ASSESSING THE INFLUENCE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY FOR NEWS SOURCING: A CASE STUDY OF NIGERIAN TELEVISION AUTHORITY, JOS

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ABSTRACT

The paper assessed the influence of information and communication technology (ICTs) for news sourcing by staff of NTA Jos network centre. Three research objectives and questions were guided the study. The Network social theory, developed by Manuels Castells in the 1930s was used as theoretical framework. The survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprises the 98 staff of Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) with a sample size of 87 respondents. The convenience sampling technique was used to select the sample. The method of data analysis was mean score. Finding of the study showed that ICT has a great impact as a tool for news sourcing and dissemination. The adoption of ICTs in media reportage by NTA Jos network centre has drastically reduce harassment faced by media staff and has promote widespread of information across heterogeneous audience; a fundamental shift from the traditional method of news sourcing and dissemination. Base on the findings of the study, the study concludes that in spite the effectiveness of the tool (ICT) for news sourcing and dissemination, there seems to be no full familiarization of the practical knowledge on the use of the tool as attested by the 87 staff of NTA Jos network centre sampled for the study. Therefore, the study recommend that the government should equip the staff of the media station with adequate knowledge of technical skills needed to drive the mission of the station in terms of handling modern equipment among other recommendations.

Keywords: Keywords: Assessing, Influence, ICTs, news sourcing, Dissemination

INTRODUCTION

The advancement of simultaneous technologies has become deeply intertwined with modern society and is rapidly transforming the process of news gathering. History, as documented in various literatures, has witnessed humanity undergoing several revolutions. The latest of these is the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) revolution. According to Okunna (2021), whenever we think of ICT, our minds immediately turn to computers, satellites, fax machines, fiber optics, digital networks and ultimately, the internet. This is due to the continuous evolution and features that come with emerging digital technologies. Digitization, in this regard, has significantly reshaped the information landscape through advanced technological innovations.

Alum (2014) posits that "Information Communication Technologies have made it easier for reporters to gather and disseminate information with advanced equipment, allowing information to go viral at the

click of a button." The modern digital era has witnessed a rapid transformation in information dissemination, enhancing both the quantity and accessibility of information. This shift has paved the way for citizen journalism, where individuals can act as self-employed journalists, further underscoring the growing significance of information systems in satisfying human needs. Given the necessity of verifying accurate information against misinformation in this evolving ICT landscape, Nwabueze (2015) asserts that "reporting is the process of giving an account of news events through a medium to an audience." This process involves gathering facts about an event, incident, or people through objective observation, reasoning, verification, organization and presentation as a news story for mass communication. However, this fact-gathering and presentation process has evolved from traditional methods of news collection to a more simplified and logical approach, now facilitated by the information and communication technology space. ICT serves as a nexus encompassing all communication devices and applications, including television, radio, cellular phones and computers, as well as services like video conferencing and distance learning.

Dugo (2018) asserts that ICT has transformed the world in all aspects of life, significantly reducing manual operations and fostering growth in the media industry. In alignment with Dugo's assertion, ICT has made information more accessible to the mass audience—whether verified or unverified (as seen in citizen journalism). For instance, individuals can now communicate in real-time across different countries using technologies such as instant messaging, voice-over services and video conferencing.

Statement of the Problem

The advancement of the information and communication technology has availed almost if not every member of the society who owns a smart/multi-media phone or media related tool for information distribution the freedom to be an originator of (verified or unverified) information. The reverse is the case as the primary source of information sourcing is becoming obsolete making even some of the legally trained journalist to dive into the citizen journalism to maintain top notch in breaking news. To mention a few in a staggering economy like Nigeria, journalistic source of news has move from objectivity to subjectivity following the secondary source of news gathering (information and communication technology) without adhering to the journalistic adage (when people run in, we run out to ascertain the situation). However, an electronic information source has made it possible to link beyond the immediate community. This electronic

information source that journalists used is online reporter's blog. They used this to access information for their stories and networking with other journalists as well as social contacts on this views/fact, the research assessed the influence of the trending information and communication technology as a tool for news sources in the Nigerian Television Authority Jos zonal Centre. To this end the research intends to access if the information and communication offering can be the best and verified sources of news gathering in NTA Jos network Centre.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to assess the influence of information and communication technology for news sourcing: a case study of Nigerian Television Authority, Jos. The specific objectives of this study are:
1. To ascertain the influence of ICT as news sources by NTA Jos network Centre
2. To find out the impact of Information Communication and Technologies on information sourcing by NTA Jos network Centre
3. To examine possible challenges associated with information and communication technology as a news source in NTA Jos network Centre

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research question:
1. To what extent do ICT influence news sourcing in NTA Jos network Centre?
2. What is the impact of ICT on information sourcing by NTA network Centre?
3. What are the possible challenges associated ICT as a news source in NTA Jos network Centre?

LITERATURE REVIEW
Information and communication technology

Information and communications technology (ICT) is a new world information order that is seen as an extensional term for information technology (IT) that houses the role of acceptable and unified communications and the integration of diverse communications, as well as necessary application software, storage and audiovisual, that aid users to access, store, transmit, understand and even distort the information. Awati (2023) notes, information and communications technology (or technologies), is the infrastructure and components that enable modern computing. This computing includes sourcing for information and dissemination of information by private of government media institution or even the citizens Journalist who are the major beneficiaries of the technology for information sharing (verified or unverified).

ICT is also used to refer to the convergence of diverse media platform through a single cabling or link system. It has indeed transformed the world in all spheres for the purpose of development through a single unified system of cabling, signal distribution and management. Amagbu (2019) ICT is an umbrella term that includes any communication device, encompassing radio, television, cell phones, computer and network hardware, satellite systems and so on, as well as the various services and appliances with them such as video conferencing and distance learning. It is not limited to advance technology but it also incorporates analog technology, such as paper communication and any mode that transmits communication. The baseline for ICT is easier access to information, simultaneous feedback and rapid communication at a flip of a finger.

Utilization in Information Sourcing

The media industry cannot survive without information. Information sourcing is the basic that give any media outfit the relevance to remain in contemporary era. The process of sourcing for information involves the reporters to travel to the width and breathe of the community/nation to scout for information, which will be used to keep the society informed on the happenings around them. These processes are carried out using different means which includes interview; opinion polls in order to bring the duty of information/news sourcing to perfection to avoid arising emotions. Zamith (2017) define source as any person, organization, document, or object that provides information to journalists. This may include the spokesperson for an international aid group, an academic, or a regular citizen who witnessed an event. This thence mean that information is sourced for, using different channels, method or technology for the purpose of news or enlightenment. Information gathering is the act of conveying or relaying or communicating the message sourced for, to the audience (Muhammed 2014) it can also be referring to the activity of researching news items meant for broadcast or publication, this act of information sourcing is commonly carried out by journalists which is thence researched into, compiled and made known to the masses as news or feature article.

Today, ICT has maintained the center stage for information as people with smart devices are on the rise to maintain best content agent in the Zukerberg evolution which pave way for citizen Journalism. Branda (2011) posits that citizen journalism is a rapidly evolving form of journalism where common citizens take the initiative to repot news or express views about happenings within their communities. MacBride et al (2020) affirm the statement when he asserts that "human beings sought to improve their ability to receive and assimilate information about their surroundings and at the same time to increase the speed,

clarity and variety of their methods for transmission of information" the rise of Information Communication and Technologies given reporters of today the flexibility of information sourcing, making reportorial duties easy for reporters and their organizations since

Television news rely on pictures, words and places where the information is collated from, this in turns outlines the basic features of the ICT as a machinery that bridge the dalliance of information communication which the traditional media were initially known for, thus traditional media rely heavily on the principle of media objectivity.

However, in trying to determine the effectiveness of Information and Communication Technology to the mass media news sourcing, television in focus, of NTA Jos network center,

Television news sourcing requires that the reporter goes out of his/her comfort to collate the news facts, backgrounds story, organize them in an objective manner and present them to the audience/viewer in a logical way to cut ills that are likely arise. The aim of the television broadcast is to tell its viewers what is happening in a manner that is as complete as possible.

Technology is behind nearly everything we do from the computer animation in movies to the research we carry out. Our dependence on Information Communication and Technologies matches its growth, as technology steadily revolutionizes, our way of life. Gralf (2018), affirmed the notion when he notes that ICT is an integration and utilization of computer mediated technologies to source and disseminate information to scattered target destination.

NTA Jos network center is a state own media establishment. The takeover of Nigeria by a new Federal Military Government in 1977 reorganized all of the existing television stations and incorporated them to the current Nigerian Television Authority. Jos was integrated into Zone D, encompassing central-northern Nigeria, which also included Kano and Kaduna. NTA Jos also sent its programming to nearby stations, NTA Yola and NTA Makurdi. In 1980, NTA set up a television college in Jos. By the early 1980s, NTA Jos had its own functional "color processing, developing and printing plant" in its studios and its local programmes were "well produced". In February 2008, it was announced that NTA Jos was set to become a Zonal Network Centre, with the ability of producing programmes nationwide. On 4 February 2015, parts of the NTA Jos building were hit by a fire at 3pm. The fire was contained within thirty minutes (Wikipedia, 2024).

However, in September 2016, President Muhammadu Buhari approved the release of 10 Billion Naira to the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) for the Digital Switch-Over. NTA's Digital Switch-Over was

first successfully carried out in Abuja. This offered thirty local, regional and national channels to viewers in Abuja an upgrade to 15 channels offered in Jos, Plateau state when NBC launched the pilot phase of the DSO. Following the successful launch in Abuja, NBC planned to launch in one state from each of the six geo-political zones of Nigeria (BellaNaija, 2020).

In 2015, the then Director-General of the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Sola Omole, requested $15 million (₦5, 452, 500, 000) to complete the agency's digitization program and an additional ₦6 billion for restructuring across Nigeria, bringing the total request to slightly over ₦11 billion. This request coincided with the International Telecommunications Union (ITU)'s commemoration of the switchover from analog to digital terrestrial television broadcasting in June 2015. However, despite initiating the process nine years earlier, Nigeria missed the deadline. The implication of this failure was that analog signals from Nigerian broadcasting stations would receive no protection in the event of interference with or from digital signals originating from neighboring countries (Premium Times, 2015).

Theoretical Framework

Network social theory, developed by Manuels Castells in the 1930, explores the social, economic and cultural transformations brought about by the wide spread use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) The theory holds the following as its basic tenants: Networks are the fundamental unit of social organization which replaces the traditional hierarchies and bureaucracies as the primary form of social organization. Informationalism, globalization, space of flow, timeless time, decentralization, interconnectedness, flexibility and adaptability. These tenants form the foundation of network society theory which aims to understand social being of the rise of ICTs.

METHODOLOGY

This study used survey research design. The population of the study consisted of 98 staff of NTA Jos Network Centre. The sample of the study were 87 respondents. The convenience sampling technique was used where all the subjects of the population available were used. A structured questionnaire of 5 points Likert scale with "SA" (Strongly Agree), "A" (Agree), "Un" (Undecided/Neutral), "D" (Disagree) and "SD" (Strongly Disagree). The instrument was validated by experts through face validity. The data collected were analyzed through descriptive statistics which involves mean score with a decision rule of 3.0 mean score was used as criteria for accepting or rejecting a factor.

RESULTS

This section of the study presents data that was collected from the field work. It is presented in tables with interpretation beneath each table.

Research Question One: What is the impact of ICT on information gathering and dissemination by NTA network Centre?

Table 1: Impact of ICT on information sourcing by NTA Network centre

S/No	Items statement	S/A (5)	A (4)	UD (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean Score	Decision
1	NTA Jos network Centre have reliable ICT tools for information sourcing and dissemination	27	50	3	5	2	4.07	Accepted
2	NTA Jos network Centre need more ICT tools to function effectively	32	44	5	0	6	4.08	Accepted
3	There are no modern tools in NTA Jos network Centre to use in news sourcing and dissemination	6	19	14	36	12	2.64	Accepted
4	NTA Jos network Centre has all the ICT modern facilities for news sourcing and dissemination	20	40	6	19	2	3.8	Accepted
5	NTA Jos network Centre have limited staff to handle the ICT tools	8	34	13	27	5	3.12	Accepted
	Overall mean						**3.54**	**Accepted**

Source: field survey 2024 (number of respondents = 87).

The results presented in Table 1 summarize responses on the impact of ICT on information gathering and dissemination at NTA Jos Network Centre. The findings indicate that all five items were accepted based on the 3.00 decision point set in the study. The highest mean score (4.08) corresponds to "NTA Jos Network Centre needs more ICT tools to function

effectively," highlighting the need for improved infrastructure. Similarly, respondents acknowledged that "NTA Jos Network Centre has reliable ICT tools for information sourcing and dissemination" (Mean = 4.07), reinforcing the positive role of ICT in news processes. However, the relatively lower mean score (2.64) for "There are no modern tools in NTA Jos Network Centre to use in news sourcing and dissemination" suggests that while ICT

tools exist, there is still room for improvement. The overall mean score of 3.54 confirms that ICT has a positive impact on news sourcing and dissemination at NTA Jos Network Centre.

Research Question Two

To what extent do ICT influence news sourcing in NTA Jos network Centre?

Table 2: Extent to which ICT influence news sourcing in NTA Jos Network centre

S/No	Items Statement	S/A (5)	A (4)	UD (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean Score	Decision
1	NTA Jos network Centre rely on citizen journalism report as a means to source news	10	61	4	5	7	3.69	Accepted
2	ICT has made NTA Jos network Centre news sourcing and dissemination not objective	7	18	18	35	9	2.74	Accepted
3	ICT has reduced reporters' harassment during news sourcing and dissemination	8	37	23	19	0	3.37	Accepted
4	ICT has boost news reporting and dissemination by staff of NTA Jos network Centre	16	42	15	14	0	3.67	Accepted
5	ICT has created 2 ways flow for instantaneous news sourcing and reportage	12	48	17	6	4	3.63	Accepted
	Overall Mean						**3.42**	**Accepted**

Source: Field survey 2024 (number of respondents = 87)

The results in Table 2 summarize the extent to which ICT influences news sourcing at NTA Jos Network Centre. All five items were accepted based on the 3.00 decision point set in the study, confirming the substantial impact of ICT on news sourcing. The highest mean score (3.69) corresponds to "NTA Jos Network Centre relies on citizen journalism reports as a means to source news," suggesting that user generated content plays a vital role in news reporting. Another significant impact is the creation of a "two-way flow for instantaneous news sourcing and reportage" (Mean = 3.63), emphasizing ICT's role in real-time information exchange. Additionally, ICT has boosted news reporting and

dissemination (Mean = 3.67) and reduced reporters' harassment (Mean = 3.37), highlighting its benefits in journalism safety and efficiency. However, "ICT has made NTA Jos Network Centre news sourcing and dissemination not objective" recorded the lowest mean (2.74), indicating concerns about media bias and credibility. The overall mean score of 3.42 affirms that ICT has positively influenced news sourcing at NTA Jos Network Centre, although certain challenges, such as objectivity, still exist.

Research question three: What are the possible challenges associated ICT as a news source in NTA Jos network Centre?

Table 3: possible challenges associated with ICT as news sources in NTA Jos Network centre

S/No	Statement	S/A (5)	A (4)	UD (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean Score	Decision
1	ICT has made NTA Jos Network Centre's news sourcing and dissemination not fully objective.	5	17	16	40	9	2.62	Accepted
2	ICT has delimited the news sourcing and dissemination process by staff of NTA Jos Network Centre.	8	18	23	33	5	2.86	Accepted
3	ICT has reduced employment opportunities in NTA Jos Network Centre.	9	7	23	43	5	2.65	Accepted
4	ICT has reduced the originality and authenticity of news sourcing and reportage.	2	15	25	38	7	2.60	Accepted
5	NTA Jos Network Centre has little or no ICT technical staff to handle modern facilities.	4	14	22	42	5	2.62	Accepted
	Overall Mean						**2.67**	**Accepted**

Source: Field survey 2024 (number of respondents = 87)

The results in Table 3 present the frequency and mean responses on the possible challenges associated with ICT as a news source in NTA Jos Network Centre. Five key challenges were identified and all items were accepted based on the 3.00 decision point set in the study. The highest mean score (2.86) corresponds to "ICT has delimited news sourcing and dissemination processes by staff of NTA Jos Network Centre," indicating concerns that ICT imposes limitations on journalistic operations. Similarly, "ICT has reduced employment opportunities in NTA Jos Network Centre" (Mean = 2.65) and "ICT has made NTA Jos Network Centre news sourcing and dissemination not fully objective" (Mean = 2.62) highlight workforce and credibility concerns. Other challenges include the lack of ICT technical staff to handle modern facilities (Mean = 2.62) and the reduction in originality and authenticity of news sourcing and reportage (Mean = 2.60). The overall mean score of 2.67 confirms that ICT presents significant challenges to news sourcing and dissemination at NTA Jos Network Centre, despite its advantages.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from this study indicate that ICT has a significant impact on information gathering and dissemination at NTA Jos Network Centre. The overall mean score of 3.54 suggests that ICT tools are widely used and effective for news reporting. However, while respondents acknowledged that ICT tools enhance news sourcing, the study also highlighted a gap in the availability of modern tools, as seen in the relatively lower mean score (2.64) for the item assessing the presence of modern ICT facilities. These findings align with Smith (2020), who emphasized that ICT has become an essential tool for information sourcing, enabling media professionals to transition from traditional news collection methods to realtime reporting through digital platforms. The need for more advanced ICT infrastructure at NTA Jos Network Centre underscores the importance of continuous investment in technological upgrades to optimize news-gathering processes.

The study further revealed that ICT significantly influences news sourcing at NTA Jos Network Centre, as indicated by the overall mean score of 3.42. A key finding was that citizen journalism plays a crucial role in news sourcing, with a mean score of 3.69, demonstrating that digital platforms have enabled audience participation in news production. However, concerns about the objectivity of ICT-based news sourcing were evident in the relatively lower mean score (2.74) for the item assessing the objectivity of news dissemination. This aligns with Tandoc (2022), who observed that while ICT facilitates accessibility and speed in news sourcing, it also introduces challenges such as media bias and reduced editorial control. The study suggests that while ICT provides benefits such as real-time reporting and reduced harassment of journalists, NTA Jos Network Centre should implement measures to ensure journalistic integrity and factual accuracy in ICT-driven news sourcing.

Despite the benefits of ICT in news reporting, the study identified several challenges associated with its use at NTA Jos Network Centre, with an overall mean score of 2.67. The most notable challenge was the limitation ICT places on traditional journalistic processes, as reflected in the highest mean score (2.86) for the item assessing the restrictive nature of ICT in news dissemination. Additionally, concerns regarding reduced employment opportunities (2.65) and lack of ICT technical staff (2.62) suggest that while technology enhances efficiency, it also presents workforce-related challenges. These findings align with Hermida (2021), who identified issues such as information overload, evolving journalism practices and economic challenges as key limitations of ICT in news production. The study highlights the need for continuous training of journalists and technical staff at NTA Jos Network Centre to address these challenges and maximize the potential of ICT in journalism.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concludes that despite the effectiveness of ICT as a tool for news sourcing and dissemination, there is a lack of full practical knowledge on its use among the 87 staff members of NTA Jos Network Centre sampled for this study. However, the study also establishes that staff members have a foundational understanding of ICT as a news source, which can be further improved through efficient and effective training programs implemented by the management of NTA Jos Network Centre. Through such training, staff members will develop credibility, expertise and adequate knowledge of ICT tools, ensuring that their limited experience does not hinder ICT utilization. This will enable all staff of NTA Jos Network Centre to acquire sufficient knowledge of ICT and its application in news sourcing and dissemination, irrespective of the challenges posed by unverified or citizen journalism.

Recommendation

Arising from the findings and conclusion of this study which assessed the influence of information and communication technology (ICTs) on staff of NTA Jos network centre, the study recommends the following:

1. Holding on the fact that NTA is a government own media outlet, the research recommends for a technical upgrade to the modern ICTs equipment to measure up to other media outlet and to remain relevant in terms of breaking news and to achieve the media objective.

2. While information and communication technology has provided more security to media reportage in terms of human harassment among staff of NTA Jos network centre, NCC are advised to organized more workshop that educates more on the practical effects of utilizing the tools efficiently and effectively.

3. The prime of the objectivity of news reportage through the utilization of information and communication technology tools by staff of NTA Jos network centre calls for more fact checking and proper investigation while rolling to be the first at breaking news. Therefore, the media editors should rise up from the concept of ICTs to a combination of proper investigation to ensure originality and objectivity of the reportage.

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