

Social Media Usage in Gathering and Transmission of News among Broadcast Journalists in South-East Nigeria

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The study was aimed at ascertaining the level at which broadcast journalists in South-East Nigeria deploy the social media in news gathering and transmission. The survey research method was used while the questionnaire served as the measuring instrument. The entire 867 broadcast journalists in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria constituted the population of the study from where a sample of 274 was drawn using the Taro Yamane's formula. Using the purposive sampling technique, the researchers found that broadcast journalists in South-East Nigeria have not significantly embraced the social media in the news gathering and transmission. It was therefore recommended among others that broadcast journalists in South-East Nigeria should embrace the social media platforms as the platforms represent potent tools for the practice of modern day journalism.

Keywords: Social media, newsgathering, transmission, broadcast, journalists

Over the years, the world has witnessed consistent advancement in the area of ICT which has given birth to new technological inventions. One of the products of the consistent advancement witnessed in the world of ICT is the social media. The social media, which have gained global acceptance, are redefining the patterns of communication all over the world. They (social media) have made communication very interactive and instantaneous. They have enhanced gathering and sharing of messages to the extent that information dissemination has become easier and faster.

There is a plethora of social media sites available for people's use in many parts of the world according to each user's purposes or aims. Folorunso, Vincent, Adekoya and Ogunde (2010, p.362) remark that, "social networking sites associated to a particular region differs, hence the reason for joining these sites differs." Now just like radio or television stations, social media sites spread everywhere in Nigeria and are bound to be springing up as technologies continue to improve. With the emergence of the social media, institutional media no longer have exclusive claim to the means of journalistic production. While the field has sought to maintain its gatekeeping role, this is changing in the face of the new media. Many users within journalism itself acknowledge that the arrival of the Digital Age has initiated a fundamental shift within journalism (Harding, 2009; Sambrook, 2010; The News Industry, 2011; Beckett, 2008) cited in (Ledwel, 2012, p.10). One key factor to understanding the new culture is to recognize that old notions of one-to-many mass

media communications have given way to a many-to-many media environment. The letters to the editor page, once the only outlet for audience participation, has been replaced by interactive spaces on the Internet and related social media sites such as Twitter and YouTube. The cost of technological tools such as phones and cameras is decreasing at the same time as global Internet access is increasing. This is a global trend, particularly notable in places such as Egypt (Dutta and Mia, 2011) cited in (Ledwel, 2011, p.10). In this technological environment, professional journalists have lost their monopoly over the means of sharing events with a wide audience. First-person witnessing in real-time is no longer the journalists' exclusive domain (Ledwel, 2012, p.10).

The shift to a form of many-to-many communications approach has immense implications for journalism. Some call this a period of 'de-professionalization' in journalism (Ornebring, 2010, p.10, McIntosh, 2005, p.22 Turner, 2010, p.15). Internet evangelists have declared that everyone has the potential to be a journalist (Gillmor, 2004, p.7, Rosen, 2008, p.25). The most vocal advocates of this position have been quick to declare that power has already shifted from institutional journalism to citizen journalists (Gillmor, 2004, p.71, Rosen, 2008, p.20), as media consumers have been transformed into 'producers' (Bruns, 2007, p.25). While this participatory journalistic culture is hailed as potentially creating better journalism, claims that citizens have usurped journalism are premature. This is because the universalized potential may ultimately have limited influence on the journalistic field itself (Benson, 2006, p.19). However, the reorganization of the power and players within the field is threatening the power of journalists vis-à-vis 'the people formerly known as the audience' (Rosen, 2008, p.5). The structure of the journalistic profession is changing, but there is no consensus as to what shape the new professional culture will take (Ledwel, 2012, p.10).

Social media as a source continues to grow in relevance to both journalists and their audience. In Nigeria, about one in every seven stories may originate from social media. While audiences in Nigeria seek verified news from newspapers, the traditional notions of what it means to be a source are rapidly expanding to capture sourcing through engagement. Engagement as the primary purpose of these platforms, promotes conversations between parties in a non-traditional manner. Customers can discuss with companies on brands, journalists can debate, politicians can engage with their constituents. The capacity for conversation is infinite (Africappractice, 2014, p.8). McNair (2005, p.12) argues that the objectivity-based journalism that dominated the 20th century has given way to a 'chaos paradigm.' But from that chaos, order has begun to emerge. Perhaps the best descriptor of the merger of new and old media is 'convergence culture' (Jenkins, 2006 p27). This inclusive media culture is both a 'top-down corporate-driven process and a bottom-up consumer-driven process' (Jenkins and Deuze, 2008, p.26). According to Jenkins and Deuze, it has had a decentralizing effect on journalism; as it 'has concentrated the power of traditional gatekeepers and agenda setters and in other ways, it has disintegrated their tight control over our culture' (2008, p.6). Convergence culture has far-reaching implications, affecting both the production and the consumption of media (Deuze, 2009, p.6). It identifies changes in the day-to-day reality of journalism, yet acknowledges that journalists maintain their integral role in the process of creating and deciding what is news. Citizen journalists have not yet wrested power from institutional journalists; indeed, there is little evidence to suggest that influence is this group's aim. Some caution that journalistic authority will never really shift, as corporations find ways to co-opt participatory online spaces (Mansell, 2004, p.13 McChesney, 2000 p.20). Still, claims that the promises of participatory forms of journalism are 'false prophecy' (Scott, 2005, p.111) have been both premature and a step too far. As illustrated by the Arab Spring,

it was the use of new media tools to organize protests that led to the toppling of long-standing autocratic governments (England and Saleh, 2011, p.31). There are few better examples of real power enabled by new media (Ledwel, 2012, p.11). These were what Folorunso, Vincent, Adekoya, and Adewale, (2010, p.326), perceived when they argue generally that, in Africa, social media networking sites are becoming widely spread than it has ever been before with journalists deploying them to engender improved journalism practice.

The traditional dividing lines between professional journalism and what is often termed participatory (citizen) journalism or grassroots media are becoming increasingly blurred as more journalists operate blogs and Twitter accounts and more non-journalist bloggers and Twitterati become increasingly professional in their news reporting and commentary. Journalism's ethical norms differentiate them from social commentary where advocacy and activism are to be expected, but the increasing use of interactive social media is creating a shift to partisan journalism with more journalists beginning to express personal opinions in their reports. Today nine out of ten journalists have been prompted to investigate a story by social media; three quarters by blogs and half by Twitter. As journalists are engaging directly with their readers via platforms such as Twitter, the barriers between author and audience are disappearing and journalists are being challenged to see the direct impact of their works: whether the audience is interested, and even more so, what the audience thinks (Africappractice, 2014, p.9).

Research Problem

The rapidity and ubiquity of the social media have made them (social media) become very visible all over the world. Individuals, groups and organisations are now deploying the various social media platforms to satisfy their various communication needs.

Within Africa, social media practices have materialized in unprecedented capacities. They've led to revolutions, encouraged, demanded and monitored best practices during elections and are also contributing to a larger dynamic of promoting growth on the continent through accountability and conversation. In fact, the most visited websites across the continent are social media platforms. In Nigeria for instance, 72 per cent of were visiting social networking sites in year 2013 (Africappractice, 2014, p.1).

Among the individuals who are embracing the social media to aid their responsibilities are the broadcast journalists. In recognition of prominent role the social media play in information gathering and dissemination, journalists including those in the broadcast media have begun to utilize them (social media platforms) to gather and disseminate relevant information to the audience. Virtually all the broadcast stations operate at least a social media account to reach their audience (Okorie, 2014, p.11).

It is consequent on the above that this study is aimed at finding out the use of social media in the operations of broadcast journalists in South-East Nigeria.

Objectives of Study

This study was aimed at achieving the following specific objectives:

- (i) To ascertain the extent at which broadcast journalists in South-East Nigeria use citizens' comments on social media platforms in newsgathering.
- (ii) To determine the level of use of social media by broadcast journalists in South-East for breaking news to the audience.

- (iii) To establish the extent of use of social media by broadcast journalists in South-East Nigeria for general transmission of news to the audience.
- (iv) To find out the level at which broadcast journalists in South-East Nigeria use social media for audience feedback.
- (v) To ascertain the major constraint of social media usage in journalism practice among broadcast journalists in South-East Nigeria.

Research Questions

In line with the study objectives, the following research questions were addressed by the researchers.

- RQ-1: What is the extent at which broadcast journalists in South-East Nigeria use citizens' comments on social media platforms in newsgathering?
- RQ-2: What is the level at which broadcast journalists in South-East Nigeria break news via the social media platforms?
- RQ-3: What is the extent at which broadcast journalists in South-East Nigeria use social media for general news transmission to the audience?
- RQ-4: To what level do broadcast journalists in South-East Nigeria use social media for audience feedback?
- RQ-5: What is the major constraint of social media usage in journalism practice among broadcast journalists in South-East Nigeria?

Significance of the Study

The need to provide current empirical data in this area of knowledge inspired the researchers to embark on this study. Thus, this study shall make available current empirical data which shall consequently serve as valuable literature for future researchers in this area of knowledge. The findings of this study will serve as a reference document for broadcast media practitioners on how best to utilise the social media to enhance their practice of journalism. Also, tertiary and research institutions shall find this work very helpful in the teaching and learning of social media and journalism practice.

Literature Review

The way in which news is conceptualized, gathered, produced, disseminated or consumed is changing in the context of new communication technologies (Berger, 1997, p.124). In the pre-internet era, mainstream media like television, radio and newspapers used to be the primary sources of news. That situation is changing as news websites, most of which are hosted by the major media companies, are now competing sources of news. Alternative news sources on the Internet, like websites featuring user-generated content (USG), blogs, social networking sites and wikis are also gaining momentum. Like mainstream media, these sites offer a wide variety of news. Some of the news articles on these sites are original reporting of local events and disasters, contributed by audiences or users and some of them are commentaries on entertainment and news stories appearing in mainstream media elsewhere. Citizen journalism is also a growing voice comprising blogs and social media that analyse and debate issues and stories appearing in mainstream media. Such commentaries and debates generally keep stories alive much longer than the

original publishers. Some scholars are of the view that this is emerging to be one of the most important functions of citizen journalism (Chari, 2013, p.113) cited in (Okoro, Diri and Odii, 2013, p.2).

Journalists are beginning to embrace social media tools like Twitter, Blogs and Facebook, but very much on their own terms. 'Same values, new tools' sums up the approach in most mainstream organisations as they marry the culture of the web with their own organizational norms. Guidelines are being rewritten; social media editors and twitter correspondents are being appointed; training and awareness programmes are underway. Social recommendation has begun to play a significant role in driving traffic to traditional news content. Most organisations are devoting significant resources to exploit social networks to drive reach. Over time, social media sites could become as important as search engines as a driver of traffic and revenue (Newman, 2009, p.2-3).

The traditional lines between professional journalism and what is often termed participatory (citizen) journalism or grassroots media are becoming increasingly blurred as more journalists operate blogs and Twitter accounts and more non-journalists bloggers and Twitterati become increasingly professional in their news reporting and commentary. Journalism's ethical norms differentiate it from social commentary where advocacy and activism is to be expected, but the increasing use of interactive social media is creating a shift to partisan journalism with more journalists beginning to express personal opinions in their reports. Today nine out of ten journalists have been prompted to investigate a story by social media; three quarters by blogs and half by Twitter. As journalists are engaging directly within their readers via platforms such as Twitter, the barriers between author and audience are dissipating and challenging journalists by allowing them to see the direct impact of their works: whether the audience is interested, and even more so, what the audience thinks (Africappractice, 2014, p.9).

Despite its well-publicized financial difficulties, the New York Times has been consistently one of the most innovative and successful websites in the United States. Like the other organisations studied for this survey, it has been quick to spot the potential of new social media tools and networks for driving online reach. It has embraced an open approach to content through RSS feeds and a well developed API. This has helped its high-quality content to sweep through the social web on the back of a wave of recommendation. The New York Times ranks No. 1 as a news source in blog aggregator Technorati, and is one of the leading news sources in Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. Jon Landman, Deputy Managing Editor of the New York Times, says increasing numbers of people are 'finding our work not by coming to our homepage or looking at our newspaper but through alerts and recommendations from their friends and colleagues'. This central insight was behind an ambitious plan to develop its own social network, Times People, first launched in 2008. This allows registered users of the website to recommend articles to other members of the community and it also integrates with existing networks on Facebook. The Times also hopes to use such networks to build up more information about its users, which it hopes to monetise through advertising or selling other services from the New York Times group (Newman, 2009, p.16).

Social media as a source continues to grow relevance to both journalists and their audience. In Nigeria around one in seven of all stories may originate from social media. While audiences in Nigeria seek verified news from newspapers, the traditional notions of what it means to be a source are rapidly expanding to encompass sourcing through engagement. Engagement as the primary purpose of these platforms, promotes conversations between parties in a non-traditional manner. Customers can discuss with companies or brands, journalists can debate, politicians can engage with their constituents

the capacity for conversation is infinite (Africappractice, 2014, p.8). Audiences are no longer just consuming the news. They are increasingly producing the news themselves. Instead of just reading the story, some audiences are telling more of the story, as they never had before. In the recent years, the quantity and quality of citizens' contributions to news stories have moved beyond novelty and tokenism, challenging the ways in which journalists and audiences produce and consume news (Sambrook, 2005; Bruns, 2008) cited in (Tng, 2009, p.6).

The UK, Canada (both with 68 per cent), China (64 per cent) and France (55 per cent) are the countries where journalists have most readily embraced social media newsgathering provided the sources are trustworthy. Use of social media by journalists to verify the stories they're already working on is also in line with the 2012 findings. Globally, 42 per cent of journalists use trusted microblogs (2012, 43 per cent), and 37 per cent use blogs they know (2012, 38 per cent) to verify stories. Compared with other sources, usage of social media for news gathering and verification has changed the least since last year, indicating journalists and their editors remain broadly happy with the role of social media in their journalism (Oriella PR Network, 2013, p.6).

Nowadays, social networks like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, MySpace among others have also involved producing and sharing of information. Especially, Twitter is described as a media for breaking news in a manner close to omnipresent CCTV for collective intelligence (Kwak et al. 2010). A lot of breaking news disperses on Twitter faster than other types of media. The biggest media companies like "CNN", "New York Times", "Time" reach millions of people via Twitter. Not only the companies, but also the journalists and the columnists are also very popular; they have millions of followers who follow them during the day to read their coverage of events. By the Turkish Statistical Institute, accessing social network sites and accessing online news have increasingly become two of the major reasons for internet users to go online in recent years (TUIK Data, 2004-2010). Although there isn't any research which focuses on specifically purposes of uses and gratifications of Turkish users, some other research shows that Twitter in particular is used for information needs rather than for satisfying social needs (Johnson, Yang, 2009). Most favourites reporters and columnist have been followed by one fourth of Turkish users, some of them are more popular than even their companies as of the August 2011 (Sozeri, 2011, p.72-73).

A high proportion of citizen sources were used especially at the beginning stage of the Mumbai crisis, indicating the small window of opportunity event driven news offer for a greater inclusion of nongovernmental voices. While the media continued to be cautious, using citizen sources more for their conventional roles as witnesses or victims with firsthand accounts, there were some clear traces of influence with citizen sources offering analytical and political viewpoints in the Times of India (Tng, 2009, p.4).

At a time when Nigerians used the social media to mobilize protests against the removal of fuel subsidy, the findings of a recent academic research released by Oxford University found that citizen journalism is on the slow but gradual rise in Nigeria and that the traditional media are waking up to it. The study, which had Sahara Reporters as its case study placed Sahara Reporters, the citizen journalism website, as Nigeria's first leading citizen website. The research conducted by Sunday Dare, a Nigerian Journalist, who earlier had studied media and public policy at Harvard University took a first objective stab at the theory and practice of citizen journalism in Nigeria; how far it has come, what impact it is making in terms of advancing democratic rights and institutions, and even how it has given the people voice and a platform to query their government. The study revealed that Sahara Reporters scored high in blazing the trail, especially exposing corruption and combining advocacy journalism with mainstream journalism. The research project entitled

'The Rise of Citizen Journalism in Nigeria-A Case Study of Sahara Reporters' argued that the emergence of Sahara Reporters was fuelled by the interactive and investigative vacuum left by the traditional media in Nigeria (Okoro, Diri and Odii, 2013, p.2).

The Internet has dramatically changed the way journalists do their work. It is therefore not surprising that about 40 per cent of U.S. journalists said that social media are very important to their work. The importance of these interactive media to the journalistic profession is underscored by the fact that one-third (34.6 per cent) of U.S. journalists spent between 30 to 60 minutes every day on social networking sites. The survey findings also indicate that more than half (53.8 per cent) of all U.S. journalists regularly use micro blogs such as Twitter for gathering information and reporting their stories. Other types of social media were used much less regularly, including blogs maintained by other journalists (used by 23.6 per cent), crowd sourced sites such as Wikipedia (22.2 per cent), audio-visual sites such as YouTube (20.2 per cent), and professional sites such as LinkedIn (10.6 per cent). Journalists were least likely to use citizen blogs in their work (7.1 per cent). U.S. journalists use social media in their reporting for a variety of purposes. The most common uses of these media are to check for breaking news (78.5 per cent) and to see what other news organizations are doing (73.1 per cent). Social media also are regularly used by U.S. journalists to identify story ideas (59.8 per cent), to interact with audiences (59.7 per cent), to find additional information (56.2 per cent) about a topic, and to find news sources (54.1 per cent). Social media are least often used for verifying information (24.7 per cent), meeting new people in the field (21.9 per cent), or interviewing news sources (20 per cent) (Willnat and Weaver, 2014, p.18-19).

With an increase in overlap between social media and traditional mainstream media in the 21st century, more journalists are forced to grapple with the ways in which social media impact their work. A clear majority (80.3 per cent) of journalists agreed that social media help to promote them and their work, and more than two-thirds (69.2 per cent) said they are more engaged with their audiences. However, only slightly less than half (48.9 per cent) agreed that social media allow them to communicate better with relevant people and only 29.7 per cent said that these media enhance their professional credibility. Thus, the use of social media as a networking and promotional tool in journalism is evident although it might not always yield desired effects. A majority also agreed that social media allow them to produce faster reporting (62 per cent), but speed of news coverage does not imply that journalists can cover more news, as only 28.8 per cent agreed with that impact of social media. Though the use of new media technology is often associated with increasing efficiency in the workplace, only a minority of journalists agreed that social media improve productivity (25 per cent) and fewer still said that it decreased their workload (6.3 per cent) (Willnat and Weaver, 2014, p.19-20).

Review of Related Empirical Literature

Some scholars have executed related empirical studies in this area of knowledge, with different scope and methodologies which has heralded variations in their results. In 2012, TNS Qual+ did a study entitled "Journalists and Social Media". The aims of the research were to provide detailed qualitative information on journalists' views and attitudes to social media as well as how they use it as part of their work. The study consisted of in-depth interviews with five journalists in each of the 27 Member States. Overall, 135 respondents participated in the study. The interviews concluded with a detailed exploration of journalists' knowledge of the way in which the European Commission uses social media and how the Commission could make more use of these channels of communication (TNS Qual+, 2012, p.12).

Findings from the study showed that Social media appear to be popular across the different Member States, especially amongst the younger generation. The most popular social media used seems to be Facebook (which has established itself as the prototype for social media) and is widely used across Member States. There was some variability in the popularity of Twitter and YouTube as they were popular in some countries, but not others. LinkedIn was popular for professional networking. The majority of journalists interviewed use social media in their work. It is clear that the most prominent types of social media used by journalists in their work are Facebook and Twitter. A clear distinction is made between the use of Facebook and Twitter - while Facebook is used for work and privately, Twitter is predominantly used for work. The tasks that journalists perform for work while using social media centres predominantly around searching for specific information and generally staying up to date on news. An important capability of social media is that it allows the journalists to identify and approach people that would otherwise be difficult to find (TNS Qual+, 2012, p.27).

The Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism and The George Washington University's School of Media and Public Affairs collaborated on a study of Twitter feeds from 13 major news organizations. The research, which examined more than 3,600 tweets over the course of a week, reveals that the news organizations use Twitter in limited ways-primarily as an added means to disseminate their own material. Both the sharing of outside content and engagement with followers are rare. The news content posted, moreover, matches closely the news events given priority on the news organizations' legacy platforms (Pew Research Center, 2012, p.1).

In general, the major news organizations studied used Twitter to direct audiences to web content that the news organization had produced and posted online. But by and large, news outlets were not using Twitter in more interactive ways, or as a reporting tool. Just 2 per cent of the tweets examined from the main organizational Twitter feeds asked followers for information-either to help inform a story or to provide feedback. Even the most active outlets rarely or never solicited information from their followers. Less than 1 per cent of the tweets from The New York Times, 3 per cent from The Washington Post and 3 per cent from The Huffington Post (one of two online-only news outlets studied) solicited information (Pew Research Center, 2012, p.9).

Brunswick Group in 2011 conducted a global survey of business journalists and their use of social media. In the survey, they interviewed more than 1,000 business journalists from print and broadcast media in 35 countries and asked them how they used social media platforms. The findings show that social media is increasingly the most influential source of information for stories published by business journalists, whether it is the initial seed of an idea for a story or a main tool in gathering information. The survey also shows how social media evolves over time. Around 90 per cent said they had taken information from a social media site. Some 66 per cent said that information found on social media had led to a published story. Overall, up to one in seven of all business articles written today are generated by something a reporter first spots on social media. According to the survey, 72 per cent of reporters believe social media will play an increasingly important role in providing content for their stories (Gunn and MacDonald, 2011, p.57).

Newman (2009) did a study on "The rise of social media and its impact on mainstream journalism: A study of how newspapers and broadcasters in the UK and US are responding to a wave of participatory social media, and a historic shift in control towards individual consumers." The paper examines how journalists at leading news organisations in the UK and USA are increasingly involving audiences in the way they research and tell stories (Newman, 2009, p.2).

The paper found that there has been an explosion of participation over the past two years (2007-9), driven by user-friendly internet tools, better connectivity and new mobile devices. Social Networking and UGC have become mainstream activities, accounting for almost 20 per cent of internet time in the UK and involving half of all internet users. This dramatic change has forced traditional news organisations to take note. Social media and UGC are fundamentally changing the nature of breaking news. They are contributing to the compression of the 'news cycle' and putting more pressure on editors over what to report and when news organisations are already abandoning attempts to be first for breaking news, focusing instead on being the best at verifying and curating it (Newman, 2009, p.2).

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on the Technological Determinism Theory and the Diffusion of Innovation Theory.

Technological Determinism Theory

This theory was propounded by Marshall McLuhan in 1962. This theory helps to explain how innovation in modern technology helps to engineer some forms of change in society or in the ordering of things. Baran and Davis (2006, p.302) averred that "McLuhan's theory is actually a collection of lot's of intriguing ideas bound together by some common assumptions. The most central of these assumptions is that changes in communication technology inevitably produce changes in both cultural and social order... McLuhan seemed ready to accept whatever changes were dictated by and inherent in communications technology... Technology inevitably causes specific changes in how people think, in how society is structured, and in the forms of culture that are created". McQuail (2010, p.103) itemised the basic assumptions of this theory, as follows:

- (i) Communication technology is fundamental to society.
- (ii) Each technology has a bias to particular communication forms, contents and uses.
- (iii) The sequence of invention and application of communication technology influences the direction and pace of social change.
- (iv) Communication revolutions lead to social revolutions.

The basic tenets of this theory is that the invention of new technology can alter the way society responds to events or what they use to do in an old way.

This theory is relevant to this study because it provides alternative approach for journalists, particularly the broadcast media journalists to use modern technology (Facebook, Youtube, Twitter and LinkedIn etc) to reach their target audience. This simply means that they would not have to use only the traditional mass media but adopt the new forms of communication platforms offered by the social media to execute their business of information gathering and dissemination. Some broadcasters are now present and active on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and others. New programme formats have been developed that use these platforms to enable listeners and viewers to directly and easily interact with the running of radio or television programmes. The primary objective is to create programme associated with communities and facilitate the link between the audience and the main audiovisual service and which promotes the broadcaster's brands and content.

Diffusion of Innovation Theory

An innovation is regarded as the process of developing and implementing a new idea. Traditional diffusion studies consider diffusion of an innovation a social process of communication whereby potential adopters become aware of the innovation and are influenced to adopt the innovation over time (Rogers, 1983, p.6) cited in (Oloredo and Oyewole, 2013, p.4).

The depiction of diffusion phenomena as a communication process led to the study of influence of three groups of factors on adoption decisions: (i) innovation, (ii) adopter, (iii) communication characteristics. Citing Rogers (1983, p.9), Oloredo and Oyewole, (2013, p.4) identified five generic innovation characteristics that influence adoption of innovations:

- (i) Relative advantage of the new technology with respect to existing technology
- (ii) Compatibility with existing technology
- (iii) The complexity of understanding the technology
- (iv) The ease of trialability of the new technology
- (v) The observability of the benefits of the new technology

Diffusion research centers on the conditions which increase or decrease the likelihood that a new idea, product, or practice will be adopted by members of a given culture. Diffusion studies have tried to characterize potential adopters based on how and when they adopt an innovation (Rogers, 1983, p.11). Other studies have focused on the influence of communication channels and information sources on adoption decisions. The introduction of internet to media news gathering and reporting is an innovation in journalism practice. The study examines the level of adoption (compliance) and usage of social media (innovation) by Nigeria broadcast media practitioners in South-East this thus justifies the relevance of the theory to this study.

Methodology

The survey research method was used to conduct the study while questionnaire served as data collection instrument. Since the study focused on broadcast stations in South-East Nigeria, the entire 867 broadcast journalists constituted the population of study is 867. A sample of 274 was drawn from the total population using the Taro Yamane's sample size determination formula. The Guttman Scale of Reproducibility was used to check the reliability of the measuring instrument which yielded reliability coefficient value of 96 per cent.

With reference to the three major types of media ownership pattern in South-East Nigeria, the purposive sampling technique was used to select journalists in federal, state and privately owned broadcast stations that were studied. The data were collated and presented using tables while they were analysed with the aid of simple percentage.

Data Analysis

In line with determined sample size, 274 copies of the questionnaire were administered on the respondents. After the administration, 268 copies were properly filled and returned while 6 copies were not returned. Since there was a significant return rate, the researchers therefore proceeded with the analysis of the returned 268 copies.

Table 1. Extent to which respondents accommodate citizens' social media comments in newsgathering

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Valid	High extent	86	32.1	32.1	32.1
	Moderate extent	11	4.1	4.1	36.2
	Low extent	97	36.2	36.2	72.4
	No extent	44	16.4	16.4	88.8
	Not sure	30	11.2	11.2	100.0
Total		268	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 above shows that most of the respondents do not significantly accommodate citizens' social media comments in newsgathering.

Table 2. Extent to which respondents use the social media in breaking news

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Valid	High extent	35	13.1	13.1	13.1
	Moderate extent	79	29.5	29.5	42.5
	Low extent	89	33.2	33.2	75.7
	No extent	40	14.9	14.9	90.7
	Not sure	25	9.3	9.3	100.0
Total		268	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 above shows that most of the respondents to a low extent use the social media platforms in breaking of news.

Table 3. The extent respondents use the social media for general news transmission

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Valid	High extent	23	8.6	8.6	8.6
	Moderate extent	38	14.2	14.2	22.8
	Low extent	127	47.4	47.4	70.1
	No extent	55	20.5	20.5	90.7
	Not sure	25	9.3	9.3	100.0
Total		268	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 above shows that most of the respondents do not sufficiently use the social media platforms for general transmission of news.

Table 4. Extent to which respondents use the social media for audience feedback

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Valid	High extent	33	12.3	12.3	12.3
	Moderate extent	56	20.9	20.9	33.2
	Low extent	100	37.3	37.3	70.5
	No extent	52	19.4	19.4	89.9
	Not sure	27	10.1	10.1	100.0
Total		268	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 above shows that most of the respondents to a low extent use the social media platforms for audience feedback.

Table 5. Major constraint in using social media for news gathering and transmission

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Valid	Lack of adequate knowledge to use of social media	52	19.4	19.4	19.4
	Inadequate gadgets to access the social media	31	11.6	11.6	31.0
	Poor internet connectivity	101	37.7	37.7	68.7
	The issue of credibility of social media sources	46	17.2	17.2	85.8
	All of the above	21	7.8	7.8	93.7
	None of the above	10	3.7	3.7	97.4
	Not sure	7	2.6	2.6	100.0
	Total	268	100.0	100.0	

Data on Table 5 above show that majority of the respondents see poor internet connectivity as the major constraint in using social media platforms for news gathering and transmission.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study were carefully discussed to ensure clear understanding.

RQ 1: What is the extent at which broadcast journalists in South-East Nigeria accommodate citizens' posts/comments on social media platforms during newsgathering?

The researchers first of all tried to establish the extent at which broadcast journalists in Southeast Nigeria accommodate citizens' posts/comments on the social media during newsgathering. To provide answer to this research question, the data presented on table 1 above were deployed. Data on the table show the extent to which respondents accommodate citizens' posts/comments on social media platforms for news gathering. 86 respondents constituting 32.1 per cent to a high extent accommodate citizen posts/comments on platforms during newsgathering, 11 respondents representing 4.1 per cent to a moderate extent accommodate citizens' posts/comments during newsgathering, 97 respondents or 36.2 per cent to a low extent accommodate citizens' social media posts/comments during newsgathering, 44 respondents constituting 16.4 per cent said they do not use the platforms for such purpose, while 30 respondents representing 11.12 per cent were not sure of the extent of usage. This means that most of the respondents are yet to significantly include the citizens' social media posts/comments in their gathering of news. The implication is that the concept of "mutualisation of news" is insignificantly practiced by broadcast journalists in South-East Nigeria.

RQ 2: What is the level at which broadcast journalists in South-East Nigeria break news via the social media platforms?

One very fundamental aspect of journalism practice especially broadcast journalism is the breaking of news. Journalists have a crucial duty of breaking news as fast as possible. This informed the advancement of this second research question. To provide answer to this research question, the data presented on table 2 above were used. Data on the table show that 35 respondents constituting 13.1 per cent use to a high large extent, 79 respondents representing 29.5 per cent use to a moderate extent, 89 respondents or 33.2 per cent use to a low extent, 40 respondents constituting 14.9 per cent do not use at all, while 25 respondents representing 9.3 per cent were not sure of the extent of usage. The implication is that most of the respondents do not significantly use the social media platforms in breaking of news.

RQ 3: What is the extent at which broadcast journalists in South-East Nigeria use the social media for general news transmission to the audience?

This research question was put forward by the researchers to ascertain the extent at which broadcast journalists in South-East Nigeria use the social media for general transmission of news to the audience. Data presented on table 3 above were used to address this research question. Data on the table and chart show that 23 respondents constituting 8.6 per cent use to high extent, 38 respondents representing 14.2 per cent use to a moderate extent, 127 respondents or 47.4 per cent use to a low extent, 55 respondents constituting 20.5 per cent do not use at all, while 25 respondents representing 9.3 per cent were not sure of the extent of usage. The implication is that most of the respondents do not sufficiently use the social media platforms for general news transmission.

RQ 4: What is the extent at which broadcast journalists in South-East Nigeria use the social media for audience feedback?

The core aim of this research question was to determine the extent at which broadcast journalists in South-East Nigeria use the social media for audience feedback. Data collected and presented on table 4 above were utilized to address this research question. It showed the extent to which respondents use social media platforms in audience feedback. Accordingly, 33 respondents constituting 12.3 per cent to a high extent use the platforms for high extent, 56 respondents representing 20.9 per cent use to moderate extent, 100 respondents or 37.3 per cent use to a low extent, 52 respondents constituting 19.4 per cent do not use, while 27 respondents representing 10.1 per cent were not sure of the extent of usage. The implication is that most of the respondents to an insignificant level use the social media platforms for audience feedback.

RQ 5: What is the major constraint in using social media for newsgathering and transmission among broadcast journalists in Southeast Nigeria?

The researchers advanced this research question to find out the major constraint of the respondents in their usage of the social media for newsgathering and transmission. Data collected and presented on table 5 above were utilized to answer this research question. The table show that 52 respondents constituting 19.4 per cent indicated that lack of adequate knowledge, 31 respondents representing 11.6 per cent indicated inadequate

gadgets to access the social media, 101 respondents or 37.7 per cent stated poor internet connectivity, 46 respondents constituting 17.7 per cent indicated the issue of credibility, 21 respondent constituting 7.8 went for the all of the above option, 10 respondents constituting 3.7 indicated the none of the above option while 7 respondents constituting 2.6 indicated that they were not sure of the correct answer. This means that majority of the respondents see poor internet connectivity as the major constraint in using social media platforms for news gathering and transmission.

Summary of Findings

Findings from the analysis of data showed that;

- (i) Majority of broadcast journalists in South-East Nigeria do not significantly accommodate citizens' social media posts/comments in newsgathering.
- (ii) Most of the broadcast journalists in South-East Nigeria do not sufficiently use the social media to break news to the audience.
- (iii) Majority of broadcast journalists in South-East Nigeria do not significantly maximize the social media platforms for general news transmission.
- (iv) Most broadcast journalists in South-East Nigeria do not significantly use the social media for audience feedback.
- (v) Poor internet connectivity constitutes a major constraint to the effective use of social media platforms in newsgathering and transmission.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers therefore conclude that broadcast journalists in South-East Nigeria are yet to significantly practice the concept of mutualisation of news. The collaboration between the journalists and the citizens on the social media regarding the production of news is ineffective. This was premised on the fact that the journalists to an insignificant extent accommodate the citizens' social media posts/comments during newsgathering. They also rarely use the social media platforms in breaking of news, general transmission of news and audience feedback.

Recommendations

Sequel to the findings and conclusion reached, the researchers made the following recommendations:

- (i) Broadcast journalists in South-East Nigeria are encouraged to embrace the social media platforms as the platforms represent potent tools for the practice of modern day journalism.
- (ii) Journalists should look at the citizens' social media posts/comments during newsgathering as this may provide more insight and expand the scope of issues to be covered.
- (iii) Journalists should be trained and retrained to improve their skills on the use of social media in the practice of journalism.
- (iv) Ministry of Information and Communication Technology should partner with internet service providers to engender enhanced internet connectivity.
- (v) Future researchers in this area of knowledge should use the qualitative approach especially In-depth Interview and Focus Group Discussion so as to get more details.

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