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Adaptive Journalistic Growth Theory

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ABSTRACT This study aimed to formulate a theory explaining the transition of a student journalist to a professional journalist. A qualitative design using Constructivist Grounded Theory was employed. Twelve professional journalists were selected through purposive sampling and participated in in-depth interviews. Data were analysed using constant comparative procedures to generate categories that describe the process of journalistic development. Findings led to the formulation of the Adaptive Journalistic Growth Theory, which explains that the transition is not linear but cyclical and dynamic. The theory consists of six interconnected components of Weaving the Foundation, Refining Skills, Hindering Factors, Countermeasures, Triumphs in the Journey, and Encountered Setbacks. The results indicate that professional growth in journalism involves continuous adaptation shaped by experiences, challenges, and achievements. The theory provides a framework that may guide journalism education, training, and professional development.