

The Impact of Social Media on Conventional Journalism Practice in Nigeria: A Study of Journalists' in Jalingo Metropolis

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of social media on journalism practice in Nigeria. It explores the extent to which social media has changed journalism practice in Nigeria with special reference to Journalists in Jalingo metropolis. The quantitative survey method was adopted for the study. The population is comprised of 293 Journalists in Jalingo metropolis registered under Nigerian Union of Journalists. The study employed Taro Yame's formula to sample out 75 journalists. Questionnaires were used as the tool for data collection. The researcher administered questionnaires to 75 purposively selected Journalists, and 70 were duly answered and retrieved. Data gathered were analyzed with SPSS version 20 with devices such as frequency counts and simple percentages. Data analyzed were presented in tables. Findings revealed among other things that a considerable number of journalists in Jalingo metropolis are computer literate, and they have internet access at various levels. Findings also revealed that journalists in Jalingo metropolis go online very often and that they prefer Facebook to other forms of social media and this assist them in faster gathering and dissemination of news. The study recommends among other things that Journalists should conduct researches on the accessible online networking organizing apparatuses to check which one of them is more and solid, keeping in mind the end goal to guarantee the validity of sources.

Key words: Journalists; Nigerian Union of Journalists; Jalingo metropolis; Journalism practice; Nigeria

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, people have witnessed the fast propagation of a new category of information technologies which is commonly known as social media. This media supports and boasting interpersonal and interactive communication using the internet-based platform. According to Dwyer (2010), a century and a half ago, communication between countries involved physical presence. Once, a reporter had to run as fast as possible back to the newsroom after interviewing and tried to beat the competition to print. With the advent of the digital age, the role of the journalist changed. The inception of information communication technology such as the internet has made it possible to find out about events without actually being there. Journalists can report news across the world over the internet.

In view of this, Agbanu and Nwabueze (2011), say

throughout history, developments in technology and communication have gone hand-in-hand, and the latest technological developments such as the internet have resulted in the advancement of the science of communication to a new level. The process of human communication has evolved over the years, with many paths- breaking inventions and discoveries heralding revolutions.

The invention of pictographs or the first written communication in the ancient world brought about written communication. These writings were on stone and remained immobile. The invention of paper, papyrus, and wax culminating in the invention of the printing press in the 15th century made it possible to transfer documents

from one place to another, allowing for uniformity of languages over long distances. The latest revolution is the widespread application of electronic technology such as electronic waves and signals of communication, manifesting in the electronic creation and transfer of documents over the World Wide Web (Ruth, 2010).

By implication, Social media which are a form of electronic communication have become the highest activity on the internet (Lynne, 2010). In contribution, Ganiyu, and Akinreti (2011), submit that the emergence of social media has increased interactivity among people, making them be producers and consumers of information in a simultaneous manner. Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, 2go etc. have brought tremendous improvement in the communication system, it has provided different entertainment functions which serve as a tool for social change and fast exchange of information.

With the aid of the internet, a reporter can form his/her own page, entree to news and send news online easily and upload patronage and advertisement online in order to get customers to purchase precise products. It is also an avenue to share or upload pictures of somebody as well as arrange for a meeting. Contributing to this assertion, Apuke (2016) submits that "the emergence of social media has increased interactivity among people, making them be producers and consumers of information in a simultaneous manner". This implies that through social media and the internet at large different media houses and their reporters can develop websites to specifically help the masses share their views and stay in touch with their admirers, relatives and well-wishers as well as reply to certain breaking news online. This is evident in cases where a newspaper house in uploads controversial issues online, such issues generates a lot of comments, giving the audience opportunity to participate. This implies that the advent of social media has increased both interactivity and participatory communication.

According to Social Media (2013),

social media represents a shift in how people discover, read and share news, information content which brought about the democratization of information, transforming people from content readers into publishers. Social media are also internet sites where people interact freely, sharing and discussing information about each other and their lives, using a multi-media mix of personal words, pictures, videos and audio. (Bruce & Douglas, 2008, p.27)

Analyzing the impact of social media on journalism practice, Ruth (2010), affirms that "social media via online newspapers can be used to spread information far and wide". The "Vanguard", the "Sun" and other well-known newspapers in Nigeria are projected in the social media where millions of adverts are placed for the consumption of the receiving public. Today, we now have online television where one can go and watch the news and other related materials (p.15).

An advertisement is another aspect where social media promotes journalistic and media practice session. Other aspects as outlined by Nigel et al. (2012), is entertainment; social media brings a sense of humor and entertainment to the public. The media practitioners set all forms of entertainment that arouse the interest of the public/masses. Social media also helps the reporter to post instant news, this gives the reporter ample chance for an audience to get news and information as well as give feedback (Ruth, 2010).

Therefore, one could agree that the coming of social media has increased the focal ratio at which journalism practice occurs. A reporter/journalist who goes out to the field could cover a story and instantly post them via his media website. In contribution, Ismail (2012) submits that through social media, reporters can easily exchange valuable information which can improve their career interest, ideas etc.. It also helps in sending pictorial illustrations, news, and vital information to the public that receives it instantly as far as they are online ideas. By implication, "social media is seen as the type of media that gives people (reporters) medium to create, share, and/or exchange information and ideas in communities and networks. It is also seen as the ideological and technological exchange of user-generated content" (Social Media, 2013).

Against this backdrop, the study to investigate the influence social media has on journalism practice with special focus on journalists in Jalingo metropolis.

1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The impact of social media in today's world of communication, especially journalism cannot be overlooked. Since its arrival, social media have certainly changed the way journalists work, how stories are developed and disseminated. Social media have had positive impacts, without a doubt, but there are also concerns about their impact on productivity and the disruption it could have on journalists' working patterns. Social media have created a dependency among those working in the media and many are unable to do without them.

Social media have become journalistic lexicon and it seems sourcing information has overtaken self-promotion as a primary social activity. While journalists are growing more sophisticated in their use of social media, and are, for instance, using a great variety of tools to source for news, some journalists are less positive about some of the ways social media affect their journalistic activities, their engagement with their audience, their productivity and the quality of their work. Based on these contrasting views, the question this research seeks to answer is; how have social media affected the journalists in Jalingo metropolis with regards to their journalistic duties?

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To ascertain whether journalists in Jalingo metropolis are exposed to social media networking tools;
- To examine the type of social media tools journalists in Jalingo metropolis prefer;
- To determine whether social media have enhanced the productivity of journalists in Jalingo metropolis.

3. EXPLICATING LITERATURE

Ruth (2010), in a study *Social Media Revolution: Exploring the Impact on Journalism and News Media Organizations* listed various social media tools available to journalists. The study noted the rise in the popularity of social networking sites as in 2010. The research reports that about 49% of internet users had created or updated a social networking profile, compared to just 17% two years before.

The researcher also explored the impact of social media on the workforce of journalists that it makes their work more efficient in a number of exciting ways, citing an example of how an investigative reporter, with the aid of social media, is able to carry out her work by capturing contents shared on social networks to enrich her stories and sometimes even make use of the virtual audience to help them find out about an issue. The findings of the study reveal that newspapers have a legacy for breaking news and uncovering stories of historic proportion, yet they are losing ground to a generation of consumers embracing digital and mobile alternatives. The research also found out that even though social media have become popular, Television remains the dominant news source, with 71% of respondents saying they favor Television. The research also observed that the younger generation lacks patience and require speedy news and information and which the internet becomes handy. Consequently, the research found that about 60% of news organizations were politically biased and were not to be completely trusted from the respondent's perspective while just 20% said news organizations were "independent of powerful people or are willing to admit their mistakes".

In a similar study, Ismail, (2012) carried out a study on how Nigerian Journalists use Social Media to Source Stories. The study found out that, Nigerian journalists are excited about the new opportunities social media have offered to them except a few journalists. The social media aid them to carry out their tasks of news monitoring and gathering with ease. They are able to explore various sites on regular basis daily like their counterparts in other countries. They also monitor what citizen journalists and newsmakers post on their Twitter handle, Facebook timeline, YouTube, LinkedIn, blogs, etc..

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theory are group of ideas meant to explain certain topics, such as a single or collection of fact(s), event(s), or phenomena, it provides an explanatory framework for some observation and from the assumptions of the explanation follows a number of possible hypotheses that can be tested in order to provide support for, or challenge, the theory. Someone who develops theories is called a theorist (Zima, 2007). Miller, (2005) also sees theory as a set of systematic generalizations based on scientific observation and leading to further empirical observation.

This study is based on diffusion of innovations theory of communication by Rogers (1995) as its theoretical foundation. The theory was coined from the work of a 19th-century French legal scholar and sociologist, Gabriel Tarde, titled *the Laws of Limitation. Diffusion of innovations theory* states that an innovation (that is, an idea, new technique, or new technology) diffuses or spreads throughout a society in a predictable pattern. A few people will adopt an innovation as soon as they hear of it. Other people will take longer to try something new, and still others will take much longer. When a new media technology or another innovation is adopted rapidly by a great number of people, it is said to explode into being (Bryant & Thompson, 2002).

The theory discussed above conforms to the study because social media are new tools journalists use in carrying out their duties, yet some are still skeptical about its impact in the field of journalism and are reluctant to adopt them or use them.

5. METHODOLOGY

The research design is the hub on which a research is hinged upon. It is the general arrangement or the plan of the research intention (Madueme, 2010).

The study area is Jalingo, Jalingo is the capital city of Taraba State, one of the 36 states in Nigeria.

This study employed the use of quantitative survey in the collection of data. Population refers to all cases or individuals that fit a certain specification (Ohaja, 2003). It is also the aggregate of all cases that conform to some designated set of specifications (Chein, 1959; Madueme 2010, p.71). Such specifications may be people, subjects, items, sectors, animals and so on.

The data obtained from Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), Jalingo chapter shows that the union has 293 registered members practicing within the state. Therefore, the population of the study is 293. To determine the sample size of the population, the Taro Yamane's formula was applied thus:

$$N = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where: N = Sample size sought
 e = Margin (0.10)²

$N =$ Population size 293

$$N = \frac{293}{1 + 293(0.10)^3}$$

$$N = \frac{293}{293 + (0.01)}$$

$$N = \frac{293}{3.93}$$

$N = 74.5$ approximately 75

The sample size for the study is 75 respondents. The researcher used purposive sampling technique in selecting 75 respondents (Journalists). The respondents were purposely selected from the different correspondent's chapel and Newspaper bureau covering Taraba State. The essence of using purposive sampling was because the researcher had certain things in mind and such things had to do with on-the-job experience journalists. The research instrument used for this study was the questionnaire; therefore, data was generated using the questionnaire administered face to face to the respondents by the researcher himself. Data collected was analyzed using SPSS version 20 with devices such as frequency counts and simple percentages, while data analyzed were presented in tables for clear understanding.

6. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

75 questionnaires were distributed and 70 were correctly filled and retrieved given a response rate of 93% and a mortality rate of 7%.

Table 1
Extent Journalists in Jalingo Metropolis Are Exposed to Social Media Networking Tools

Items	Responses	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total
1	Are you computer literate?	50 (71.4%)	20 (28.6%)	70 (100%)
2	Do you have internet access?	65 (92.9%)	5 (7.1)	70 (100%)
3	If yes are you aware of any social networking site?	70 (100%)	0 (0%)	70 (100%)
4	Do you have an account with any of the social networking site?	65 (92.9%)	5 (7.1%)	70 (100%)

Source: Field Survey 2016.

Table 1 examined the extent journalists in Jalingo metropolis are exposed to social media networking tools. Item 1 on the table revealed that 50 (71.4%) out of the 70 respondents are computer literate while 20 (28.6%) are not. Item 2 revealed that 65 (92.9%) of the respondents have access to the internet at various levels and 5 (7.1%) agreed not to have any access to the internet. Item 3 revealed that the whole respondents 70 (100%) are aware of one social networking site or the other and items 4 revealed that 65 (92.9%) out of 100 respondents have a social media account. These findings show that to a great extent journalist in Jalingo metropolis are exposed to social media networks. The question is, what type of social media do they use and how does it affect their journalism work. The next question will analyze and proffer inference to that.

Research question two: What type of social media tool do journalists in Jalingo metropolis prefer?

6.1 Respondents' Bio-Data

From the data gathered and analyzed, 45 (64.3%) respondents out of the 70 are male, while 25 respondents (36%) are female. 7 respondents (10%) out of 70 respondents are within the age bracket of 25-30, 35 out of 75 respondents (50%) are within the age bracket of 31-35, 18 respondents (25.7%) are within the age bracket of 36-40, whereas, 10 respondents (14.3%) are within the age bracket of 41-45, while no respondents were within the age bracket of 46 and above. This implies that majority of the respondents are within the ages of 31-35.

50 respondents making 71.4% are National Diploma (ND) holders, while 15 making 20.4% are BSc/HND holders, whereas only 5 making 7.1% are Masters (MSc) Holders. The data gathered implies that most of the respondents are Diploma holders followed by BSc/HND.

45(64.3%) out of 70 respondents are general assignment reporters, 15 (21.4%) respondents are specialized reporters, 5 (7.1%) respondents are freelancers, and 5 respondents (7.1%) are beat reporters.

6.2 Answering Research Questions

Question one: To what extent are journalists in Jalingo metropolis exposed to social media networking tools?

To answer the above question, questions number 6, 8, 9 and 10 from the questionnaire were presented in tables and analyzed using SPSS with descriptive devices such as frequency counts and simple percentages as follows.

To answer research question two above, items 11, 12, 13 and 14 from the questionnaire were analyzed.

Table 2
Social Media Respondents Have an Account With— Which of the Social Networking Site Do You Operate an Account With?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	45	64.3%
Twitter	15	21.5%
YouTube	5	7.1%
None	5	7.1%
Others	-	-
Total	70	100%

Source: Field Survey 2016.

Table 2 above examined the social media respondents have an account with. 45(64.3%) out of the 70

respondents have an account with Facebook, 15 (21.5%) have an account with twitter, 5 (7.1%) have an account with YouTube while 5 (5%) do not have an account with any social media.

Table 3
Frequency at Which Respondents Visit Their Account—How Often Do You Visit Your Account?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Very often	46	66%
Often	14	20%
Not very often	5	7.1%
Not often	5	7.1%
Total	70	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Table 3 ascertained the frequency of respondents visiting their social media account. 46 (66%) out of 70 of the respondents visit their account very often, 14 (20%) visit their account often, 5 (7.1%) visit their account not very often while 5 (7.1%) visit their account not often. This means that most of the respondents visit their account very often.

Table 4
Respondents Choices of Social Networking Site—Which Social Networking Tool Do You Prefer?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	45	64.3%
Twitter	15	21.5%
YouTube	5	7.1%
None	5	7.1%
Others	-	-
Total	70	100%

Source: Field Survey 2016.

Table 4 above examined respondents' choice of social networking sites, that is, it seeks to explicate the social networking site respondents prefer the most. 45 (64.3%) out of the 70 respondents prefer Facebook, 15 (21.5%) prefer twitter, 5 (7.1%) prefer YouTube while 5 (5%) do not have any choice of social media network.

Table 5
Reasons for Preferred Choice of Social Media—What Are Your Reasons for the Preferred Choice of Social Media?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
It gives me more opportunities to explore news sources	35	50%
It helps me to socialize with other people	5	7.1%
It is more trustworthy	5	7.1%
It has wider coverage	25	36%
Total	70	100%

Source: Field Survey 2016.

Table 5 examined the reasons for respondent's choice of social media, 53 respondents representing 50% agreed

that it gives them more opportunities to explore news sources, 5 representing 7.1% agreed that it helps them to socialize with other people, 5 (7.1%) agreed that it is more trustworthy, while 25 (36%) agreed that it has wider coverage. This implies that the reasons for the preferred choice of respondents social media are it gives them more opportunities to explore news sources and it has wider coverage

Research Question Three: How have social media enhanced the productivity of journalists in Jalingo metropolis?

To answer this question, questions number 16, 17, 18 and 20 from the questionnaire was analyzed.

Table 6
Social Media Tools for Journalism— How Well Do You Embrace Social Media Tools as Part of Journalism?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Very well	55	79%
Well	10	14.3%
Not very well	5	7.1%
Not well	-	-
Total	70	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Table 6 above examined the rate at which respondents embrace social media tools for journalism, 55 representing 79% agreed that they embrace social media tools as part of journalism very well, 10 representing 14.3% agreed they embrace social media tool as part of journalism well, and 5 (7.1%) agreed that they embrace social media tools as part of journalism tools very well. This implies that majority of the journalist in Jalingo metropolis embrace social media tools as part of journalism very well.

Table 7
Social Media and Journalism Practice—Social Media Have Changed Journalism Practice

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
(a) Strongly agree	50	71.4%
(b) Agree	10	14.4%
(c) Strongly disagree	5	7.1%
(d) Disagree	5	7.1%
(e) Undecided	-	-
Total	70	100%

Source: Field Survey 2016.

Table 7 above seeks to find out whether social media have changed journalism practice. Most of the respondents 50 representing 71.4% strongly agreed that social media have changed journalism practice. 10 representing 14.4% agreed that social media have changed journalism practice. On the other hand, 5 representing 7.1% strongly disagreed that social media have changed journalism practice, while 5 representing 7.1% disagreed that social media have changed journalism practice. This means that social media have

greatly changed journalism practice. The question is, in what ways social media have changed journalism

practice. The next question explicates the ways in which social media have changed journalism practice.

Table 8
Social Media’S Effect on Journalistic Practice—In Your Own Opinion How Has Social Media Changed Your Journalistic Practice?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
It has enhanced news gathering	35	50%
It has improved credibility of my news	8	11%
It enables me to report from anywhere with ease	20	29%
It helps me to know the information needs of the audience	7	10%
I don’t know	-	-
Total	70	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Table 8 examined respondent’s opinion on how social media have changed their journalistic practice. 35 of the respondents representing 50% were of the opinion that social media enhanced news gathering, 8 representing 11% opined that it has improved credibility of their news, 20 representing 29% agreed that social media enable them to report from anywhere with ease, while 7 representing 10% were of the opinion that social media helps them to know the information needs of the audience. These findings mean that majority of journalists in Jalingo metropolis have been improved through social media as it enables them to report from anywhere with ease as well as enhances their news gathering.

social media have become popular, Television remains the dominant news source, with 71% of respondents saying they favor Television.

Exploring how social media have enhanced the productivity of journalists in Jalingo metropolis, the study revealed that journalists in Jalingo metropolis embraced social media tools as part of journalism and that Social media have drastically changed journalism practice as it enables journalists to report from anywhere with ease as well as enhances news gathering. This study is related to Ismail (2012), He found out that, Nigerian journalists are excited about the new opportunities social media have offered to them except a few journalists. The social media aid them to carry out their tasks of news monitoring and gathering with ease. They are able to explore various sites on regular basis daily like their counterparts in other countries. They also monitor what citizen journalists and newsmakers post on their Twitter handle, Facebook timeline, YouTube, LinkedIn, blogs, etc.. The study is also related to Ruth (2010) findings, the researcher explored the impact of social media on the workforce of journalists, findings revealed that it makes their work more efficient in a number of exciting ways, citing an example of how an investigative reporter, with the aid of social media, is able to carry out her work by capturing contents shared on social networks to enrich her stories and sometimes even make use of the virtual audience to help them find out about an issue.

7. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Explicating the demography of respondents the study reveals that majority of the respondents (journalists) in Jalingo metropolis are male and that they are with the ages of 31-35. The study also reveals that most of the journalists in Jalingo metropolis are Diploma holders followed by BSc/HND and only a few of them are Masters Holders and most of them are general assignment reporters. The study further revealed that an average number of journalists in Jalingo metropolis are computer literate, and they have internet access at various levels and a majority of the journalists are aware of social media sites as well as have an account. Explicating on the various forms of social media journalists in Jalingo metropolis have an account with, the study revealed that Face-book top the chat.

Findings also revealed that journalists in Jalingo metropolis go online very often and that they prefer Face-book to other forms of social media. This implies that they surf Face-book more than any other social networking sites. Findings further revealed that most of the journalists make use of Face-book because it gives them more opportunity to explore news sources and it has wider coverage. This strong impact of social media negates the findings of Ruth (2010) which shows that even though

CONCLUSION

The employment of online networking organizing instruments has made journalistic exercises less demanding and acceptable for reporters. Albeit a few reporters still require the fundamental computer training to end up familiar with online networking organizing instruments, the dominant parts of journalist are utilizing the online networking organizing devices. These have colossally improved their journalistic abilities and emphatically impacted their journalistic exercises. The

findings of this study demonstrates that an extraordinary number of reporters in Jalingo city have admittance to the web and are presented to online networking organizing apparatuses and larger part of writers in Jalingo city favor Facebook as their systems administration devices for various reasons, one of which was its wide scope. Online networking upgraded the efficiency of columnists in Jalingo city and has widened their news sourcing and scattering. A few writers in Jalingo city require essential computer training so as to be pertinent in the present day reporting styles and to investigate the different open doors that the Web and online networking bring to the table.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Against this backdrop the study recommends that:

- Media houses and press bodies ought to sort out courses and workshops to sharpen and teach reporter on the effect of online networking apparatuses so they can grasp social networking and utilize interpersonal interaction devices to enhance their aptitudes and
- Journalists ought to conduct research on the accessible online networking organizing apparatuses to check which one of them is more dependable and solid keeping in mind the end goal to guarantee the validity of sources.
- Additionally, institutions, media associations, press bodies, and the government ought to provide facilities for preparing and retraining of reporters on the new media and Information Communication Technology (ICTs) with a specific end goal to guarantee demonstrable skill and offer of professionalism and good services modern media consumers.

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