

ASSESSMENT OF CITIZEN JOURNALISM STATUS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract: *This study examined the status of citizen journalism in Nigeria. In carrying out this study, survey research method was used. The population of study was 20,555,137. A sample size of three hundred and eighty-five (385) was drawn from the population of study. After the analysis, the results revealed that majority of the citizen journalists in Nigeria have poor knowledge in information gathering and dissemination. The findings also revealed that the level of citizen involvement in citizen journalism in Nigeria is high. It was found that citizen journalists in Nigeria have to a large extent enhanced professional journalists in their news report. It was however discovered that citizen journalists in Nigeria do not abide by the ethics of the journalism profession. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended that there should be increased enlightenment and education of the public through radio, television, newspapers, seminars and workshops by communication scholars on the negative consequences of wrong application of the Internet and other social media tools for information dissemination. Also, the cyber crime law should be effectively enforced to deter people from cyber mischief. Again, the citizen journalists should be adequately sensitized on basic professional guidelines in order to report as effectively as possible.*

Key Words: *citizen Journalism, Mainstream Journalism, Internet, Journalism Ethics, Status.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

By conveying information, analysis, comment and entertainment, journalism constitutes the public eye as well as its advocate in the public arena (Udejah, 2014, p.1). Before now, people have been communicating with their relatives and friends using various primitive media such as clay tablets, papyrus parchment, flag, smoke and drums. In the year 1450, Johannes Gutenberg, who was a goldsmith and a businessman developed a truly new communication technology that changed the world of printing. Gutenberg invented a printing press that could produce more than hundred copies of books in a day. This early technological innovation by Gutenberg, no doubt, suddenly made the dissemination of information quicker and cheaper.

Beginning from the time of Gutenberg till today, more and more media are being included in the communication system. Each of these media being included in the communication system no doubt is as a result of one form of technological innovation or the other. This was why Marshall McLuhan in one of his famous books titled “The Gutenberg Galaxy” predicted that the world would be a global village. Today, this prediction has become a thing of reality.

Journalism as a profession was originally associated with the reportage of current events in printed form especially in newspapers and magazines, but with the coming on board of the Internet in the 20th century, the use of the term has broadened to incorporate all forms of printed materials and electronic communication that has to do with the dissemination of current information which is of interest to the public. According to Agba cited in Emenari (2004) the Internet is a global communication infrastructure, which enables any computer connected to it to communicate with any other computer connected to the Internet at electronic spreads regardless of geopolitical location.

The Internet has assumed an indispensable tool in every area of human endeavour, including modern journalism practice. This has brought about the democratization of information, transforming people from being content readers to publishers and reporters. This technological innovation in journalism profession has greatly reduced if not completely removed the bottlenecks in the conventional and conservative form of journalism which is categorized by different levels of gate-keeping. Hudson and Rowland (2007, p.1) agreed with this view when they stated that:

We live in the digital age. News bulletins and programmes that used to be available on television and radio set are now available on your computers or mobile phone. News reports that were presented to viewers and listeners in a running order decided by editors and producers are now available on demand at the click of a mouse or a remote control, whenever the consumer wants it.

The invention of the Internet has made everybody who can manipulate the button of a Laptop computer, the Blackberry phones, Smart phones; IPad etc. become a journalist irrespective of the person's professional background. In many parts of the world today, citizens are taking advantage of the opportunities provided by the Internet to disseminate and access information they wouldn't have had access to or disseminate. To this end, Baran (1998, p.63) opined that:

As the technology continues to shrink the world, people will become increasingly involved in one another's lives, and as people come to know more about others who were hitherto separated from them by distance, they will form new beneficial relationships.

The above assertion by Baran is significant to our discourse as it draws attention to the human interest angle to stories and events happening around the world which have made citizen journalism to flourish. Human beings by nature are very passionate and curious, as such they would explore every means at their disposal including the Internet to bring to limelight information that will be of importance to their fellow human beings as quickly as possible. The engagements of the Internet and other social networking tools have facilitated the ability of citizens to create new opportunities in news gathering and dissemination.

2. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM:

The emergence of the information and communication technologies, specifically the Internet has given citizens the opportunity to be heard and equally contribute their quota to the happenings in and around their environment, citizen journalists have become regular contributors to mainstream media. They provide information and some other latest and interesting pictures especially in a scenario where professional journalists have little or no access to. The participatory nature of citizen journalism has helped in reducing the censorship nature of the professional journalism practice that dictates who should or should not participate in journalism.

However, some communication experts believe that citizen journalism has posed serious threat to the journalism profession in Nigeria since some of the information disseminated by these crops of journalists has been found to be untrue. An exemplary case was the recent salt cure for Ebola virus posted on Facebook and text messages in Nigeria which resulted in the loss of some human lives. While some see citizen journalism as an opportunity to improve on professional journalism, others fear that if too much importance is attached to citizen journalism, it may undermine the ethical standards of the profession. Given these realities, it becomes imperative that relentless efforts are geared towards discovering the rational and professional tension that have erupted between citizen journalism and the professional journalism and show how these have altered journalism practice in Nigeria.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The specific objectives of this study were:

- To ascertain the knowledge level of the citizen journalists in information gathering and dissemination.
- To ascertain the extent of citizens involvement in citizen journalism in Nigeria.
- To find out whether citizen journalists have enhanced professional journalists in their report.
- To ascertain the extent to which the public perceive the information disseminated by the citizen journalist in Nigeria as credible.
- To find out the extent to which citizen journalists abide by the ethics of the journalism profession in Nigeria.

4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

To realize the objectives of this study, the following research questions were put forward to guide the study.

- What is the knowledge level of the citizen journalists in information gathering and dissemination?
- What is the level of citizens' involvement in citizen journalism in Nigeria?
- To what extent have citizen journalists enhanced the professional journalists in their report?
- To what extent do the public perceive the information disseminated by the citizen journalists as credible?
- To what extent do citizen journalists abide by the ethics of the journalism profession in Nigeria?

5. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES:

The following hypotheses were tested:

Hypothesis One

Hi: There is a significant relationship between citizen journalists' level of knowledge on information gathering and dissemination and their level of involvement in news business.

Hypothesis Two

Hi: There is a significant relationship between citizen journalists' involvement in news business and enhanced professionalism by mainstream journalists.

Hypothesis Three

Hi: There is a significant relationship between the educational qualification of citizen journalists' and their ability to abide by the ethics of journalism profession in Nigeria.

6. LITERATURE REVIEW:

The Internet and World Wide Web invented by Dr. Barnes-Lee more than two decades ago are initially designed to move data and other information from one place to another in a reliable and most efficient way, have created the communication opportunities needed by citizens to become actively involved in gathering, processing and dissemination of information. Curtis (2012) describes citizen journalism as "the gathering, writing, editing, production and distribution of news and information by people not trained as professional journalists." Writing about citizen journalism, Mark Glaser noted that:

The idea behind citizen journalism is that people without professional journalism training can use the tools of modern technology and the global distribution of the Internet to create, augment or fact-check media on their own or in collaboration with others. For example, you might write about a city council meeting on your blog or in an online forum. Or you could fact-check a newspaper article from the mainstream media and point out factual errors or bias on your blog. Or you might snap a digital photo of news worthy event happening in your town and post it online. Or you might videotape a similar event and post it on a site such as YouTube (Glaser, 2006).

It is the dissemination of information by individuals who are not journalist by profession but they have something newsworthy to share. The success and popularity of citizen journalism have shown that the idea of online journalism has been successfully taken to participatory level and this underscores the fact that citizen journalism emphasizes dialogue, where active senders and active receivers play functional roles in shaping the message content being sent across.

6.1 Citizen Journalism Development

Citizen journalism had been in existence but was brought to limelight as a result of the technological innovation in the journalism profession which has resulted in a paradigm shift in the area of news gathering and reporting. The name "citizen journalism" was coined in the immediate aftermath of the South Asian Tsunami of December 2004, when individuals' accounts and imagery were widely heralded for uniquely contributing to mainstream journalism coverage (Zelizer and Allan, 2010, p.18).

Communication scholars have traced the coming on board of citizen journalism to the emergence of the Web 2.0 in 2004. Web 2.0 refers to the functionality built into websites that allows people to put information on them easily, share it with others and collaborate with them (Duarte, 2009). Some examples of the web 2.0 sites are social networking sites, wikis, video sharing sites, web-based communities; blogs etc. with the Web 2.0, citizens are on a daily basis, becoming active audience instead of the usual passive audience. This explains why Baran (2004, p.309) noted that:

We typically think of people who access a medium as audience members, but the Internet has *users*, not audience members. At any time- or even at the same time- a person may be both *reading* Internet content and *creating* content.

From the above, it is deducible that the Internet has created an interactive Websites that functionally engage sender and receiver in shaping the message content. The Internet has transformed journalism into what is called the attention age. The attention age according to Nwabueze (2013) is characterized by the ability of individuals to create and consume information instantly and freely as well as share it with the social media community on the Internet. The bottom line here is that the average citizen can now transmit information globally. Before now, this power was solely reserved for big media organizations and news agencies. "Gutenberg made us all readers. Radio and television made us all first-hand observers. Xerox made us all publishers. The Internet makes us all journalists, broadcasters, columnists, commentators and critics" (Grossman cited in Barab, 2004).

6.2 The Place of Citizen Journalism in Nigeria

In contemporary society, the roles of the mainstream media are drastically changing in order to adapt to the ever increasing pressure which the citizen journalism has mounted on them. At present, there are many Weblogs or blogs which are either operated by Nigerians or they create a forum for Nigerians to air their views and make meaningful contributions to topical issues being discussed by a chain of users. Some of these blogs include; ogbongeblog.com 360nobs.com, Notjustok.com, Topic.net and Klinreports.com.

Web-based applications, common information on the Internet are also producers and disseminators of information, thus given rise to a new term “Prosumers” (Ramanyam, 2015, p.243). The term prosumer was coined from two concepts-producer and consumer. Prosumer means that the audiences are no longer consumers alone but active and equal participants in the business of mass communication. Quoting Gunelius, Daniel (2012), wrote that: No longer are businesses completely in control of their products, brands and messages. In Nigeria today, the consumers are in control (citizens). These are the citizen journalists who are members of the social web-bloggers, forum posters, social networking participants, micro bloggers etc. who report the events as soon as they happen and influence people within and outside the country. According to the Nigerian communications commission (2015) Internet users in Nigeria are about 86million and Nigeria is currently home to about 190 million connected telephone lines, with 145 million having active subscription. With this report, it may be save to say that the democratized media society has caught on in Nigeria. Millions of Nigerians have signed up social networking sites and numerous audience-driven online citizens journalism sites and discussions forum. A lot of excitement now surrounds the perceived empowering potentials of citizen journalism (Dare, 2010, p.8).

6.3 Positives of Citizen Journalism: The Nigerian Experience

There is no doubt that citizen journalism has become essential to the democratization of the media and the society. Before now, the idea that the media should be given free hand to operate by reducing if not completely removing the bureaucratic bottlenecks, commercial and professional hegemony to pave way for all potential users and consumers has been a mirage. As a result of the numerous opportunities offered by the Internet and the social media platforms, almost all citizens who can manipulate the computer button can now communicate to a large audience through blogs, Internet groups, social networking sites and other related means.

Unlike before, citizens can easily challenge those in authority concerning certain issues that affects them, expose all forms of corruption and equally express their opinions through the Internet and social networking sites. These roles were made manifest in the recent general elections in Nigeria where citizen journalist were busy providing and entertaining people by reporting bit by bit the election results in the various polling units as soon as the results were announced. This to a great extent reduced the incidence of election rigging in the form of result manipulation, bribing of electoral officials by party agents and snatching of ballot boxes. Asuni and Frarris (2011, pp.10-18) reports that in 2011, more than 70,000 people were able to contact INEC directly to report incidents and have their questions answered, while the commission also received about 4,000 Tweets and 25 million hits on its Website in three days during the presidential election alone. Politicians in Nigeria have come to realize the importance of Internet and the social networking systems during and after the 2015 general elections. The elections heralded the use of information and communication technologies in the history of electioneering process. The former President Goodluck Jonathan and other contestants made extensive use of the social media in the campaign process.

Odi, C., in his study conducted in 2013, found that Nigerians participated in the country’s democracy through citizen journalism. Out of the 396 respondents studied, 242 representing (61%) of the respondents strongly agreed that Nigerians participated in Nigeria’s democracy through citizen journalism. The study also showed that the level of participation in Nigeria’s democracy through citizen journalism was not low. It is against this backdrop, that the advent of the social media in the few years is fast changing the situation as we now have online platforms that serve as a new “political arena” where citizens resort to and participate in political discourse.

In 2008, the incident of the brutal assault on Ms.Uzoma Okere by the navy officers in Lagos attracted the unprecedented attention from the public and even the government as a result of the wider publicity given to it by citizen journalists who were at the scene of the event. They videoed the incident as it was happening and instantly posts it on the Internet. Also, when the federal government of Nigeria removed the fuel subsidy, a Facebook page named occupy Nigeria was created and used to keep protesters fully informed about the happening and to coordinate the protest (www.Facebook.com/occupy.Nigeria). These are clear manifestations of the fact that citizen journalism has come to stay in Nigeria and people are not relenting in utilizing the opportunities it has offered.

6.4 Negative Implication of Citizen Journalism in Nigeria

Citizen journalism is not without its negativities, depending on the motive of who is or are involved. In Nigeria, the first noticeable case that comes to mind when down side of citizen journalism is mentioned was the incident of the offensive photographs of an accident scene where a truck driver crushed 19 robbery victims to death along Lagos- Ore Highway on July 31, 2009. Unfortunately in march, 2010 the Internet was flooded with the ugly photographs of the

incident which happened a year later making it look fresh. This generated whole lots of controversy and attention from the public. Reports had it that the testimonies from security agencies and some persons involved in the story denied the robbery alleged to have happened on 25 February, 2010 as speculated on the Internet by the citizen journalists. According to Nigerian Best Forum (2010) the then inspector general of police Ogbonna Onovo, said the incident was a rehash of robbery incident which took place on 31 July last year, (2009) between Ore, in Ondo State and Shagamu, in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Another incident of the downside of citizen journalism in Nigeria which is still very fresh in our memories was the salt-water bath for Ebola virus. From all over the country, people were receiving and sending texts messages through WhatsApp, BBM, Facebook, Twitter, e-mails etc on the same issue. These were some typical instances of what could be classified as a major downside of citizen journalism on Nigerians. In a comparative content analysis and desk research conducted by Olalekan, A.A. in 2014, it was found that there was predominance of unethical reporting in blogs as compared to professional journalism. Also, the study found out that despite these unethical practices, a lot of people still visit these sites for their news information.

Since information uploaded online by the citizen journalists do not go through censorship, obscene, indecent and other materials lacking in standard may be uploaded and defenseless citizens in the society may be exposed to them.

6.5 Citizen Journalism Implication on Mainstream Journalism

The explosion of Internet and other new technology devices has resulted in a new trend where people cover events and disseminate content easily and immediately (Grabowicz cited in Niyomukiza, 2013). The growing incident of citizen journalism in Nigeria is such that it has now become a constant supplier of news and other vital information to the mainstream media. As a result of the participatory and immediacy nature of the citizen journalism, this brand of journalism has opened up new opportunities and transformed positively the mainstream journalism in various ways. For instance, majority of the mainstream media now depend on citizen journalists to feed them with information about events happening in their locality, since they are constrained by time and resources. Citizen journalism has proven itself to be an effective part of news reporting and an asset to journalists and editors (Niyomukiza, 2013).

According to Philips as cited in Bayelsa Official Social Media Group (2015) social media create a new model of civic engagement that blends traditional with social media. He further explained that reporters are following Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, and incorporating the voices of ordinary people in news reporting. Thus, the Internet, mobile phone technology, satellite communications, and other forms of communication have been coupled to computer communication to produce a new media technology stage that has multimedia capabilities to address information and communication needs across fields and disciplines (Ukonu, Okoro and Agbo, 2013).

While many communication scholars are in agreement that citizen journalism has improved on mainstream journalism practice, others believed that it has posed a serious threat to the journalism profession. Dare, S. conducted a survey in 2010 among 120 respondents to provide insight into the usage pattern of the Internet by Nigerians and what they trust as their news source. It was revealed that only 33 respondents of the 120 surveyed trust the news from Sahara reporters' website, while 55 respondents do not.

7. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

The study is anchored on the Technological Determinism theory, and the Democratic- Participant Media Theory.

7.1 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) noted 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) listed the basic assumptions of this theory as follows:

1. Communication technology is fundamental to society.
2. Each technology has a bias to particular communication forms, contents and uses.
3. The sequence of invention and application of communication technology influences the direction and pace of social change.
4. Communication revolutions lead to social revolutions.

The main tenet of this theory is that the invention of new technology can change how society reacts to events or what they use to do in an old way.

7.2 Democratic- Participant Media Theory

The democratic- participant media theory is another theory that guides this study. It was propounded by McQuail in 1987. The theory emanates from the realization of the development in new media and intense criticism of the dominance of the main mass media by private or public monopolies. Okunna (1999), citing McQuail (1987), gives the fundamental principle of the democratic-participant media theory as the:

...needs, interests and aspirations of the active “receiver” in a political society (and) and has to do with the right to relevant information, the right to answer back, the right to use the means of communication for interaction...

The main thrust of democratic-participant media theory lies in its insistence that the existing bureaucracy as well as commercial and professional hegemony in media systems be broken down, so as to guarantee easier media access for all potential users and consumers (Folarin, 2002, p. 33).

These theories are relevant to this study because they provide alternative approach to the media audience, particularly the active users of the media who depend on the media for up to date intelligence report on the society. With Facebook, Youtube, twitter and LinkedIn etc audiences are exposed to an avalanche of interactive media networks from which they not only expose themselves to but participate actively in uploading, downloading, fact checking, and updating information with the aid of the Internet and digital technology gadgets.

8. METHODOLOGY:

The research design adopted in this study is survey research method. The survey is a research method which focuses on a representative sample derived from the entire population (Nwodu, 2006, p. 67). The survey research method was adopted because of its ability to ensure a representative outlook and provide a simple approach to the study of opinion, attitude and values of individuals.

8.1 Population of the Study

The population of study is made up of all the residents of the five South East states of Nigeria which include; Abia, Enugu, Ebonyi, Imo and Anambra who make use of Internet and other social networking sites for information gathering and dissemination. According to the National Population Commission (2013) the projected population of the South East Nigeria is 20,555,137 people.

8.2 Sample Size

Sample size used in this study is 385. This was scientifically determined using the online Australian Scientific Calculator at 95% confidence level and 5% confidence interval.

8.3 Sampling Technique

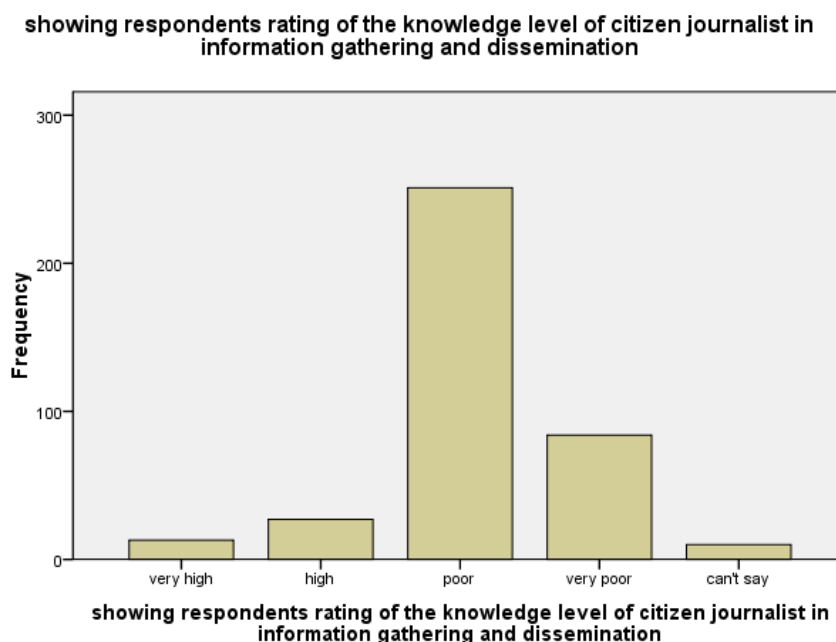
In carrying out this study, the researcher adopted the multi-stage sampling technique. This technique requires the use of several sampling techniques or/and stages in a particular method for ensuring proper representation, especially when the population is large and complex (Chukwuma, 2002). In the first stage, the researchers used simple random sampling technique to select three states of Enugu, Anambra and Imo. The second stage was the selection of the state capitals of the three selected states. This was purposively selected because the researchers believed that a good number of the literate populations reside in the capital cities. Also, the capitals have a good number of people who make use of the internet and the networking sites for various purposes because of the availability of these facilities.

From the selected state capitals, the researchers then used the simple random sampling technique to select two areas in each of the state capitals for analysis. The areas selected are: New Haven, Abakpa for (Enugu), Bank Road, Douglas Road for (Owerri), Unizik Junction, and AmenyiAwka for (Awka). Then a proportional representation was done to this effect to determine the number of questionnaire allotted to each of the selected areas. Thus; New Haven got 74, Abakpa got 75, Bank Road got 55, Douglas Road got 60, Unizik Junction got 65 and AmenyiAkwa got 56. The researcher purposively distributed copies of questionnaire to the respondents based on the above proportion in each of the selected areas. As such, respondents with the ability to respond to the items in the questionnaire were given the questionnaire.

8.4 Data Presentation and Analysis

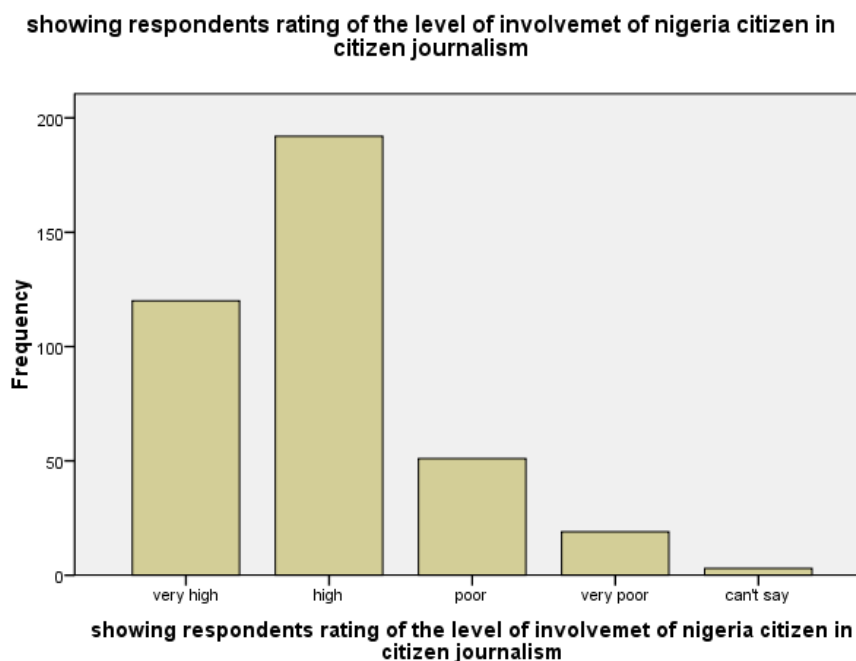
Here, quantitative data generated through questionnaire were presented and analysed.

Figure 1



Research question 1 was intended to ascertain respondents’ assessment of the knowledge level of the citizen journalist in information gathering and dissemination. From the data presented in figure 1 above, 13 respondents representing 3.4%, said that the knowledge level of the citizen journalist in information gathering and dissemination is very high. Twenty seven (27) representing 7.0% said it is high. 251 respondents representing 65.2% said the citizen journalist has poor knowledge level in information gathering and dissemination. 84 respondents representing 21.8% said their knowledge level is very poor while 10 or 2.6% of the respondents were undecided. This knowledge level analysis indicates that majority of the respondents believe that the knowledge level of citizen journalist in information gathering and dissemination is still low.

Figure 2



The information in figure 2 above show that 120 respondents representing 31.2% said that the level of citizens involvement in citizen journalism in Nigeria is very high; 192 respondents representing 49.9% said that the level of citizen involvement in citizen journalism is high, 51 respondents representing 13.2% said it is poor, 19 respondents said

that the level of citizens involvement in citizen journalism is very poor while 3 respondents representing 0.8% could not say.

Figure 3

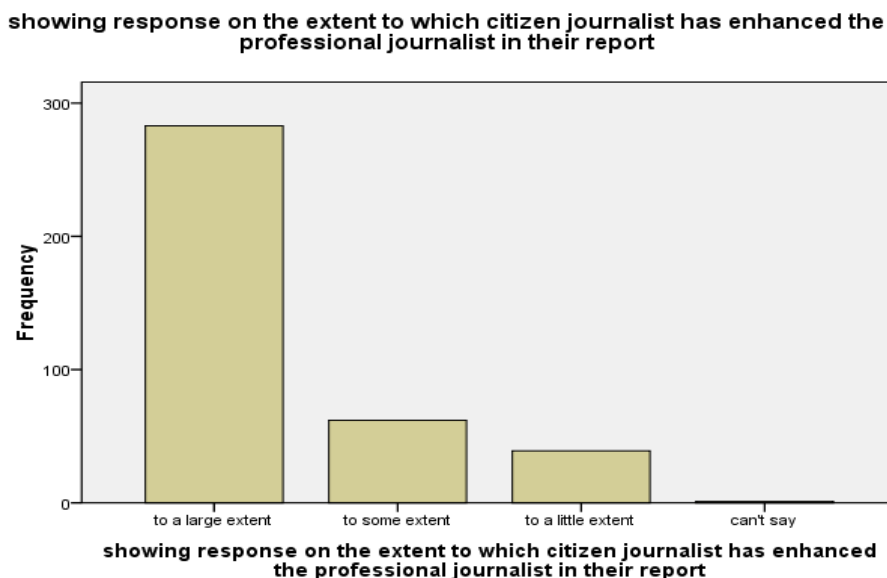


Figure 3 above shows that 283 respondents representing 73.5% believed that the citizen journalists have to a large extent enhanced the professional journalists in their report; 62 or 16.1% of the respondents believed that the citizen journalists have to some extent enhanced the professional journalists in their report; 39 respondents representing 10.1% believed to little extent that the citizen journalists have enhanced the professional journalists in their report while 1 or 0.6% of the respondent was undecided. From the data provided in the figure above, it can be deduced that citizen journalists have satisfactorily improved the news report of the professional journalists in Nigeria. The above figure shows that 57 respondents representing 14.8% perceive the information disseminated by the citizen journalist as credible to a large extent; 209 respondents or 54.3% perceive the information disseminated by citizen journalist as credible to some extent; 114 respondents representing 29.6% said they perceive the credibility of the information to little extent; 1 or .3% of the respondents perceive the credibility of the information disseminated by citizen journalists to no extent while 4 or 1.0% of the respondents could not say.

Figure 4

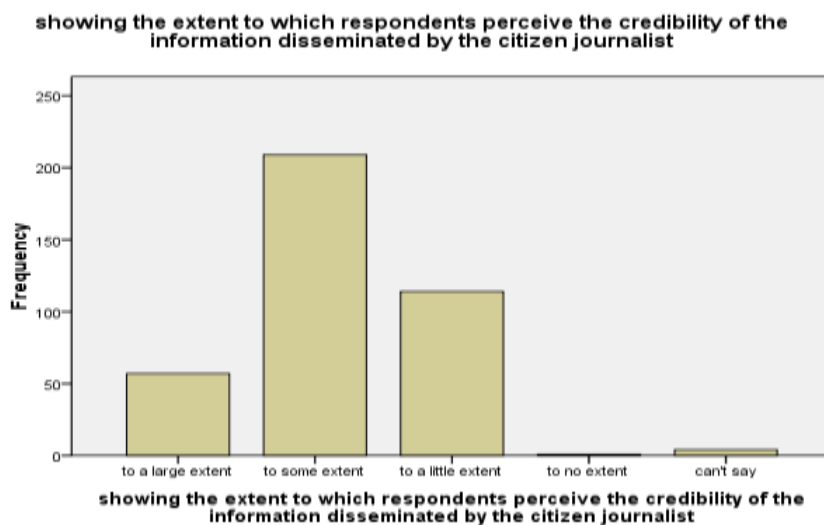
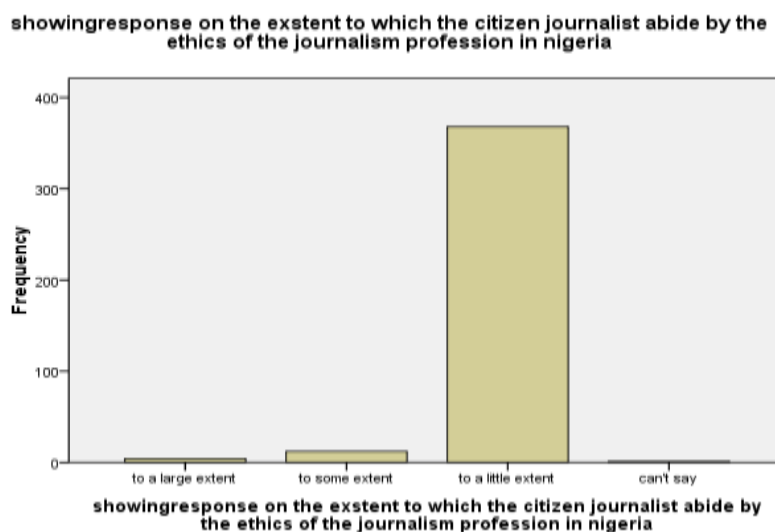


Figure 4 above shows that 283 respondents representing 73.5% believed that the citizen journalists have to a large extent enhanced the professional journalists in their report; 62 or 16.1% of the respondents believed that the citizen journalists have to some extent enhanced the professional journalists in their report; 39 respondents representing 10.1% believed to little extent that the citizen journalists have enhanced the professional journalists in their report while 1 or

0.6% of the respondent was undecided. From the data provided in figure 4 above, it can be deduced that citizen journalists have satisfactorily improved the news report of the professional journalists in Nigeria.

Figure 5



Data in figure 5 above shows that 4 respondents representing 1.0% believe to a large extent that citizen journalists abide by the ethics of the journalism profession; 12 respondents representing 3.1% believe to some extent that the citizen journalists abide by the ethics of the journalism profession; 368 or 95.6% of the respondents believe to little extent that the citizen journalists abide by the ethics of the journalism profession while 1 or .3% of the respondents was undecided. From the available data presented in figure 5 above, it is save for one to conclude that the citizen journalists have no regard for the ethics guiding the journalism profession.

8.5 Hypotheses Testing

8.5.1 Hypothesis One

There is a significant relationship between citizen journalists’ level of knowledge on information gathering and dissemination and their level of involvement in news business.

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Showing respondents rating of the knowledge level of citizen journalist in information gathering and dissemination	3.1325	.71488	385
Showing respondents rating of the level of involvement of Nigeria citizen in citizen journalism	1.9429	.84277	385

Correlations^a

	showing respondents rating of the knowledge level of citizen journalist in information gathering and dissemination	showing respondents rating of the level of involvement of nigeria citizen in citizen journalism
showing respondents rating of the knowledge level of citizen journalist in information gathering and dissemination	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) 1	.765** .000
showing respondents rating of the level of involvement of nigeria citizen in citizen journalism	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) .765** .000	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Showing respondents rating of the knowledge level of citizen journalist in information gathering and dissemination	3.1325	.71488	385

a. Listwise N=385

In the test of hypothesis, if the Pearson correlation at p-values 0.000 is above 0.7 it is a perfect positive correlation. In the test of hypothesis one, Pearson correlation indicates that at p-value 0.000, correlation is significant at a high value of 0.765. This shows that it is a positive correlation. This implies that “There is a significant relationship between citizen journalists’ level of knowledge on information gathering and dissemination and their level of involvement in news business.

8.5.2 Hypothesis Two

There is a significant relationship between citizen journalists’ involvement in news business and enhanced professionalism by mainstream journalists

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
showing respondents rating of the level of involvement of Nigeria citizen in citizen journalism	1.9429	.84277	385
showing response on the extent to which citizen journalist has enhanced the professional journalist in their report	1.3714	.67292	385

Correlations^a

		showing respondents rating of the level of involvement of Nigeria citizen in citizen journalism	showing response on the extent to which citizen journalist has enhanced the professional journalist in their report
showing respondents rating of the level of involvement of Nigeria citizen in citizen journalism	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1	.800** .000
showing response on the extent to which citizen journalist has enhanced the professional journalist in their report	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.800** .000	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In the test of hypothesis, if the Pearson correlation at p-values 0.000 is above 0.7 it is a perfect positive correlation. In the test of hypothesis two, Pearson correlation indicates that at p-value 0.000, correlation is significant at a high value of 0.800. This shows that it is a positive correlation. This implies that “There is a significant relationship between citizen journalists’ involvement in news business and enhanced professionalism by mainstream journalists”

8.5.3 Hypothesis Three

There is a significant relationship between the educational qualification of citizen journalists' and their ability to abide by the ethics of journalism profession in Nigeria.

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Educational qualification of respondents	3.0675	.95504	385
Showing response on the extent to which the citizen journalist abide by the ethics of the journalism profession in Nigeria	2.9506	.27033	385

Correlations^a

		educational qualification of respondents	Showing response on the extent to which the citizen journalist abide by the ethics of the journalism profession in Nigeria
educational qualification of respondents	Pearson Correlation	1	.437**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
Showing response on the extent to which the citizen journalist abide by the ethics of the journalism profession in Nigeria	Pearson Correlation	.437**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In the test of hypothesis, if the Pearson correlation at p-values 0.000 is below 0.5 it is a negative correlation. In the test of hypothesis three, Pearson correlation indicates that at p-value 0.000, correlation is significant at a value of 0.437. This shows that it is a negative correlation. This implies that "There is no significant relationship between the educational qualification of citizen journalists' and their ability to abide by the ethics of journalism profession in Nigeria"

Furthermore, this shows that one's level of knowledge does not determine his or her ability to obey a particular law or code.

8.6 Discussion of Findings

Research Question One: What is the knowledge level of the citizen journalists in information gathering and dissemination?

This sought to find out the knowledge level of citizen journalists in the business of information gathering and dissemination. The quantitative data gathered and analysed revealed that majority of the respondents (251 or 65.2%) out of 385, believed that the knowledge level of the citizen journalists is poor. This means that the citizen journalists are not well grounded in the rudiments and intricacies of the profession and as such they are bound to operate haphazardly.

Research Question Two: What is the level of citizens' involvement in citizen journalism in Nigeria?

Here, the researcher sought to find out the level at which Nigerian citizens get involved in citizen journalism. The rating analysis conducted, shows that 31.2 percent of the respondents rated it as very high and high the level of citizens involvement in citizen journalism in Nigeria. In the whole, majority of the respondents believe that there is increase in the level of citizen involvement in citizen journalism. This finding is supported by the findings of Odii, (2013) which revealed that Nigerians participation in the country's democracy through citizen journalism was not low.

Research Question Three: To what extent has citizen journalists enhanced the professional journalists in their report?

Here, the researcher sought to find out the extent to which the citizen journalists have helped professional journalists in their report. The quantitative data generated revealed that out of the 385 respondents sampled, 283 or 73.5 percent of the respondents believed that citizen journalists have enhanced the professional journalists in their report to a large extent. This shows that majority of the respondents believed that citizen journalists have satisfactory improved the news report of the professional journalist in Nigeria.

Research Question Four: To what extent do the public perceive the information disseminated by citizen journalists as credible?

In this research question, the researcher sought to find out the extent to which the information emanating from the citizen journalists is regarded as credible. The analysis indicated that majority of the respondents perceive the information disseminated by the citizen journalists as credible. This finding contradicts the findings of Dare, (2010) which revealed that most Nigerians do not trust the news from sahara reporters.

Research Question Five: To what extent do citizen journalists abide by the ethics of the journalism profession in Nigeria?

In this research question, the researcher sought to find out the extent to which the citizen journalists in Nigeria play by the roles of journalism as a profession. The results obtained from the data generated revealed that out of the 385 respondents sampled, 369 or 95.8 percent of the respondents believe that the citizen journalists do not abide by the ethics of the journalism profession. This shows that citizen journalists do not abide by the ethics of the profession. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Olalekan, (2014) where he observed that there was predominance of unethical reporting in blogs as compared to professional journalism.

8.7 Hypotheses Results

Three hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The test of the hypothesis indicated that there is significant relationship between citizen journalists' level of knowledge on information gathering and dissemination and their level of involvement in news business. Also, the hypothesis revealed that there is a significant relationship between citizen journalists' involvement in news business and enhanced professionalism by mainstream journalists. However, the third hypothesis showed that there is no relationship between the educational qualification of citizen journalists and their ability to abide by the ethics of the profession.

8.8 Summary of Findings

- Majority of the citizen journalists in Nigeria have poor knowledge in information gathering and dissemination.
- The level of citizens involvement in citizen journalism in Nigeria is high.
- Data revealed the fact that citizen journalists in Nigeria have greatly enhanced professional journalists in their news report.
- Majority of the people in Nigeria believe that the information disseminated by the citizen journalists is credible.
- Citizen journalists in Nigeria do not abide by the ethics of the journalism profession.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- There should be increased enlightenment and education of the public through the radio, television, newspapers, seminars, and workshops by communication scholars on the negative consequences of wrong application of the internet and other social media tools for information dissemination.
- Since the cyber crime bill has been passed into law, appropriate measures should be put in place to ensure effective enforcement of the law to deter people from cyber mischief.
- The mainstream journalists should try as much as possible to cross-check information received from the citizen journalists before making use of it.
- Since citizen journalists cannot be banned from reporting events or situations, there is need for them to be adequately sensitized on basic professional guidelines in order to report as efficiently as possible.

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