the development and publication of output stories, analysis shows that police extortion [5], professional misconduct [5], illegal detention [4], investment fraud [4], extortion in academia [2], and bank fraud [2] received more attention. This implies that the cheats and relevant stakeholders, having been

exposed through the input stories, took actions that led to the provision of justice. The analysis also suggests that Soyombo and his team primarily focused on reporting injustices in the security, banking, investment, and education sectors. These results are further explored with the data presented in Figure 3, where the dominant aspects of Nigerian society focused on by 'Fisayo Soyombo and his team are revealed.



**Figure 3:** Story Type by Frequency of Injustice Type  
**Source:** Foundation of Investigative Journalism, 2021; Researchers’ Analysis (2023)

Analysis of the 66 input and 34 output stories reveals that Fisayo Soyombo and his team mainly focus on reporting wrongdoings in the commercial and criminal justice sectors. Approximately 36% of the input stories concentrate on inequalities in commercial transactions or interactions between individuals and organizations. This is closely followed by stories [22.7%] that expose faults and injustices in the security system, as well as those committed by officials responsible for ensuring long-term security for all citizens. However, Soyombo’s social journalism practice primarily holds powerful individuals and organizations accountable for their various illegal activities and anti-social behaviour, including killing, financial extortion, illegal detention, harassment, and investment fraud [see Figure 3]. Over 32% of the output stories focus on crime, while 11.8% address corruption.

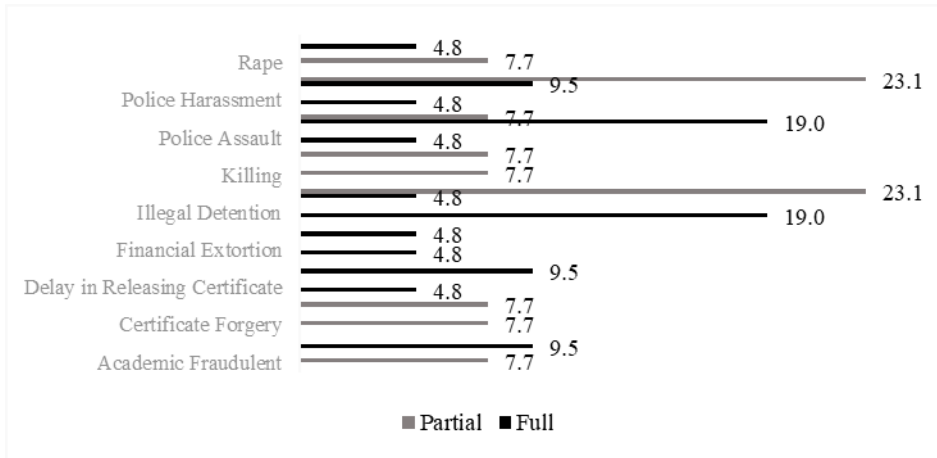


**Figure 4:** Story Type by Targeted Aspects of the Society

**Source:** Researchers' Analysis (2023)

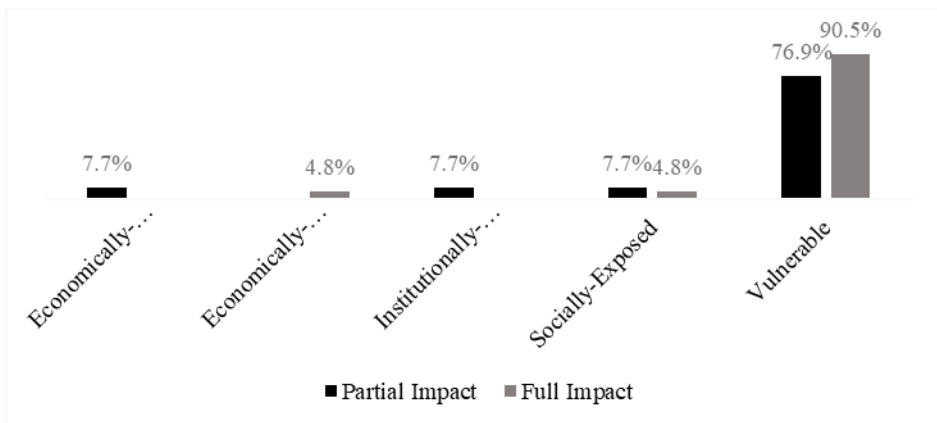
### *Place of Dimensions of Cheats and Victims in Concerned Stakeholders' Attention*

This section focuses on the impact categories resulting from the output stories. According to the analysis, 61.8% of the 34 input stories categorized as impacts fall into the full impact category outlined earlier. Approximately 38% of the stories had only a minor impact. Figure 4 illustrates how FIJ's stories have held police personnel and the Nigeria Police Force accountable for constant illegal detention [19.0%], extortion [19.0%], and professional misconduct [9.5%]. The analysis also indicates that FIJ's selection of salient issues and framing of the perpetrators and stakeholders have yielded desired results for individuals and organizations affected in the banking [9.5%] and education [9.5%] sectors. Further investigation of the stories reveals that 9.5% of the output stories establish a complete reaction to security personnel's professional misconduct, which is not encouraging when compared to the 23.1% of partial impacts recorded for the same injustice. This is also the case for investment fraud. These findings imply that cheats and other interested parties are disregarding Soyombo's and his team's efforts to establish equal justice in Nigeria. In the subsequent analysis, the status of the cheats and the victims is examined to determine which statuses enhanced the most recorded impacts.



**Figure 5:** Concerned Stakeholders’ Attention to Injustice Stories reported by FIJ (in percentage)

**Source:** Researchers’ Analysis (2023)

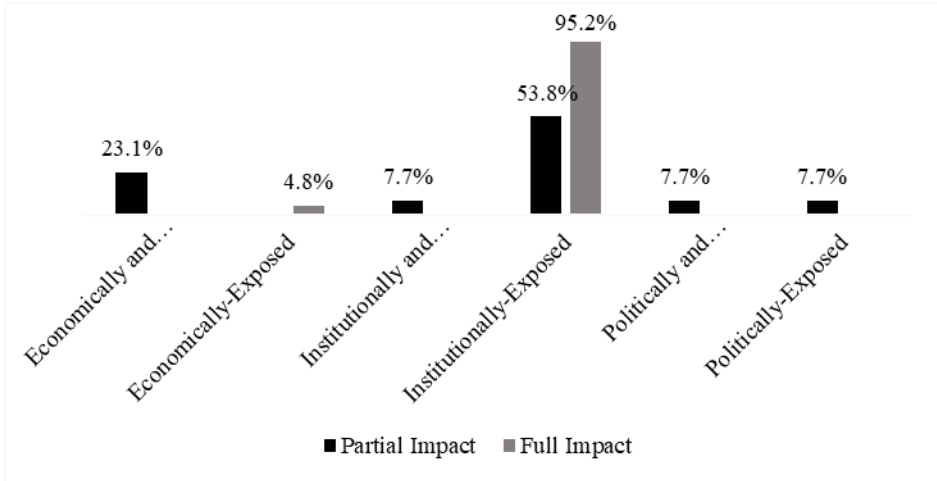


**Figure 6:** Concerned Stakeholders’ Attention to Injustice Stories reported by FIJ by Status of the Victims

**Source:** Researchers’ Analysis (2023)

As previously reported, Figure 6 reveals the- frequency of victim status in relation to impact categories. In other words, the results suggest that FIJ’s choice and framing of victim status influence the types of impacts generated by the stories. According to the data, framing the victims as helpless and defenceless resulted in 90.5% of the 21 full impact stories. Additionally, when the vulnerability of the victims was emphasized using various journalistic

principles such as emotionally-driven headlines and leads, a significant percentage of the partial impact stories were also affected. These findings indicate that social justice stories about the less powerful in society are highly likely to attract the attention of both cheats and concerned stakeholders.



**Figure 7:** Concerned Stakeholders’ Attention to Injustice Stories reported by FIJ by Status of the Cheats

**Source:** Researchers’ Analysis (2023)

Figure 7 illustrates the role of status in understanding how Soyombo and his team's practice of social justice journalism can improve Nigeria's social justice system. The data clearly demonstrates that cheats affiliated with political institutions reacted to news exposing their misconduct against individuals and institutions. This was observed in over 95% of the stories with full impact and 53.8% of the stories with partial impact. Furthermore, the analysis indicates that the cheats' economic and social status also contributed to partial impact. Approximately 23% of the 13 partial impact stories were influenced by the way FIJ selected and framed the socioeconomic status of the cheats. These findings suggest that incorporating socioeconomic status, political positions, and institutional affiliations of the cheats would facilitate significant improvements in the Nigerian social justice system. Additionally, the subsequent exploration will delve into the time lag between the publication of the selected social justice stories and the response from the cheats and concerned stakeholders.

**Table 2: <sup>1</sup> Time Lag of Concerned Stakeholders' Attention to Selected Social Justice Journalism Practice**

	First Reaction	Second Reaction	Third Reaction	Status of the Cheat(s)	Status of the Victim(s)
Extortion in Academia	5	6	-	Institutionally-Exposed	Vulnerable
Professional Misconduct	1	-		Institutionally-Exposed	Institutionally-Exposed and Vulnerable
Bribery and Police Harassment	1	1	-	Institutionally-Exposed	Vulnerable
Police Extortion	7	-	-	Institutionally-Exposed	Vulnerable
Investment Fraud	25	18	220	Economically and Socially-Exposed	Vulnerable

**Source:** Researchers' Analysis (2023)

Table 2 contains the outcomes of the in-case analysis of selected social justice stories that were previously analysed. This analysis aimed to determine the duration it took for the cheats and concerned stakeholders in the security and political institutions to respond and fulfil their roles in ensuring justice for the victims. Our in-case analysis considers the reaction or attention of cheats and concerned stakeholders using first, second, and third reaction patterns. The following stories are considered for analysis within the input story type: "HOD of Taraba State University Removed after FIJ's Story on Extortion," "After FIJ's Report, Taraba State University Returns Illegally Collected Money to Students," "Police in Kwara Demand N400,000 Bribe from Detained Street Sweeper, Granddaughter," and "After FIJ's Story, Police Open Investigations into Sack of Kwara Officers Who Busted Car Theft Ring." Additionally, we analysed the following stories within the output story type: "Pull Down FIJ's Story First' — Kwara Police List Conditions for Releasing Aged Street Sweeper, Granddaughter," "BREAKING: After FIJ's Story, Kwara Police Free Detained Street Sweeper, Granddaughter," "Ireti Doyle's Daughter Kachi Refunds N12m to 16 Customers After FIJ's Story — But 106 More Still Waiting," "BREAKING: Police Arrest Two Staff of Ireti Doyle's Daughter Kachi Over Hair Scam," and "After Promoting Her Daughter's Business, Ireti Doyle Distances Herself From Scam."

The data in Table 2 show that cheats and concerned stakeholders take a significant amount of time before reacting to these stories. This delay is

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<sup>1</sup> Days of reaction

particularly notable in cases involving investment fraud, police extortion, and extortion in academia. For example, in the Ireti Doyle's Daughter story, it took the cheat and others 25 days to react to the first publication, followed by an additional 18 days for the second reaction. The fact that more than 200 days elapsed before the third reaction indicates that victims of investment fraud are not receiving timely justice.

**Table 3: Facilitation of Status of Cheats and Victims in Stakeholders' Attention**

Status of Cheats		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	<b>.595</b>	<b>.034</b>
	Cramer's V	<b>.595</b>	<b>.034</b>
N of Valid Cases		34	
<i>Status of Victims</i>			
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.349	.387
	Cramer's V	.349	.387
N of Valid Cases	34	34	

**Source:** Researchers' Analysis (2023)

To better understand the role of cheats and victims in the impact categories, Table 3 presents data on the association between their status and the categories. According to the data, 59.5% of cheat statuses were accounted for in the full and partial impact. This is evident from both Phi and Cramer's V nominal association analyses, which yielded a significance level of 3.4% ( $p < .034$ ). However, the second part of the table reveals that the victim's status does not strongly contribute to the two impact categories ( $v = .349$ ,  $p < .387$ ). The nominal association analysis shows less than 50% association, which is the expected average for considering two categorical variables as strong. These results suggest that the framing and reinforcement of the cheat's status in the stories compelled them to respond or react, possibly to protect their reputation and personality. The findings also imply that regardless of the degree to which specific characteristics of the victims are utilized in highlighting vulnerability, there is little substantial impact on partial and full attention.

## Discussion of Findings

The redeployment of skills and knowledge towards social justice journalism has yielded desired impacts, as analyses reveal significant attention from cheaters and concerned stakeholders. This is especially evident when stories expose the exploitation of institutional and socioeconomic status, highlighting the extent of vulnerability faced by victims. In other words, victims of anti-social justice behaviour have utilized FIJ (Fisayo Soyombo's medium) to seek justice and promote a just society (World Justice Project, 2017).

The prevalence of injustice, including crime, business misconduct, corruption, security issues, and governance problems, has led Nigerians to distrust the country's criminal justice system (Olonisakin, Olanrewaju Ogunleye & Adebayo, 2017). Soyombo's journalism practices act as a check against the abuse of power by administrators of justice (Rothmund, Gollwitzer, Baumert & Schmitt, 2013), thereby providing an avenue for victims of social abuse to turn to FIJ. Soyombo's investigative and social justice journalism often involves going undercover or concealing his identity to uncover the truth behind propagated lies (Lanosga, Willnat, Weaver & Houston, 2015). His stories focus not only on social problems (Walth, Dahmen & Thier, 2019), but also on broader societal and government issues (Lanosga & Martin, 2017). Through his journalism, Soyombo challenges those in power and brings about meaningful policy change (Dahmen & Walth, 2021).

Essentially, this study has found that 'Fisayo Soyombo's social justice journalism is not fundamentally different from his investigative journalism practice. Based on our data, he has effectively used investigative journalism as a tool for social justice journalism. Soyombo's mastery of investigative journalism principles and experiences strengthens his social justice journalism. Acts of anti-social behaviour and crime involving powerful individuals within institutions generate greater reactions than other forms of anti-social behaviour (full and partial impact).

Conversely, when victims are vulnerable and the culprits are not within public institutions, minimal attention is generated (e.g., financial fraud and scams). Investigative journalism is more time-consuming than social justice journalism, but without investigative journalism skills, Soyombo's social journalism practice would not have garnered responses from his targeted stakeholders, which include public and financial institutions, as well as economically powerful individuals, among others.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The government must strengthen the country's criminal and social justice system, ensuring that no crime goes unpunished. Periodically, FIJ should share social justice stories that have not yet received attention from the culprits, particularly stories involving vulnerable individuals. Consistent reporting, such as through the "ICYMI" (In Case You Missed It) approach, can make those who are not institutionally-exposed cheats feel uneasy due to the repeated exposure. Nigerian journalists should incorporate a social justice journalism template into their stories to provide a platform for victims of social injustice to seek justice against powerful oppressors. Instead of threatening whistleblowers, heads of institutions, primarily public ones, whose staff are accused of

anti-social behaviour and crimes should respond promptly. Upon conducting internal investigations as ordered by institutionally-exposed heads, if the accused cheaters are found guilty, appropriate sanctions should be imposed on the offending staff/officers as deterrents.

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