IMPACT OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICTS) ON CAMPUS JOURNALISM IN LAGOS STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effects of ICTs on journalism practice among campus journalists in Lagos State. With a descriptive research design, 235 respondents which comprised 300-400 level students and campus journalists responded to a structured questionnaire. The study shows that ICT has a positive impact on news collection and drastically minimizes manual activities while increasing the quality and the amount of the information published. However, some of the challenges that slowed the effectiveness of ICTs in campus journalism practice campaign include fake news and inadequate manpower and knowledge on digital technology. Findings confirm the inability of current journalism practice to exist without the support of ICTs, while suggesting the need for increased trainings focused on the usage of ICT, providing the affordable opportunities to reach the majority of the population with the help of ICT, and increasing the fines for misleading information and fake news.

Keywords: Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Campus Journalism, News Gathering, News Dissemination, Fake News, Digital Knowledge.

INTRODUCTION/THE PROBLEM

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) hae changed the face of journalism from how news is collected, processed and shared. Today's communication type is rapidly evolving from conventional print media to electronic means of communication that are more efficient. This shift has specifically affected campus based journalism where student writers use ICT means to cover occurrences and theme within their institutions.

Hence, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have empowered information dissemination in Nigeria, influencing significantly print and media stations (Hasan, 2013). In media industry input and output is always information because the flow of data undergoes the process whereby raw material or data get classified and sorted into areas of interest to clients. This ICT-driven change is profound and impacts journalism more than any other professions as noted below. These technologies are applied by the media industry to increase efficiency across all facets of news gathering, writing and producing, advertising and marketing, with an objective of positioning as a competitive edge (Indo American Print summit 2016).

However, the use of ICT in writing and publishing by the campus journalists entails some challenges as discussed below. Challenges like low people employment, low proficiency in computer knowledge, appearance of fake news have put question mark on ICT in context of journalism practice. This research will therefore, attempt to establish the effects of ICT on contemporary journalism practice among the campus journalists in Lagos State especially Lagos State University.

Despite the fact that many prior researches have determined the overall effect of ICT on mainstream journalism, only a handful of such studies have examined the effects of ICT on campus journalism with specific reference to Nigeria. Therefore, this study seeks to address the following research problem: How has ICT influenced journalism practice among campus journalists in Lagos State? And what factors constitute constraints to the utilization of ICT?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The key objectives of the study are to:

i. assess the appropriateness of ICT for information acquisition by campus journalists.

ii. identify the ways students' journalists use ICT in dissemination of information.

iii. find out the various facets of difficulties understood in connection with the process of implementing ICT practices in campus journalism.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. To what extent does ICT application support information gathering by campus journalists?

2. In what ways has campus journalist been able to appropriate ICT in the generation of information?

3. What is the implication of ICTs adoption to campus journalists?

CONCEPT OF ICT

ICT may be defined as the electrical and electronic devices, which enables the production, processing, storage and distribution of information. In journalism as a realm of practice, by which 'information' is constructed and disseminated, it is has made news compilation, analysis and delivery quicker and more effective through the provision of wider audience by the application of ICT as noted by Nwabueze, (2005). Journalism has greatly benefited from ICT through the introduction of a new dimension of reporting by creating new media sources in form of online news portals and the social media, which have become indispensable tools for journalists working in the current society.

ICT AND JOURNALISM

ICT's have influenced the journalism field in ways such as; Informed journalism, Quality of the news and the audience relation. For example, a journalist can gather information from a different region, write his/her news story, and distribute news in a very short period by the help of technology (Ikeduba, 2015). ICT application has also lowered costs of news production and added efficiency to a newsroom (Nwanne, 2016).

CHALLENGES OF ICT ADOPTION

However, there still remains concerning challenges in the adoption of ICT in journalism. Among the challenges identified are limited staffing, general inexperience and high costs of adoption of ICT solutions (Gapsiso & Wilson, 2014). Further, the current world has also been a concern in regard to the authenticity of information disseminated through the social media through fake news and gpurposes misinformation (Apuke, 2016).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Technological Determinism Theory and the Social Shaping of Technology (SST) Theory are the foundational theories of this study. According to Technological Determinism Theory, technology determines the social process and actually dictates how people reason and behave (McLuhan, 1967).

One of the criticisms of technological determinism is that technology can be said to never impose itself on the lives of people in the society. Man is the creator of technology and equally makes the decision on its application. He invents television and makes a decision of how he wants to look at it. The technology to be used in the process is not insisted on rather technology calls on people to engage or become part of the process at some given phase (Asadu, 2009). That means the decision to use technology and feel its impact therefore remains with persons.

The SST Theory, on the other hand concerns itself with how technology impacts and is impacted, by the social factors in relation to the adoption of ICT and suggests that one's choice to adopt ICT is deterministic of its Social and Organizational context (Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2002). They argue that this framework expands on classifications for systems and features of ICTs. It is in this respect that the broader model of SST was expanded in order to alleviate the systematic inconsistencies in the technological determinism tradition. The primary limitation evident in the linear model was that it tended to examine invention and diffusion of technologies as two

mutually exclusive processes from the associated social and organisational structures (Williams & Edge, 2001). This paper therefore suggests the SST as the more appropriate, two way, interactive approach to studying the use of ICTs. What it claims is that neither technologies nor societies can transform the other. The SST model believes that they benefit from analysing ICTs in terms of social and organisation use as they are utilised. The spirit of this is to demystify the ICTs by studying them in the social and institutional context they are found in, (Williams & Edge, 2001).

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Obayi (2018) examined journalists' perception of the role of ICT on journalism in Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria. The study was conducted using the Technological Acceptance model and Technological Determinism theory adopted a survey research method with a response of 220 registered Journalists. This study revealed that 90% of the journalists had used ICT and 82% had derived profound support from ICT to collect news. Still, 58 % felt the impact of challenges associated with high installation costs. In aggregate, 90% of the respondents expressed hiểu ICT affects their work. In view of this, the study concluded that ICT has enhanced the practices of journalism in Imo State and therefore encouraged media outfits to embrace ICT tools in their operations.

Nwanne (2016) carried out a study of journalism, and new media particularly on Nigeria with emphases on technological determinism. This discussed aspects such as lack of funds and electricity that hampers usage of new media by journalist. However, with these problems in mind media convergence has happened. The paper suggests that government has the key role in enhancing power and supporting knowledge based economy, in addition to the continuing media professional education.

Apuke (2016) discussed the role of ICT with the understanding of the benefits and pitfalls of CJ in Nigeria. Employing qualitative research, the paper demonstrates that although they are related, ICT concerns militate against effective citizen journalism. This arrangement leaves the credibility of the numerous sources up for question, as there are no editors around. Suggestions include paying for professional editing of the citizen generated content and providing easy access to cheaper ICT equipment so as to increase citizens' engagement and connectivity.

METHODOLOGY

This research utilized descriptive research design and survey method to assess the effect of ICT on practice of journalism among campus journalists. Administration of the questionnaires was done on 300 and 400 level campus journalists in Lagos State University. Respondent selection involved purposive sampling of 100 respondents from Journalism Department and 135 respondents from other faculties. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, which was divided into four sections: demographic characteristics, ICT usage for collecting information, probability of ICT in disseminating information and problems of ICT implementation. The data obtained from the respondents were analyzed using frequency tables and percentages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
ICT Efficiency in Information Collection

The research findings show that ICT has a tremendous impact on collection and distribution of news. Specifically, 55.3% of respondents answered that ICT helps to share information through electronic means while 66.8% strongly supported view that ICT lowers manual content and development in the media. Majority (62.2%) said that ICT reduces distance and time by bringing nearer news sources.

These increases are in tandem with the earlier studies, which revealed the efficiency of ICT in enhancing news collection and dissemination processes (Ibrahim et al., 2021; Obayi, 2018).

Opportunities of ICT in Information Distribution

ICT has also enhanced the effectiveness of news delivery: ICT has also brought in efficiency in delivery of news. Most of the respondents (69.3%) agreed that ICT enhances the reporting of news and increases news quality as it is reported in real time while majority (56.2%) responded positively that ICT increases organizational productivity and efficiency particularly with less costs involved.

These findings bring closer the understanding of the role of ICT in journalism nowadays, based on which one can highlight the accelerated delivery of messages.

Challenges of ICT Adoption

Despite its benefits, the adoption of ICT is hindered by several challenges. More than half of the respondents (58.3%) agreed that ICTs adoption is limited by inadequate manpower and knowledge in using digital technology. Majority (74%) of the respondents also revealed that fake news serves as a major setback to the use of ICTs for campus journalism. A similar opinion is shared with other studies done by Gapsiso and Wilson (2014) revealing lack of training as well as fake news as some of the pressing issues affecting ICT adoption.

CONCLUSION

The research findings reveal that ICT has enhanced campus journalism practice in news assembling, reporting, and the coverage of audiences. However, barriers include low training, high costs of data and fake news. To address these challenges, there is need to incorporate ICT training in the curriculum of the journalism universities, in order to prepare the students for the needs of the new age while there should be provisions for ICT tools for the campus journalists with aim to improve opportunities to collect and publish news. Campus Journalists should also endeavor to adopt effective measures to prevent fake news and enhance the authenticity of news that is spread through ICTs. The heads of campus media organizations should also ensure that journalists undergo ICT training and retraining on regular basis.

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