

1-1-2024

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Recommended Citation

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Egyptian Journalists' Perceptions of Digital Journalism Training Effectiveness

SAGE Open
 January-March 2024: 1–20
 © The Author(s) 2024
 DOI: 10.1177/21582440241232756
journals.sagepub.com/home/sgo


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Abstract

This study examines the perceptions of Egyptian journalists of the effectiveness of professional training in digital journalism and determines the training-needs of journalists to adapt to innovative journalism practices. The study applies mixed descriptive methods based on The Motivation–Hygiene theory of what motivates employees. Data analysis is based on an online questionnaire with a snowball sample of 134 Egyptian journalists from different media outlets and in-depth interviews with 10 journalists and professional trainers, between June 2019 and August 2020. Findings reveal that the impact of hygiene factors is stronger than that of motivation factors. This study shows that hygiene factors negatively influence professional training and inhibit any positive impacts of motivation factors. The findings of this study are significant to media organizations and professional training providers.

Keywords

Digital journalism, Motivation–Hygiene Theory, Egyptian journalists, journalism practice, journalism training

Introduction

For decades, journalism has been witnessing several obstacles like decline in advertising revenues, budget cuts, and change in media consumption behaviors (Reinardy, 2009). Discussion has been taking place regarding the challenges facing the field of journalism in Egypt. With training as a core challenge, the Egyptian news landscape is beset by many other problems including lack of trust in media, future uncertainty of journalism as a profession, economic difficulties, adoption of up-to-date media technologies, and meeting the demands of new digital-native generations. Due to lack of diversity among media companies, ownership of Egyptian media outlets is another challenge for journalism in Egypt (Ali, 2016; El-Aswad, 2017; El-Masry, 2014). Other controversial issues that affect journalism in Egypt relate to issues like freedom of speech and expression, human rights, and the decline of newspaper readership due to the increased usage of social media platforms as a news source among the Egyptians, particularly the youth (N. A. Fahmy & Salah, 2017). Though journalism training, in particular, is vital to the working conditions of the Egyptian journalists, since recent research has indicated that journalists struggle to access updated, reliable, and accurate information from official websites and databases (N. Fahmy & Attia, 2021).

In Egypt, journalism training programs are available through different sources. Some are offered by in-house

training centers, formal educational institutions, or independent regional and international journalism training organizations. Others are offered through several Egyptian newspaper entities (e.g., *Al-Ahram*, *Akhbar-elYoum*) which have their own in-house centers that provide training for their staff and others. In addition, there are other privately-owned training institutions, such as *Byanat School and InfoTimes*, and academic journalism training institutions at The American University in Cairo, and the Syndicate of Journalists in Egypt. Recently, several journalism-training associations have emerged; The Danish Media Club is an example that represents a collaboration between Egyptian journalists who aim to share their knowledge and experience to raise professionalism, while usually organizing free training workshops, sometimes using online platforms.

Working conditions probably influences the demand for journalism training. Research on the performance of the Egyptian journalists reveal many factors affecting

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their productivity and performance; such as lack of promotion criteria, insecure jobs, unfair wages and incentives (especially in newspapers owned by private companies and political parties), lack of Professional Journalism Training (PJT), a shortage of technological facilities, and managers' support of innovative practice methods (Tawfiq, 2018; Wassel, 2017). The rapid and increasing technological developments and their impacts on newsrooms (like new jobs and new digital skills) could also become extrinsic stress factors to traditional journalists. These challenges raised the pressure of the workplace environment in the field, and lead to the absence of hygiene factors with greater workloads, job cuts, and lack of job stability (Viererbl & Koch, 2021), leading to an increasing number of journalists struggling to cope with the stress related to those extrinsic factors.

This study examines Egyptian journalists' perceptions of the effectiveness of PJT in digital journalism and determines their training-needs. The study uses Motivation-Hygiene Theory which provides keys to explore factors that affect the Egyptian journalism training environment. The study aims to investigate the challenges that Egyptian journalists face in reskilling their capabilities to adapt to innovations in the field of journalism. The insights and practical recommendations offered through this study can help develop PJT offered to the Egyptian journalists.

Motivation-Hygiene Theory

Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory (MHT), which is also known as the two-factor theory, was widely used by researchers to examine job satisfaction in different contexts such as teaching (Evans & Olumide-Aluko, 2010; Marcela-Sefora Nemteanu, 2021), nursing (Vévoda et al., 2011), and managerial jobs (Hur, 2018). Since its proposal to management studies in 1959, Herzberg's theory has been the most dominant theory in research on job satisfaction in the field of journalism (Yu, 2021). According to Judge et al., (2017), among other elements like morale, commitment, involvement and engagement, job satisfaction is an important component of job attitude that describes how people think about and relate to their work and jobs.

MHT theory assumes that the factors involved in producing job satisfaction differ from the factors that lead to job dissatisfaction. It also implies a relationship between job attitudes and job productivity, and posits that time frames are significant, since the job attitudes of workers are dynamic and in constant motion. MHT thus suggests that one's motivation toward work can be best interpreted based on two sets of factors; hygiene factors (*job-extrinsic*), which are associated with job context; such as salary, relations with peers and managers, supervision,

company policies, physical working conditions, status, benefits, and job security, and motivation factors (*job-intrinsic*), which are task-related factors that include recognition, achievement, work itself, responsibility, professional advancement, and the possibility of intellectual growth. According to the theory, motivation factors contribute to job satisfaction, while hygiene factors merely prevent job dissatisfaction (Rogelberg, 2007, p. 392). hygiene factors do not lead to satisfaction; they can help avoid negative feelings about work. Alternatively, motivation factors require actual changes to increase motivation for work (Aydın, 2012; Teck-Hong & Waheed, 2011).

Motivation-Hygiene Theory in Journalism Studies

Since scholars started applying Herzberg's theory in 1970s for investigating journalists' job satisfaction, their results have been supporting that intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction levels were essential in evaluating the overall job satisfaction (Cook & Banks, 1993). The emotional stress value was the most frequent examined independent variable in studies on job satisfaction since 2009 to 2021, followed by task stress, demography, and journalism professional value. The individual level of the examined independent variables included demography (age, gender, income, race) and emotional stress (Yu, 2021).

Flores and Subervi (2014) focused on race and ethnicity in examining the assessment of job satisfaction by Latino journalists. The motivation factors examined were (1) work itself, (2) advancement, and (3) growth. The hygiene factors were (1) company policy, (2) supervision, (3) relationships with managers, (4) work conditions, (5) salary, and (6) relationships with peers. The results revealed that the foremost motivation factors impacting Latino journalists' job attitudes were career advancement, and growth, while the leading hygiene factors were salary and peer relationships.

Reinardy (2009) urged that job dissatisfaction was a distinctive factor that pushed employees away from their profession. His results revealed that work-family conflict, job demands, and role overload were significant predictors of dissatisfaction. Gutiérrez-Coba (2020) found similar results which revealed that low salary, lack of training programs and promotion opportunities were the main causes of how journalists moderated job satisfaction perception in Colombia. In the same context, Viererbl and Koch (2021) concluded two kinds of factors for quitting journalism; push factors which are "negatively experienced influences arising from within a journalist's job," and pull factors which are "external, positive influences originating in the attractiveness of the other occupation" (Viererbl & Koch, 2021).

There is no clear evidence on the relation between job satisfaction and employees' attitudes toward PJT. However, MHT proposed that motivators include recognition, sense of doing something meaningful, professional advancement, and personal growth (Viererbl & Koch, 2021). Job satisfaction could be enhanced by offering employees opportunities to achieve their needs for self-actualization (Sahinidis & Bouris, 2008; Yu, 2021). Moreover, the opportunity of career advancement was strongly supported to be the most important motivation factor for job satisfaction of minority journalists, which suggests that they were not getting in comparison to their counterparts (Singh & Sharma, 2021).

Becker et al. (2004) emphasized that journalists who participate in PJT to acquire new skills are likely to be more highly motivated than those who do not. According to their findings, highly motivated journalists were also expected to have increased stature in the newsroom, thereby advancing their careers. Moreover, the benefits of PJT were not limited to trained journalists, as they usually shared their experiences with others in the newsroom, leading to an overall improvement in the performance of the media organization. PJT was usually associated with positive impacts on their job retention and motivation for professional growth and self-realization. It is, therefore, an indicator of their job satisfaction, as training provides journalists with a way to recharge their motivation and to sustain interest and avoid burn-out (Becker et al., 2004; Flores & Subervi, 2014).

Aziz (2013) pointed to Holton's alternative model of training effectiveness (2005) which emphasized the importance of training motivation. In his study, training effectiveness was found to be intervened by training motivation. Hence, this study assumes that journalists' attitudes toward PJT and their perceptions of its effectiveness could be associated with their overall attitudes toward the job itself, their motivation, and their needs for career advancement and development.

"Salary" was the second most common reason why American journalists quit the profession, where financial rewards do not provide long term solutions for diminishing dissatisfaction (Reinardy, 2009). Employees sometimes consider value-intrinsic rewards, such as the nature of work itself to be more significant than salary (Yu, 2021). This is important when considering that journalism, as a profession, is described through dimensions like public service, objectivity, autonomy and ethics (Deuze, 2005), and that, in journalism, creativity, intellectual challenge, control, prestige and social commitment are among the intrinsic and extrinsic factors of job satisfaction (Yu, 2021). As PJT mainly aims to up-skill employees and support their career development, it is reasonable to examine journalists' perceptions of the effectiveness of

the PJT they had in terms of enabling them to get the recognition, the advancement, and the growth they need.

Training Effectiveness

The concept of training effectiveness and how it can be measured is crucial in many disciplines as training and development programs are widely applied in various fields of work. Scholars from management studies and human resources identified effectiveness of training as "the ability to achieve stated goals, judged in terms of both output and impact, measurement is done to evaluate the knowledge gained, skills acquired and attitudinal change, whether the objectives of the training program were achieved or not." (Ahmed & Fariduddin, 2005). This definition ensures the importance of defining both the training goals and their outcomes. The definition also highlights the possible differentiation between employees' evaluation and organization's evaluation for the training effectiveness.

According to Aziz (2013), training effectiveness is based on the needs of both the employees and the organization. Hence, the definition of training effectiveness stresses the importance of training-needs. Moreover, the Expectancy Theory suggests that training motivation is a "direct function of the extent to which the trainee believes that training will result in either job utility or career utility" (Schumaker, 2004). This shows that the methods used to identify employees' needs are very important and that the training offered to them should consider these needs to be deemed as effective. It could be very helpful to cover this area of research, especially when considering the social and cultural contexts of journalism practice in Global South. For example, PJT on innovation in investigative journalism, data journalism, and mobile journalism offered to Arab journalists should consider the sociopolitical and cultural contexts they work in, which often add more challenges and raise several risks (Bebawi, 2021; N. Fahmy & Attia, 2021).

This study does not evaluate the effectiveness of a certain training program offered to Egyptian journalists, it is not concerned with how different their fields of specializations are. Alternatively, the study is concerned with how journalists perceive the effectiveness of the training they had based on their needs and satisfaction. Thus, the following were posed to examine the sample's perceptions and achieve the aim of the study: what training skills they needed, whether they perceived the training they received as helpful to achieve their goals, whether they had opportunities to practice the new skills they gained (training transfer), and what they thought was important to make PJT effective.

Kirkpatrick Model of Training Evaluation was the most preferred model used by scholars and practitioners to measure training effectiveness based on how trainees rated their training experiences in the past years (Aziz, 2013). Kirkpatrick's Model consists of four levels of evaluation: a. *Reactions*: what the trainees think of the training b. *Learning*: what the trainees learn during the learning experience c. *Behavior changes*: what learning and skills trainees apply to the job d. *Results*: changes in results and productivity observed on the job (Borate et al., 2014; Sahni, 2020). According to Aziz (2013), scholars and practitioners applied mostly the first level (reaction) to evaluate training effectiveness. Notably, satisfaction can be a powerful tool to predict training effectiveness and to explain the effect of training on performance improvement.

Despite the criticism it faced, Kirkpatrick model can still be reliable, especially when revisiting it to overcome some shortcomings in the model (Cahapay, 2021). Studies showed that the impact of each level does not necessarily happen separately, instead, the impact of two or more levels could happen at the same time (Reio et al., 2017). Hence, scholars suggested that training effectiveness comprises four dimensions which can be considered together to determine training effectiveness; namely satisfaction, learning performance, individual performance, and organizational performance (Aziz, 2013).

This study benefits from the Kirkpatrick model within its focus on measuring journalists' perceptions of training effectiveness based on their reactions to the professional training they receive in digital journalism and the training transfer and results they perceive.

Perceived Training Effectiveness

Trainees' perceptions of the training effectiveness had been studied by researchers either to examine employees' satisfaction of training offered to them (Malik et al., 2015; Tawalbeh, 2015) or to examine relationship of perceived training effectiveness with different variables related to organization, trainer and trainee factors (Sahinidis & Bouris, 2008; Schumaker, 2004). Sahinidis and Bouris (2008), measured the perceived training effectiveness using a one-item 5-Likert scale to measure the degree journalists perceive training they receive in their companies as effective. The study showed that the long-term investment in employees' development of new skills motivated employees and urged high levels of commitment to their organizations. In other words, organizations' training practices influence how employees realize the opportunity their organizations offer them for career development and growth. This interpreted the significant correlation they found between perceived training effectiveness and employees' motivation and commitment.

Studies by Tawalbeh (2015) and Malik et al. (2015) examined perceived training effectiveness of development programs in higher education institutions. Tawalbeh applied more comprehensive measurements as he examined instructors' perceptions of development programs effectiveness (10 items 4-likert scale), reasons behind their opinions and perceptions, and then their suggestions to improve professional development programs. Malik et al. examined perceived training effectiveness by focusing on respondents' opinions of the impact of the development programs they received on certain aspects of their job performance, which made their measurements closer to the Kirkpatrick's model.

Organizational environment also captured researchers' interests to examine independent factors affecting perceived training effectiveness. According to Schumaker (2004), a positive organizational environment can enhance perceived training effectiveness by providing incentives such as paying for training, enhancing training transfer (opportunity for incorporating ideas/skills learned in training), and encouraging a collaborative work culture. While the "Motivation for training" factor is related to the trainees, including "direction, effort, intensity, and persistence that trainees apply to learning-oriented activities before, during, and after training," the "relevance of the information or concepts delivered in training to the needs of the trainee" relates to the trainer and the training program itself. This includes the "demonstration of knowledge, skills, to be learned; creation of opportunities for trainees to practice the skills." (Schumaker, 2004, pp. 52–53).

Based on the above literature, this study examines Egyptian journalists' perceptions of perceived training effectiveness by applying the conceptualizations proposed by the MHT, and Kirkpatrick's Model as follows:

- The "*Reactions*" level: how satisfied journalists are about the PJT they received, their perceptions of how beneficial the attended training was, and their opinions about how professional the training was.
- The "*Behavior changes*" or "*Training transfer*": "journalists" evaluation of the attended training outcomes' on their practice in matter of importance and relevance (Borate et al., 2014; Sahni, 2020; Schumaker, 2004).
- The "*Results*" level: journalists' perceptions on how the training they received was beneficial for their job practices, productivity, satisfaction toward their journalistic products, and their digital journalism skills.

Motivation Factors include: a. "job attitude" or the work itself (willingness to decide to work in journalism) and

journalist's attitude and loyalty toward the profession itself (Flores & Subervi, 2014; Judge et al., 2017; Viererbl & Koch, 2021), *b.* "advancement and upskill efforts and activities done by the journalist" (e.g., participation and enrollment in professional media forums, attending PJT, openness to non-traditional sources for training, keeping track of innovative media practices), (Aziz, 2013; Singh & Sharma, 2021). *c.* "growth and professional development" (journalists' attitudes toward PJT as an opportunity for upskilling journalism competencies, the perceived importance of PJT for practicing journalism, journalists' perceptions of the expected efficiency of training' (Flores & Subervi, 2014; Tawalbeh, 2015).

According to Nicholls (2010), Knuppel (2015), and McKay (2020), "advancement" is a short-term goal to get more challenging job opportunities to move up within the organization, while career development is a long-term process of learning and exploring, and is related to one's whole career goals. Hence, the advancement factor in this study is linked to promotion in the media organization journalists work in, and whether they think the PJT helps them to achieve their short-term goals. The career development factor was linked to journalists' awareness of the available opportunities to improve their professional knowledge and skills and their interest in future training.

Hygiene Factors include: *a.* "workplace and institutional policies" (perceived impact of PJT on career promotion) based on the work of Malik et al. (2015), *b.* "professional support" (training and development programs offered to journalists by their media organizations, and actual opportunities journalists have to fully apply their gained journalistic skills (Sahinidis & Bouris, 2008; Viererbl & Koch, 2021), *c.* "interpersonal relations" with peers and managers (cooperation and competition with peers, the encouragement and recognition they receive from their managers in respect to PJT), *d.* "working conditions" (daily workload and whether it makes it possible to join PJT courses), *e.* "professionalism of training" (how qualified the trainers and the novelty of training themes), *f.* "Financial resources" (wages/institutional budget for PJT and/or covering the cost of their training fees when journalists attend outsourced training, incentives are offered to journalists in this regard).

Journalism Professional Training (PJT)

There is a distinction between journalism education and journalism training. The former refers to academic programs for students that introduce norms and theories that govern journalism. The latter is continuous education to adapt journalists' skills to work in a constantly evolving field and face enormous digital challenges by empowering them with technical training. Some overlap exists between the two concepts (Deuze, 2006; Du & Lo,

2014). Previous researchers have examined journalism training and education highlighting the differences between them (Dube, 2013; Hoxha & Andresen, 2017). Gibbs et al. (2004) identified training as the teaching of a particular skill or type of behavior through regular practice and instruction. According to them, any training should involve some specific performance and/or skill that should be practiced and mastered.

Contemporary studies have been discussing the different categorizations of journalism training according to the type of targeted and acquired skills. However, journalism training aims to teach skills that help improve professional practices and media technology skills. Journalism training also teaches a varied set of competencies due to their interdisciplinary approach. Training thus can be divided into three types: on-the-job training, off-the-job training, and distance training (Ju & Li, 2019). Early research has suggested that five journalism training objectives are to: improve job skills, prepare for new assignments, provide job enrichment, prepare for special assignments or the handling of special projects, and renew employees' enthusiasm (Becker et al., 2004).

Burgh (2003) and Dube (2013) distinguished between the two types of journalism training: training for transferable skills, and training for vocational skills. Transferable skills include research and investigation, information verification and assessment, communication skills, precision journalism, prioritization of newsworthiness, and the ability to interpret information. Vocational skills include analysis and construction of news stories, professional production, operating skills, production management, interviewing skills, teamwork, meeting deadlines, using technology, and understanding the audience, market, and genre.

As advanced technologies have become widely used in newsrooms, the ability to master their use in all types of media production is now a vital skill required by every journalist. Posetti (2018) argued that journalism innovation is broadly seen as a different way of doing things depending on digital technologies that support journalism practices. However, the status of PJT that focuses on technologies has not been fully covered by previous studies, especially in Arab countries. Accordingly, journalism training in this study encompasses all types of training in innovative journalism practices offered to Egyptian journalists, whether to improve their traditional professional skills, or to acquire new and innovative skills compatible with digital era.

PJT in Global South

The study of PJT, especially in Global South and different Arab countries, share consensus over journalists' need for quality training and lack of training budget in

media outlets (Allan, 2014; El-Ibiary, 2020; Hoxha & Andresen, 2017; Ileri, 2018; Rowlands & Khosla, 2014; Salawu, 2019; Twaissi et al., 2015). The study of journalists' professional career development has been examined in relation to other variables, such as newspaper content deterioration, lack of professionalism, job satisfaction (Flores & Subervi, 2014) and training validity (Becker et al., 2004; Dube, 2013; Gibbs et al., 2004).

Findings reveal similar challenges related to the weakness of journalism education system, in different countries such as: South Africa (Dube, 2013), Kosovo (Hoxha & Andresen, 2017), and Uzbekistan (Dadakhonov, 2019), in addition to a the lack of training facilities, especially in electronic media (Ileri, 2018). According to Khalid (2019), deterioration of journalists' educational background is one of the main reasons for the declining quality of news in Pakistani news media. Salawu (2019) reviewed PJT trends in several African countries, and he emphasized the need for PJT for journalists, especially in new media. Researchers called for radical reform of journalistic education and training models to raise journalists' skills and competencies.

A similar scene is detected in the Arab countries where journalism education is not a prerequisite for joining the profession. According to Weaver and Willnat's (2012) survey across 33 nations, most journalists in Arab countries have college degrees unrelated to journalism, while only 22% majored in journalism, and 24% had no PJT before being hired as journalists (Weaver & Willnat, 2012, p. 433). Working conditions was another common factor that negatively affected the quality of journalism training in Jordan (Twaissi et al., 2015) and Algeria (Bouchikh, 2014). Findings revealed that respondents evaluated the PJT offered to them as either low or medium quality. PJT challenges also included unskilled trainers, low budgets, lack of coordination between media organizations and training providers, lack of clear institutional training strategy, and absence of any independent national organizations responsible for PJT. Surveyed journalists also mentioned: low wages, lack of encouragement and recognition given to distinguished journalists, and working under stress without any appreciation.

Similarly, El-Sebaey (2018) used a total quality management approach to assess Egyptian newspapers performance and revealed that journalists' promotion and their distribution in different departments in their media organizations did not follow any fair or clear criteria in several Egyptian media organizations. Moreover, the study indicated the absence of a quality management unit in the sample majority, which would negatively affect the overall working conditions.

International and regional journalism organizations deployed their efforts to reskill African journalists and close this journalism training deficiency in Global South.

To increase journalistic professionalism in Jordan, UNESCO published a comprehensive assessment of the media landscape. The report recommended that training organizers should respond to the real needs of the media sector (UNESCO Office in Amman, 2015). Arab *Reporters for Investigative Journalism* (ARIJ) was one of the successful pioneer institutionalized PJT and coaching programs in the MENA region, which has challenged journalism practice in the Arab world since 1995, and promoted investigative reporting through training workshops, coaching, and funding (Bebawi, 2016).

According to Jallof (2005), several PJT efforts that were implemented in Palestine through collaborations between local universities and international partners, and the post-training report of the Palestinian Journalist Training Project during 1996–2005, revealed that the training program was relevant, effective, efficient, cost effective, and had strengthened local ownership of ideas, ideals, and activities in both of its two components: the establishment of a media institute and the creation of a quality PJT. The outcomes of the PJT offered to Palestinian journalists were effective, especially in investigative journalism and editing skills.

Meanwhile, other researchers have examined the need to reskill Arab journalists from a different perspective. They focused on factors affecting Arab journalists' performance in certain journalistic roles, especially in Arab countries that face unstable and insecure circumstances, such as Iraq and Palestine. Relly et al. (2015) examined the influence of Iraqi journalists' attitudes toward government information access. Their findings partially supported the hypothesis that Western news media training positively influenced Iraqi journalists' watchdog role and highlighted the importance of following the effects of Western news media training on journalists' attitudes and performance, whether in Iraq or any other country with political and societal unrest and complicated histories of oppression.

However, Bebawi (2021) argues that Arab journalists are increasingly moving away from traditional Western models of training due to a tightly monitored Arab media landscape, and that they seek training programs that take into consideration the political, cultural, and social work environment. Implementing Western models of PJT in Arab countries such as the Deutsche Welle Academy (*DWA*) training project in Egypt, *Women's Voices*, showed limited impact due to the tight media environment and the variety of laws stifling media freedom and media development projects. El-Ibiary (2020), however, mentioned that this training fulfilled small-scale goals, such as developing the professional skills of women journalists, enhancing gender-sensitive reporting, using state-of-the-art technology, and engaging local communities.

Problems in Journalism Industry in Egypt

Since the nationalization of Egypt's journalism industry in 1960, media outlets have depended on government subsidies and advertisements for funding. Both have started to decrease in the past few years due to the country's political and economic circumstances, resulting in unsustainable revenue models which experience minimal growth due to a constant decline in readership.

After the January 25th revolution, there has been a lack of diversified types of Egyptian media ownership. This led to a functional distortion of the media, from being a means of conveying information and facts to the citizens to a means of propaganda to support specific policies (El-Masry, 2014). Moreover, Egyptian journalists faced insecure work conditions and poor personal safety during the clashes and political troubles. This political climate affected the diversification of news media coverage and led the Egyptian media to become "obsolete, rigid organizational structures that do not reflect the dynamic and evolving journalism practice culture" (Badr, 2022).

During this transformation period, according to El-Issawi (2014), some Egyptian journalists were lobbying to improve their working conditions regardless of the political agenda of the contemporary government, while other journalists were lobbying for editorial independence from political power, but this was not reflected in professional structures and often led to a disorganized expression of personal views and beliefs in support of the January 25th revolution.

According to Allam (2018), the main problem with state-owned newspapers was the lack of real competition between newspaper organizations or reporters, and readers consider them as mouthpieces of the government. Moreover, El-Masry (2014) highlighted that this institutional situation led to unfair career advancement and growth for journalists, while serving the regime became a valuable criterion for promotion.

Nowadays, Egyptian state-owned print media are experiencing low circulation and overstaffing, and have accumulated significant debt (Badr, 2022). Despite financial losses, journalists in state-owned media have been secure against layoffs owing to the high political cost of taking such a decision. Private media journalists have high workloads and struggle against job insecurity due to "major layoffs and shutdowns of enterprises since 2014"; party newspapers were also struggling to survive (Badr, 2021, p. 226).

Financial Challenges

Egyptian newspaper organizations adopted a business model that is challenged by declining circulation and

rapid decline and migration of advertising revenues. While Egyptian state-owned journalism entities are subsidized by government, recent reports indicate that their debt surpasses 19 billion Egyptian pounds, a huge amount that the government needs to write off (Gomaa, 2019). This economic crisis has resulted in low wages for journalists, and many need to seek second jobs (El-Masry, 2014).

According to Wassel (2017), financial challenges have negative impacts on the editorial decision in the Egyptian newspapers, leading to a fall back in the role of social responsibility for the newspapers, as well as a relapse of coverage for the interest of the readers. Meanwhile they tend to focus on serving interests of advertisers, against the professional norms and values of journalism.

Media Regulation in Egypt

In 2016, the Supreme Council for Media Regulation (SCMR) was established to ensure that media institutions and journalists adhered to the principles and ethics of the profession. Outlining the SCMR's impact on PJT, Magdy (2018) reported the SCMR's announcement of mandatory training sessions in "media and national security" for editors-in-chief of Egyptian newspapers and websites, offered by ex-military officers in the Nasser Military Academy.

According to Sakr (2016), journalism in Egypt is characterized by self-censorship. Criticizing authority contradicts many practices of Egyptian newspapers because state-owned newspaper policies avoid comments that, according to state officials, could harm Egypt's stability or reputation. According to Article 14, law No180 of year 2018, it is forbidden to publish any material likely to cause disputes among different religious groups, create social confusion, or criticize the values and traditions of Arab and Egyptian societies. This could explain why most Egyptian journalists exercise self-censorship and do not conduct investigative reporting that may cause conflict (Sakr, 2016).

Institutional Challenges

Egyptian journalists face several challenges that affect their opportunities to improve their professional skills. El-Issawi (2014) documented that most local journalists operate without either official recognition or protection; by law, it is forbidden for any media outlet to hire a journalist not registered with the Egyptian Journalists Syndicate (EJS). However, a considerable number of young journalists cannot register because of the tough conditions they face, as "the Syndicate limits its membership to journalists who have considerable published works and experience," (El-Issawi, 2014, p. 22).

Egyptian media outlets, especially state-owned media, follow a central management model for their decision-making process and prevent Egyptian journalists from getting involved in editorial decisions, which affects overall Egyptian journalistic performance (Tawfiq, 2018; Wassel, 2017). Personal relations between journalists and their managers affect editorial decision making in Egyptian newspapers, according to Wassel (2017). He revealed that these personal relations could determine what is published and what is not, and even lead to the publishing of some articles, despite their lack of quality.

Media outlets in Egypt lost much of their credibility, because their coverage focuses on news consistent with government protocols, and journalists are seen by audience as government mouthpieces who propagate government policies without much accuracy and fact-checking (Allam, 2019). Gomaa (2019) reported that the Egyptian journalism industry is facing a severe crisis due to lack of credibility and influence compared to social media, sharp drop in distribution figures, and decline in advertising revenues. Additionally, the status quo of Egyptian journalism has deteriorated due to a lack of in-house training programs, low salaries, and the absence of fair career advancement (El-Masry, 2014).

Organizing PJT could be the way out of this dilemma. This requires developing news content that addresses the real needs and interests of young generation readers, and implementing up-to-date and innovative journalism practice.

Digitization and Training Challenges

Badr (2022) highlighted the rapid changes in journalism over the last two decades as the print industry lost readers to news websites. This diminished its revenue from advertising as advertisers shifted to other media, especially online outlets. Digitization challenges affected both journalism work and Egyptian newspaper outlets and have impacted the way journalists publish stories on several platforms. There is a rapidly emerging need for rapid adaptation to new technology to develop content and readership on these different platforms. This requires various new skills in gathering and verifying information from different sources (Spilsbury, 2014).

Struggling to adapt to the digital era, Mansour (2018) enumerated Egyptian journalists' challenges while using social media as the lack of know-how to cite sources, lack of credibility of the news source and lack of quality of available information sources, lack of language skills needed for using social media, and lack of technical skills needed to use social media.

Previously, several international journalism training providers offered training to Egyptian journalists, such as USAID's Media Development Project, the Knight

Foundation, Reuters Foundation, Thomson Foundation, Friedrich Naumann Foundation, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, BBC World Service Trust, Jemstone Center, International Center for Journalists (ICJ), and The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Foundation (Hamdy, 2009). In 2013, these providers were forced to shut their offices or move to other Arab capitals when they were accused of working illegally in Egypt (Gorzewski, 2016; Tynes, 2013). Several professional Egyptian trainers were also accused of working with unlicensed organizations (Osnos, 2013). In the same context, the Deutsche Welle Akademie in Egypt, which offered basic media skills training (news writing, feature writing, language skills, and technological training, e.g., video journalism, mobile journalism, photo-journalism, and entrepreneurial and journalism business-related training, including media management and media viability) for Egyptian journalists, had to terminate their training activities in Egypt (El-Ibiary, 2020).

Based on this theoretical framework, this study examines Egyptian journalists' perceptions of the effectiveness and validity of the PJT offered to them. The main objective is to examine the perceptions of journalists toward perceived training effectiveness. This means that we can measure trainees' perceptions of training effectiveness based on the extent the training they had received, met their needs.

Research Questions

To address the importance of providing up-to-date PJT for Egyptian journalists, a training process roadmap was not available, and the factors affecting its sufficiency were unclear. Consequently, this study proposed the following research questions:

1. What are the needs of the Egyptian journalists' in professional training in digital journalism?
2. To what extent do Egyptian journalists perceive the effectiveness of the professional training they receive in digital journalism?
3. What are the motivation and hygiene factors influencing the perceived effectiveness of professional training in digital journalism?

Methodology

This study combines qualitative and quantitative methods to identify factors that influence Egyptian journalists' perceptions of PJT. Researchers collected data through semi-structured in-depth interviews, and a 17-item online questionnaire to gain a deep understanding of the Egyptian media training environment.

There was a lack of accurate records of Egyptian journalists as they often worked through media outlets without EJS licenses. A snowball non-probability sample was appropriate for surveying and interviewing Egyptian journalists.

Sampling

The study applies an exponential non-discriminative snowball sampling technique. Researchers started by preparing a list of primary data sources of Egyptian journalists who: *a.* hold an Egyptian nationality, *b.* currently live in Egypt and are full-time workers in one or more Egyptian media organizations and *c.* successfully passed at least 2 PJT courses during the past 3 years.

Researchers prepared a primary list of 35 journalists' emails based on their approval to contribute to the survey. A list of journalists who participated in the *Arab Data Journalists Network* (ADJN) survey conducted in 2017 was used, as those journalists had already passed at least more than one PJT.

Then, an invitation was emailed to the primary list of journalists, asking them to participate in the survey, and to provide the researchers with referrals according to the criteria mentioned above. An invitation was also sent to the list of journalists through Facebook messenger to their personal accounts. One week later, a reminder which included an invitation to participate in a structured interview after responding to the survey, was emailed. Only 134 of the invited journalists answered the survey with a 71.6% overall response rate. The received responses confirming their acceptance to participate in the structure interview were limited to only 15 out of the total sample of respondents.

Finally, eight participants were selected to be interviewed based on having higher numbers of training courses passed during the last 3 years and more than 10 years of job tenure. Only two of the contacted trainers were reached.

Data Collection Tools

Using Google forms, the study deployed an online questionnaire that examined journalists' perceptions of training effectiveness (Q8, Q15, Q16), needs (Q11), satisfaction (Q12, Q17), and value/benefit/results (Q10, Q14).

Structured in-depth interviews were conducted after revising the initial survey results. The interview guide focused on topics such as training availability, effectiveness, quality, applicability, and challenges.

The study applied the thematic analysis in examining the interview transcripts structure to extract themes related to the interview guide topics. This analysis method enabled us to identify common themes, topics,

ideas, and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly. It allows for connections between the statements of various interviewees centered around the topics outlined in the interview guide, as well as identifying emerging unanticipated themes (Guest et al., 2012).

The interviews were conducted using a deductive analytical methodology, adhering to a pre-established framework. Based on the study goals and initial observations derived from the results, we established themes in advance of the analysis.

After preparing the transcripts (in Arabic), we went through each transcript and identify any intuitive emerging themes. Subsequently, a meticulous examination of each transcript was conducted, wherein the identification and correlation of relevant content within the transcripts to the aforementioned themes were systematically carried out. We reviewed and revised the themes to ensure that there is enough data to support each theme. Themes that did not have enough supporting data were removed; sub-themes were merged with other main themes.

Interviewees' responses were compared to the survey results with respect to the main categories of the analysis. The study emphasized the similarities and distinctions seen in the survey and interview findings, which were further analyzed and substantiated by direct quotes from the interview participants. The analysis of the interview data provided a comprehensive understanding and interpretation of the quantitative findings.

Respondents

The sample consisted of 134 respondents: 58.2% male and 41.8% female. The majority had significant work experience: 52.2% had over 10 years of work experience, 31.3% had worked for 5 to 10 years, while only 9% had less than 3 years of work experience. The majority of the sample (71%) had a degree in communication studies, 23% had a degree in humanities, and 7% had a degree in computer sciences or natural sciences. Respondents represented multiple age groups, with 56.7% between 31 and 40 years, 13.4% between 41 and 50 years, and 26.9% between 22 and 30 years.

Interviewees

A purposely selected sample of 10 journalists (including two professional media trainers) was interviewed. They represented varied journalistic specializations and work experiences in different Egyptian media outlets (see Table 1). Semi-structured interviews were conducted via phone calls or Zoom meetings. The in-depth interviews were based on open-ended questions about problems faced in journalistic PJT in Egypt, benefits and challenges

Table I. Interview Sample Characteristics.

No.	Job	Gender	Journalism beat
Interviewee (1)	Editor in both print newspaper and newscast in private TV channel.	Male	Crime news
Interviewee (2)	Editor and board member of the Egyptian Journalism Syndicate.	Male	Editor-in-Chief of online website
Interviewee (3)	Editor and journalism trainer	Male	Content developer and Quality assurance
Interviewee (4)	Editor and board member of the Egyptian Journalism Syndicate	Male	Education
Interviewee (5)	Editor	Female	Investigative report
Interviewee (6)	Editor in both print newspaper and newscast in private TV channel.	Male	Government & Presidency affairs
Interviewee (7)	Editor	Female	Women & investigative reports
Interviewee (8)	Editor	Female	Investigative reporter
Interviewee (9)	Editor, digital media advisor, media trainer in several Arab countries, and co-founder of Radio Rozana	Female	Radio and Online media editor.
Interviewee (10)	Professional trainer and training coordinator	Female	coordinator in international training provider.

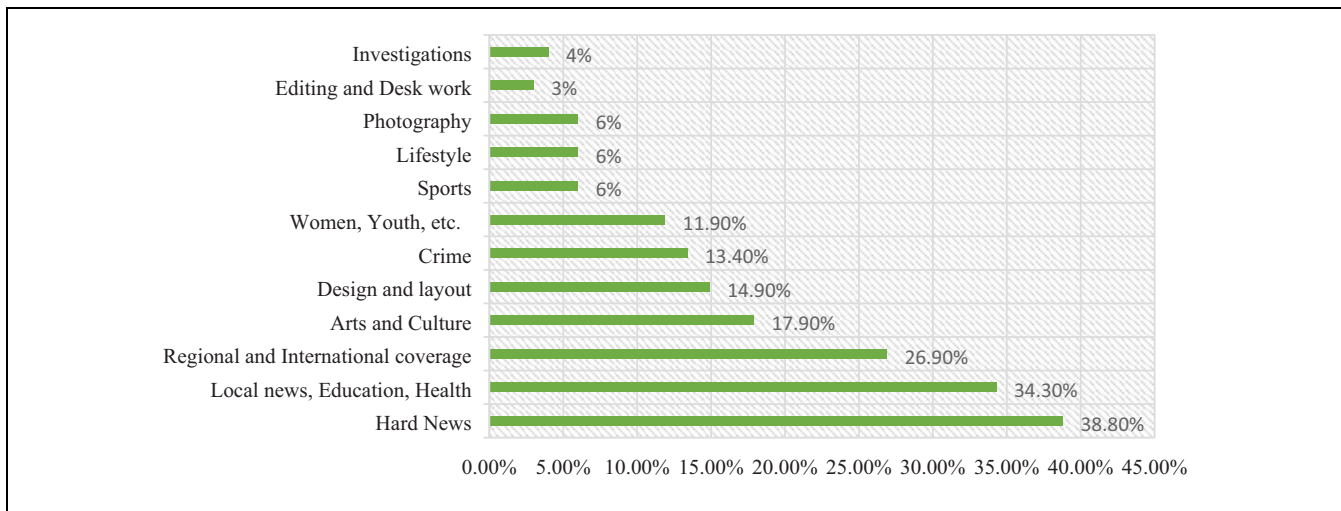


Figure 1. Respondents' fields of journalism beats.

of the available PJT, and participants' suggestions for improving the outcome of this training in Egypt.

Results

Results from the survey and in-depth interviews reflected a recurring theme of the respondents' perceptions about the training courses offered to journalists in Egypt. PJT in Egypt, like the profession, is experiencing many challenges.

Specialization of Journalistic Practice

Respondents' journalism beats varied: 38.8% reported on politics, parliament, and economic news; 34.3% covered other local issues such as education and health; and 17.9% reported on culture, arts, and literature. A total of 26.9% reported on Arabic and international political issues, 14.9% worked as graphic designers, 13.4%

reported on crime, 6% were photojournalists, and 6% covered sports. Only 1.5% of the respondents specialized in investigative reporting, lifestyle journalism, or legal issues (Figure 1).

Respondents' Job Attitude

Most of the respondents were highly satisfied with being journalists, as 95% emphasized that working in journalism was a fully desired decision, and 82% of them had a positive vision of, and strong loyalty to, their profession, with a sense of "belonging" to the industry. The majority of the respondents, 70.1%, exhibited active participation and enrollment in local, regional, or international professional media forums. Moreover, 58.2% kept track of innovative local and international media practices to maintain personal development by acquiring latest updates regarding international journalism practice.

Unlike previous results of Weaver and Willnat (2012), this study found that the majority of respondents (71%) had a degree in communication studies, which can be interpreted by the large number of academic entities offering communication degree in Egypt since 1930s (Allam, 2019). In addition to the increasing number of journalism and mass communication schools during the last two decades, some of the Egyptian media outlets entered the field of academic education by establishing private journalism schools and thus prioritizing employment to graduates of their own private schools.

Journalists' Perceptions of Training Effectiveness

Concerning the perceived training effectiveness, most of the respondents reflected a positive attitude; 88% confirmed that training workshops had upskilled their professional reporting, and 11.9% disagreed.

Despite the many challenges faced by Egyptian media outlets, respondents' perceptions and evaluations of the training they had received were positive, despite showing concern about their impact on their career advancement.

Eighty-five percent of the respondents mentioned that practicing journalism required ongoing training and professional development, 94% were aware of their continuous need for PJT to update their skills, 94% considered that the professional skills they had gained from their work experience were not sufficient without further training, and 58% reported that their media outlets encouraged continuous PJT. This result indicates the gap between how Egyptian journalists perceived the importance of PJT and how their media outlets underestimate or neglect their needs. This could be interpreted in the wider context of the financial challenges facing most Egyptian media outlets, and the central management model that marginalizes journalists' participation in the decision-making process (Tawfiq, 2018; Wassel, 2017).

Although 76.1% of the respondents expected that PJT would support their career promotion, interviewees highly doubted that training would help in this regard. This result indicates how institutional policies affect journalists' performance. This was also consistent with previous research revealing that promotion criteria were unclear in many Egyptian media outlets as it depended on the top management's consideration (Wassel, 2017).

Almost 51% of the respondents agreed that their training was effective, 31.3% thought it was to some extent effective, 8.9% perceived it as ineffective, and 8.9% could not evaluate its effectiveness. In addition, 50% of the respondents pointed out that most of the training courses they attended were valuable, while 35% said they were not. This result is consistent with Ileri's (2018) results on PJT in Kenya but contradicts Twaissi

et al. (2015) results regarding Jordanian journalists' evaluation of the PJT they received.

However, although training offered to Egyptian journalists is still able to upskill journalists, our results do not indicate that they have received sufficient PJT, and there is no guarantee that recipients practice the skills gained, as real practice is tied to other factors, such as work conditions, managers' encouragement, and institutional policies.

Satisfaction With PJT

Most of the respondents were somewhat satisfied with the training they received and their professional skill levels, especially skills related to using technologies in journalism practice, while they were not fully satisfied with the training system in their media outlets.

Only 13.4% were extremely satisfied with the PJT they received, while 52.2% were satisfied to some extent and 27.9% were extremely unsatisfied. Additionally, results reveal that 52.2% of the respondents were, to some extent, satisfied with the experience and skills they had in using digital technologies in their work, and 35.2% of them were unsatisfied with the media outlets' policies concerning PJT (Figure 2).

This emphasizes the impact of hygiene factors on the overall effectiveness of journalism training. It is not enough to provide journalists with high quality PJT; it should meet their needs and expectations, and be linked to clear career advance requirements, while recognition should be given to skilled journalists.

Effectiveness of Digital PJT

The results reveal the perceived effectiveness of technologies in journalism practice by the majority of respondents with 94% acknowledging that the use of technology is mandatory in journalism and a requirement for future progress through the adoption of the latest technologies.

Notably, 65.6% indicated that they could not fully understand and use the technologies relevant to journalism practice without specialized training, while 16.4% stated that they could use these technologies without PJT. Regarding whether they could learn how to use new technologies without PJT, 28.3% disagreed, 16.4% agreed, 41.7% slightly agreed, and 13.4% indicated that they did not know.

This result highlights the extreme need for PJT on using technologies in journalism practice, and that digitization challenges have an impact on journalism in Egyptian media outlets. While there is an increasing trend for rapid adaption to new technologies in newsrooms (Badr, 2022), journalists both need and seek PJT on using these technologies. This reflects the gap between

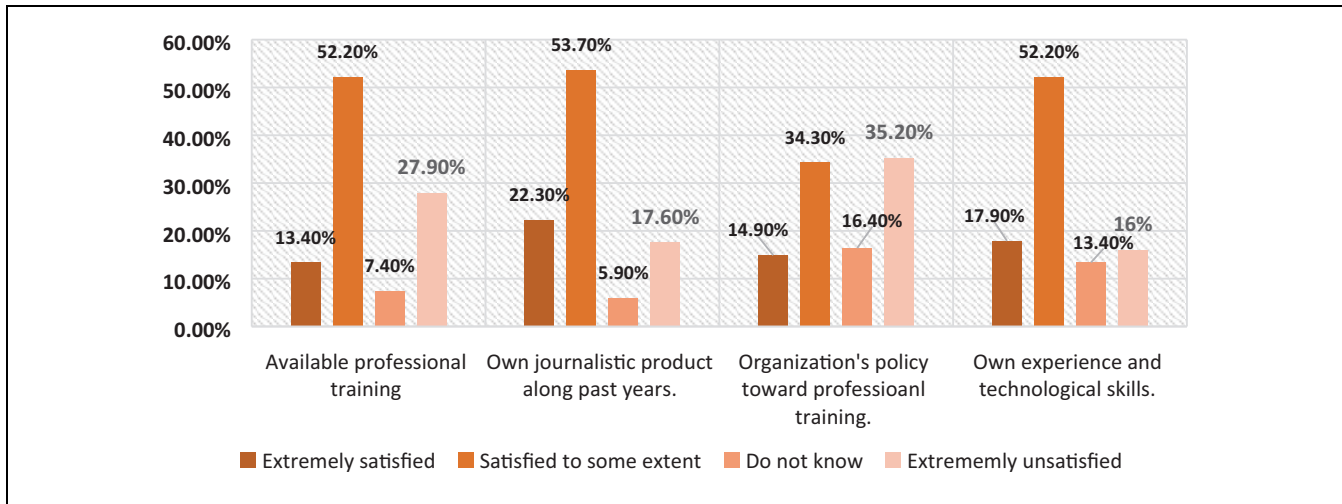


Figure 2. Respondents' satisfaction with PJT.

what journalists need and what their media outlets prioritize. This shows that Egyptian media outlets invest less in reporting quality.

Factors Affecting Perceived Training Effectiveness

Workplace Impact. Approximately 68.7% of the respondents considered that workplace and institutional policies had a big impact on the effectiveness of PJT in Egypt, while 67.1% did not believe that Egyptian media organizations supported or encouraged them to complete training.

Although most Egyptian media outlets have in-house journalism training centers, several do not offer PJT to improve journalists' skills. Survey results revealed that 19% of the respondents confirmed that their current employers were not interested in providing training, and 59.7% mentioned that their daily workloads made it impossible to enroll in PJT courses. Similarly, 83.5% considered that their work environments prevented them from fully using their journalistic skills, and 31.3% were unaware regarding training offered by their media outlet. Allam (2019) reported a similar remark about disagreement to the quality of the media in-house training programs and their ability to supply the Egyptian media market with journalists competent to operate effectively in today's media environment.

Additionally, 79.1% of the respondents indicated that their media employers had no training budget and did not subsidize their training fees when they attended outsourced training. In addition, 76.1% said that their media outlets did not host in-house training courses for their staff. Interviewee (4) referred to the financial problems:

Our media outlets don't have a training budget nor [do they] subsidize us to attend journalism training courses

When asked if they believed that attending PJT would support their promotion, 28.3% of the respondents said they did not; however, 25.3% believed it would be beneficial. This may help explain why journalists sometimes attended inefficient training courses. It also reflects the inconsistency in how Egyptian media outlets deal with the issue of PJT; they do not provide enough support yet include training qualifications in their promotion criteria.

Interviewee (6), who worked in two different full-time jobs, shared a similar concern:

Promotion criteria in media outlets in Egypt have nothing to do with gaining new skills or even work professionalism; it is about having a good relationship with the authorities and bosses, and it was never related to attending training or improving journalism skills

Low wages was another institutional factor that affected journalists' ability to attend PJT courses, and interviewee (2) also commented:

Journalists' working conditions and low wages force many journalists to work in two full-time jobs at the same time, like news editors for private TV channels, to raise their income, which means 18 hours daily just to have a reliable income

A recurrent term among some journalists was the lack of time and work stress, as interviewee (8) pointed out:

Journalists' managers never allow us to receive a reduction in working hours or a sabbatical leave to attend a training course, so it becomes hard to attend or complete a training course

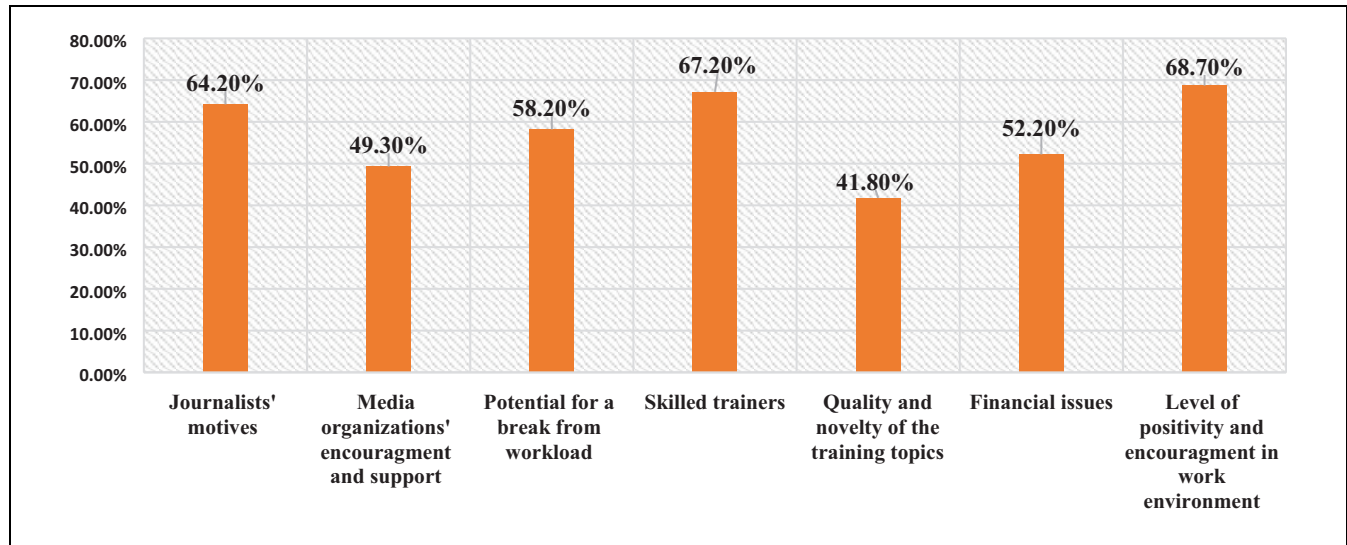


Figure 3. Factors affecting perceived training effectiveness.

Interviewee (9) highlighted the negative impact of the workplace context in many Egyptian media outlets.

I noticed that most of the trainees do their best to apply the skills they gain from the PJT. However, this is still a challenge, as it is affected by the whole context they are working in. The PJT is just a beginning [...] One of the most important factors that affect how journalists can practice the new skills they gain from PJT is how much their managers and senior journalists accept new ideas and encourage them. The institutional working environment has a strong impact, whether positive or negative

This was consistent with the observation of interviewee (10), who emphasized the negative impact of boundaries created by rules and regulations of the media outlets where journalists worked, whether those limits were related to freedom of expression or the availability of technology. This result was consistent with Bebawi's (2016) remark that there is a need to change journalistic culture, as editors do not support or appreciate changes in traditional journalism practice.

The findings support previous research that indicated that one of the most prominent problems faced by journalists in Egypt was the lack of management interest in their training and development of their skills, and that favoritism and personal relationships with higher administrative staff were at the forefront of promotion criteria (El-Sebaey, 2018). Findings also support Bouchikh (2014), who found that the negative workplace impact expands to both newspaper content deterioration and lack of professionalism.

According to 68.7% of the respondents, positivity and encouragement in the working environment were

important factors affecting the effectiveness of PJT. Qualified trainers was another important factor that the majority of the respondents claimed it influenced their decision to undertake PJT. Furthermore, 58.2% mentioned that the potential to take a break from their workload would help them optimize the benefits from PJT, 52.2% said that financial issues also had an impact on their ability to join journalism training, and 49.3% mentioned that their managers' encouragement regarding training had a significant impact (Figure 3).

Self-Motivation Impact. Represented by 91% of the respondents, willingness to attend PJT was mainly driven by self-motivation, while 64.2% considered that self-motivation allowed them to truly engage in and benefit from a PJT. Moreover, 49.2% clarified that, due to the lack of training, they often asked their colleagues to teach them new skills. Responses also revealed that 58.2% of the respondents were not familiar with free Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), although they were interested in using them to improve their professional skills.

The data indicate a positive attitude toward training as an opportunity for upskilling journalism competencies for 83.3% of the respondents, while 88% realized an improvement in their work after attending PJT courses. Additionally, 59.7% reported that journalists who worked in digital news outlets were more interested in training than their peers in print media. Interviewee (7) explained that:

MOOCs could be an opportunity for self-development as they offer continuing education for journalists in Egypt, but the language barrier prevents their proliferation as most of them are

unavailable in Arabic, so Egyptian journalists can't benefit from this type of education

Despite the obvious impact of the self-motivation factor, Egyptian journalists, especially women, faced contextual challenges that prevented them from joining PJT, as interviewee (10) mentioned:

Some women journalists, especially from upper Egypt, had problems in joining training because either male boss, father or husband refused to let her spend a week in Cairo to attend a training

Respondents were found to be informed of several entities providing PJT; (55.2%) recognized the American University in Cairo, (50.7%) marked Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism Association ARIJ, (43.3%) were informed of International Journalists' Network, (29.9%) knew about College of Mass Communication at Cairo University, (28.4%) went for Arab Data Journalists' Network, and (16.4%) checked Info Times company as a journalism training provider.

When asked to state their experience in attending online PJT, 58.2% of the respondents expressed that they never experienced any kind of online PJT, although they wanted to, while 20.9% said they had previously attended online PJT and considered the experience pleasant and helpful. However, 11.9% had experienced it before with minimal benefit, and 4.5% of the respondents who had experienced online PJT said that they were unwilling to repeat it. Finally, 4.5% of the respondents had no interest in online training.

A repeated theme cited during the in-depth interviews was that training entities rarely offered high-quality training courses. There are several reasons for this. For example, interviewee (3) stated:

Training program curricula tackle some basic journalism skills, like information gathering and news editing, which professional and veteran journalists don't need anymore. Training programs provided by media entities and the EJS seem to be (formulaic) and don't offer training that journalists need

Interviewee (5) added that the main problem with the training offered by professional entities or in-house centers was mainly related to lack of organization:

Sometimes trainers are not qualified enough to deliver their colleagues high-quality training as they are chosen based on a personal relationship, or they are well-known in the journalism field for their good relationship with the authorities

Respondents expressed some skepticism about the misuse of funds by international journalism training providers. Interviewee (1) commented:

International journalism training providers collaborate with the EJS to offer training courses, but sometimes these international funds are misused by their local partners. For example, allocating a budget of two hundred thousand Egyptian pounds for catering while only compensating the trainer with 300 EGP

Interviewee (10), a journalism training coordinator for DW, indicated that selecting professional trainers depends on their expertise and previous training experience

A previous training experience was necessary. However, in the first stage of Women's Voices, a selection of the best trainees was chosen to receive TOT (train the trainers) so that they could become trainers afterwards.

PJT Themes

Respondents ranked the most beneficial training they had received in the following order: news editing for print media (61.1%), media coverage (50.7%), interview techniques (47.7%), news verification (41.7%), online news editing (35.8%), editing for social media (29.8%), editing for social media (29.8%), mobile journalism (26.8%), photojournalism (23.8%), layout (20.8%), conflicts and war coverage (22.3%), investigative journalism (22.3%), and specialized journalism (19.4%), data journalism (16.4%),

Required PJT Topics

PJT is in high demand because the emerging changes in media practice require new skills to deal with technological innovations, such as mobile journalism and multimedia platform reporting. Respondents indicated their requirements for training courses to focus on the topics identified in the following Figure 4.

Figure 4 shows that video editing and writing for interactive media are the most desired training topics.

During the in-depth interviews, we asked interviewees to elaborate on their journalistic training needs. Interviewee (5) stated:

We seek training courses and workshops that improve our technological skills in newsgathering, verification, and editing for multimedia platforms. Training centers rarely offer training in mobile journalism, data journalism, or investigative journalism, even though [training in] such topics are highly needed and are offered in other Arab countries such as Tunisia and Jordan

Interviewee (4) also noted that organizing short-period training for 2 or 3 days was insufficient to transfer the trainer's practical experience to the trainees or to follow how they would implement the acquired skills, while regular workload prevented journalists from fully

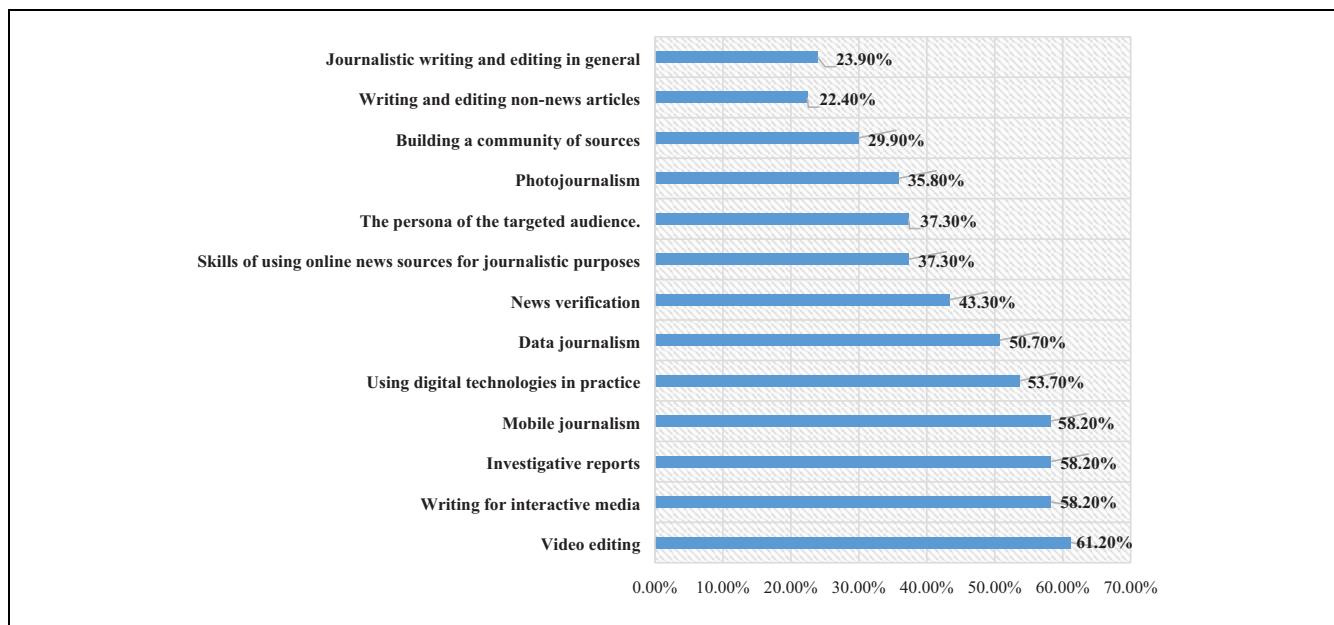


Figure 4. Required training topics.

engaging in long training courses or practicing the skills they gained in training.

Interviewee (7) revealed his concern saying:

In-house journalism training centers and private journalism training centers offer training to gain profits, so they target fresh graduates who dream of getting a chance to join the media profession.

Discussion

This study surveyed and interviewed a small number of journalists in Egypt, yet was able to provide indicators of journalists' perceptions of PJT, as the main aim was to determine what factors can enhance the effectiveness of PJT according to journalists' perceptions.

Results reveal that there is an overall satisfaction among the respondents with the effectiveness of PJT they received. Respondents acknowledged that PJT helped them upskill their reporting. These results are consistent with previous research showing a relationship between job attitude, motivation, and training effectiveness (Flores & Subervi, 2014). However, Egyptian journalists highlighted several problems that reflect why they were not fully satisfied with the media organizations' training policies and practices. There is a gap between how journalists perceive the importance of PJT, and the interest of their media outlets to provide them with the PJT they need. This result accords with Sahinidis and Bouris (2008) findings that having opportunities for career

advancement and development influences employees' commitment and their job attitudes.

Additionally, while the majority of the respondents reported their interest and need for PJT in digital journalism practices, they emphasized that their media organizations were interested in adopting new technologies in newsrooms more than providing prior sufficient PJT to help journalists to best use of those technologies. The inconsistency between journalists' digital skills and their news content production could lead to inappropriate media practices, like high levels of inaccuracies, a focus on users' traffic for profit margins disregarding the public, and audience misinformation and disinformation. Levush (2019) report supported this by listing cases for imposing fines on some Egyptian printed and online newspapers accusing them of disseminating false information online.

Despite of the Egyptian journalists' interest in new opportunities for future training, and their attitude toward the importance of PJT which highlights the impact of the motivation factors, they referred to the lack of actual opportunities to apply skills they gained from PJT. And in addition to the lack of encouragement from their managers, most of the respondents mentioned that they doubted if the PJT they received would support their promotion.

Issues raised by Egyptian journalists, about the negative impact of workplace and the media organization's unclear policies and low wages, emphasize the impact of hygiene factors on the overall effectiveness of PJT. Problems perceived by Egyptian journalists in their

media organizations' training system come as result to the economic and institutional crises Egyptian media face and reported by Tawfiq (2018) and Wassel (2017).

The departure of international training providers, who had previously been organizing and funding training for Egyptian journalists and providing them with opportunities to acquire practical know-how from international colleagues (Gorzewski, 2016; Tynes, 2013), such departure adds to the challenges Egyptian journalists are facing to get the PJT they need.

Results of this study support the MHT regarding how the hygiene factors prevent dissatisfaction but does not lead to satisfaction. The negative impact of hygiene factors, as perceived by Egyptian journalists, can explain why some journalists started to lose interest in improving their professional skills. This could be interpreted based on: hygiene versus motivational factors, and push versus pull factors (ex: poor working conditions vs. attractive qualities of work for another job) (Viererbl & Koch, 2021).

The MHT has been criticized for focusing on improving employee satisfaction, which does not necessarily translate into increasing productivity (Dilmaghani, 2019). Our study considered this point by avoiding depending on journalists' satisfaction as an indicator of their productivity; instead, the study asked journalists whether the PJT they received improved their skills and productivity.

Despite the challenges related to the hygiene factors, results show the possible connection between journalists' job attitude and the perceived training effectiveness. This is consistent with the MHT and is also supported by Flores and Subervi (2014), Judge et al. (2017), and Viererbl and Koch (2021).

Following Kirkpatrick's Model for levels of perceived training effectiveness, findings of this study shows that the "*Reactions*" level is present to some extent, as the majority of the respondents were satisfied with the PJT they received. While half of the sample believed it was valuable, most of the sample were not satisfied with the policies and system of the whole training process at their media organizations.

On the level of "*Behavior changes*," Egyptian journalists clarified that they need PJT that focuses on using new technologies in journalism practices. Meanwhile, they pointed out that the institutional problems and other external factors related to the socio-political contexts, reduced the opportunity they had to practice the skills gained. As for the level of "*Results*", findings were proven consistent, as respondents reported that they believed training was valuable and efficient, despite facing many challenges to apply the skills they gained due to the whole context they were working in.

Egyptian PJT has two opposite levels: poor hygiene factors versus high motivation factors. Low level of

hygiene factors means that the negative impacts are external and are related to the wider context of work conditions, which require root changes and distinctive efforts. Workplace policies and conditions are the foremost factors affecting journalists' ability to join PJT, according to the respondents. Indeed, they are also the main factors responsible for the inconsistency and inefficiency of Egyptian PJT. Results indicated that media organizations' policies did not prioritize PJT, as respondents confirmed the lack of staff training budgets. Career structure and advancement are not related to professional development, which is linked to the media's close relationship with the authorities. Policies should be changed to consider increasing investment in PJT and to ensure high-quality training to raise journalists' competency in the use of technology.

Conclusion

As journalism industry rapidly changes, ongoing quality training is needed for journalists to prepare them for an upcoming generation of technological innovation in journalism practice. It has become obvious that maintaining a high level of professionalism remains critical after the swift emergence of citizen journalism.

Despite the acknowledgment that journalists' comments reflected a level of satisfaction with the training environment in Egypt, they raise several concerns about offering workshops on basic journalism skills that senior journalists no longer need to be trained on. Instead, respondents mentioned their need for training in several topics, like mobile journalism, data journalism, and news verification techniques. They also expressed their need to acquire new skills related to editing for multi-platforms.

This research also highlights how journalism workplace factors and management policies influence PJT. From a theoretical perspective, this study adds to the literature exploring the MHT, suggesting that it should consider a continuum of nested macro levels of socio-economic and political contexts that influence the micro-level of journalists attending PJT.

The lack of financial resources has a notable impact on journalists' ability to attend training on their own. Most of the respondents mentioned that they were underpaid and experienced a lack of financial support from their media outlets regarding training. Furthermore, journalists' low wages forced them to seek a second full-time job to maintain a decent lifestyle. They felt unsupported when they attended training, as their institutions neither reduced their workload, nor subsidized their training fees, which lead to a continuous deterioration of professionalism of Egyptian journalists. (Sakr, 2016)

With all challenges that face Egyptian media, providing effective PJT for journalists is not the main player in

ameliorating the profession. However, PJT could help reduce the declining professionalism and reproduction of loyalist and propagandistic practices. In addition, by identifying the skills and training that separate professional journalists from machines, journalists can practice their own value in the news production process (Creech & Mendelson, 2015).

There are several limitations to this study including the insufficient sample size for statistical analysis and the small size of the interviews sample. The study conducted interviews and survey to reduce this weakness and get as much information from the respondents.

Despite the clarified limitations, this study provides insights into the factors that affect journalists' perceptions of PJT effectiveness. Findings highlight the importance of factors like motivation, indicating the need for further research to investigate challenges in professional online training. Journalists' concerns about academia's role in improving PJT also remain unclear. Further research is needed to shed light on different opportunities to overcome the financial and institutional challenges that Egyptian journalists face regarding reskilling their capabilities. The study also recommends that researchers evaluate the contents of PJT provided by professional training institutions in Egypt.

An attempt to readdress journalism training landscape in Egypt and Arab countries is noticed. Several free training projects have been launched since 2020 to provide Arab journalists with PJT, like ICFJ Global Health Crisis Reporting, and Bayanat School project. These interactive training platforms focus on training Arab journalists. Future research on the effectiveness of online training and its impact on journalists' performance will enrich journalism training landscape. Additionally, there is a need to proceed toward the Arabization of MOOCs to support self-motivated journalists in updating their knowledge and acquiring new skills.

Achieving the ultimate purpose of PJT, especially digital training, does not rely only on the quality of courses and trainers, but also on reforming journalists' working conditions on both administrative and wage levels, and increasing their freedom of expression.

Accordingly, this study recommendation is to develop a journalism mentoring training program and build centers of excellence where professionals can seek counseling and networking with their peers to improve their journalism practices. In addition, there is a need to consider attending training as a criterion for any career advancement in journalism profession.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Editage (www.editage.com) for English language editing.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Ethical Approval

ZU19_62_F from Research Ethics Committee at Zayed University.

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Data Availability Statement

Data sharing not applicable to this article as no datasets were generated or analyzed during the current study.

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