

INFLUENCE OF CITIZEN JOURNALISM ON NEWS CONTENTS OF AFIA TV IN ENUGU STATE NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study looks into how citizen journalism affects Afia TV's news contents in the state of Enugu, Nigeria. A structured questionnaire was utilized to gather participant data for the survey research design, which had a sample size of fifty respondents. The research objectives were to: Identify the influence of citizen journalism on the quality of news contents of Afia TV in Enugu State; ascertain the influence of citizen journalism on the believability/credibility of news contents of Afia TV in Enugu State and assess the influence of citizen journalism on the consumption/acceptability of news contents of Afia TV in Enugu State. Among other things, the results showed that citizen journalism raises the caliber of Afia TV's news programming in Enugu State. According to the study's findings, policymakers ought to support cooperation and partnerships between citizen journalists and traditional media outlets to leverage each group's unique advantages. Both professional journalists and citizen reporters can benefit from initiatives like cooperative training, cooperative reporting projects, and shared resources, which can promote professional development opportunities, mutual assistance, and information sharing.

Keywords: Influence, citizen journalism, news contents

Introduction

News is an essential part of human culture, serving as the means in which people and nations get information about recent, anticipated, or even historical events. It is through different media formats such as prints, broadcast, podcasts, newsletters, social networks, and various internet apps that the information is transmitted (Ahmed & Andover, 2022). As user-generated contents is on the increase, due to advancements in digital technologies and the connectivity of new media platforms, journalism as a practice and institution has experienced dramatic shift. According to Luce et al., (2020), citizen journalism means producing, assessing, and disseminating recent occurrences and information by non-professional individuals. This includes citizens reporting on blogs, social networks, and online forums, as well as participatory media projects organized by professional outlets and civic groups. It also includes the daily practices of sharing, tagging, liking, and commenting on news contents. While users on the one hand project the significance of this participatory model, critics on the other hand raise issues concerning reliability, fairness, and the long-term sustainability of professional journalism. As users' involvement in news circulation has grown alongside the migration of many citizen journalism initiatives to social media, the boundaries between journalism and general social media activity have become increasingly blurred (Näkki et al., 2021). In this context, media literacy becomes a required skill in distinguishing between verified news practices and casual user interaction.

In some parts of Africa, especially in Nigeria, the use of smartphones and internet connectivity has paved way for the growth of citizen journalism. Here, members of the society with no formal journalism training report news and disseminate information through digital platforms (Apuke & Ayih, 2020). Numerous components describe the drift: First, widespread access to mobile phones and internet services allows real-time reporting, amplifying diverse

voices and democratizing the news-gathering process (Olaniyan, 2021). Second, politicization and polarization have shaped Nigerian media, eroding public trust in mainstream outlets, which are often accused of bias and manipulation (Ridwanullah et al., 2024; Wilner et al., 2020). Citizen journalism has emerged as a counter-narrative to these institutional shortcomings. Third, financial challenges have weakened professional news outlets, reducing their strengths for investigative and in-depth reporting. Citizen journalists, often motivated by civic duty and passion for storytelling, step into this gap without expectation of financial reward (Udoudo & Nwosu, 2021).

Notwithstanding, citizen journalism in Nigeria faces challenges mainly on credibility; without grounding in professional ethics and standards, many of them struggle to maintain accuracy and impartiality, which has at times led to the spread of misinformation and fake news (Aneke & Ogbodo, 2022; Guanah, 2022). Additionally, the legal and regulatory environment for citizen journalism remains ambiguous. Although citizen journalists are expected to comply with laws on libel and slander, and national security, no dedicated legal framework exists. This vacuum often exposes them to harassment and intimidation, especially when reporting on politically sensitive issues (Aneke & Ogbodo, 2022). These concerns notwithstanding, citizen journalism holds real qualifies by offering alternative channels of news and projecting underrepresented voices, it enhances transparency, accountability, and civic engagement (Guanah, 2022). The implications go beyond how audiences consume news contents. News, understood as information produced by media organizations about current events, includes articles, videos, podcasts, and social media posts covering politics, health, economics, science, entertainment, and more. It not only informs and educates but also shapes decision-making within households, businesses, and institutions. Given this, believability becomes essential to both producers and consumers. Distrust in news damages reputation, undermines influence, and weakens journalism's societal role in promoting development.

According to Society Now (2023), Afia TV is the Southeast Nigeria's first regional television, launched on DStv (channel 254) and GOtv (channel 94) on February 17, 2023. It is the newest channel to join the lineup of free-to-air options for both platforms' subscribers. The channel offers a 24-hour combination of excellent lifestyle entertainment, documentaries, movies, and local news, promoting the culture, business, and entertainment in the area. The TV channel is available to all DStv and GOtv subscribers because it transmits in English, Pidgin, and Igbo. The rise of social networking sites such as Facebook and X formally twitter has further widened participatory journalism (Ahmed et al., 2020a). These platforms provide communicative spaces that enable users to connect, share, and engage (Li & Das, 2020; Kim et al., 2016). While initially serving interpersonal communication (Joo & Teng, 2017), they have evolved into arenas for political awareness, activism, and opinion formation (Naab & Sehl, 2017; Chen et al., 2020). Within this environment of user-generated contents, communication practices are redefined, with citizen journalism shaping how news is created, circulated, and consumed. Against this backdrop, examining its effect on the news contents of Afia TV becomes both timely and significant.

Every academic field has a corpus of theories that explain phenomena that can be observed in that field. As such, the Social Responsibility Theory served as the foundation for this research. In their book "Four Theories of the Media," Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm (1956) presented this theory, which is thought to be a Western approach that adds some new aspects and integrates parts of the libertarian concept. The fundamental tenet of the press's social responsibility theory is that, while the press should be allowed to carry out the tasks that libertarian philosophy gave it, this freedom must be used responsibly (Okunna & Omenugha, 2012). According to the social responsibility thesis, the government should control the media in order to encourage them to fulfill their obligations to society. "A press has the right to criticize government and institutions but also has certain basic responsibilities to maintain the stability

of society," according to Bittner (1989). In a similar spirit, but from a slightly different perspective, Dominick (2009) states that while the press has the right to critique the government and other institutions, it also must uphold democracy by appropriately informing the public and attending to the needs and interests of society. The press is required to respond to the needs of society; it is not free to do as it pleases. Noting that the press fails to fulfill its fundamental societal roles of enlightenment, information, watchdog, advertising, entertainment, and self-sufficiency, the Commission on Freedom of the Press, which developed the Social Responsibility theory, urged the media to provide an accurate, thorough, and intelligent account of the day's events in a context that gives them meaning, act as a forum for comment and criticism exchange and assume responsibility for presenting and elucidating the society's objectives and ideals and project a representative image of its constituent groups; And grant complete access to the intelligence of the day. How ought the forums to function? Whose ideals ought to be explained and presented? In a nightly report that lasted less than twenty-three minutes, how could they offer "intelligent discourse about the day's events"? The uncertainty continued indefinitely. This might be a flaw in the hypothesis that existed from the beginning. It is clear from the above that the core ideas of the social responsibility theory can be summarized as follows: "practice responsibly, be self-regulated, or the government will control you." In other words, freedom should be exercised with utmost responsibility for societal interest. The theory is relevant to this study because it helps understand the enormous responsibility of the media to always be the purveyor of truth to all citizens, as well as ensuring the voices of citizens are heard through what is generally referred to as Citizen Journalism.

By analyzing SaharaReporters.com, the leading citizen journalism project in Nigeria, Dare (2010) sought to offer a groundbreaking academic analysis of the emergence of citizen journalism in that nation. The social environment that gave rise to citizen journalism in Nigeria, as well as the technological infrastructure that supports it was examined and analyzed in this study. Using Sahara Reporters as a case study, the authors employed empirical data to investigate the enormous following and support this citizen journalism phenomenon enjoys among Nigerians both at home and in the diaspora. The study further investigates the inspiration behind SaharaReporters.com's concept as well as the site's sustainability and editorial diversity. The author found that the emergence of Sahara Reporters was facilitated by the conventional media in Nigeria's dearth of investigative and interactive space. Its journalism has energized, enlightened, and empowered the Nigerian people. They are now more politically active, have a resurgence of civic obligation, and are calling on their leaders to be more transparent and accountable. Sibanda (2019) investigated Zimbabwean citizen journalism's claims to be an excellent form of journalism. Constructivist philosophy informed the qualitative research methodology used in the study. Constructivism holds that reality is subjective because different people will often interpret the same phenomenon in different ways. Both the Democratic Participant Media theory and the Public Sphere theory guided the study. Triangulating data sources and data generation methods was done to ensure the reliability of the data. The results also demonstrate that people in Zimbabwe lack the freedom to express themselves freely and frequently use fictitious names out of fear for their safety, which gives them the right to remain anonymous. Ethics and news values are not taken into account when covering news in citizen journalism. The freedom of expression that citizen journalism provides is unmatched by traditional media. That being said, information must be controlled, as in any democratic nation, to prevent harm and promote peace. Participants pointed out that the inverted pyramid format of Zimbabwean news writing, which consists of an introduction, a body, and a conclusion, has been replaced by citizen journalism with a narrative structure that supports user-generated content through multimedia content communication.

Onabajo (2016) looked into how citizen journalism affected media practices in Nigeria, with a particular emphasis on the moral dilemmas that these journalists faced. According to the

study, citizen journalism has given people the ability to report on news and events, but it has also sparked debate over accountability, fairness, and veracity. To enhance their work, the study suggested creating policies and training courses for citizen journalists. According to Apeh & Didiugwu's (2017) assessment of the consequences of citizen journalism in mainstream journalism, well-known citizen journalism websites show how citizen journalism is becoming a powerful phenomenon across Nigeria. Therefore, the study suggests that there should be a healthy synergy between mainstream media and citizen journalism to establish the best course of action for effective and efficient journalistic practices in the country. As a result, Nigerian citizen journalists must be trained in the appropriate use of this new medium.

State Raza et al. (2021) aimed to comprehend the little-understood connection between public opinion formation and an individual's level of confidence in citizen journalism activities. In light of this, the study intends to: (1) ascertain the moderating function of trust in citizen journalism practices during COVID-19 via social networking sites; and (2) investigate the impact of user-generated information regarding government economic policies during COVID-19 as the precursor to public opinion regarding government performance. The study used a survey methodology and collected a sample of 464 participants using an internet-delivered questionnaire. The findings show that during COVID-19, people's perceptions of government performance were positively impacted by user-generated content that supported government economic initiatives. However, public opinion was negatively impacted by user-generated content that berated government economic policies. Arimitan & Nwankwo (2021) examine how citizen journalism has affected Nigerian journalism practices. The methodology for the study was qualitative research. Since it is appropriate in situations where it is not necessary to manipulate the behavior of study participants, this method was used for the investigation. Because it allowed for a thorough and contextual understanding of the phenomenon being studied, a case study research design was chosen.

Students from the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) made up the study's population. A random sampling technique was used to choose. Purposively selected were the mass communication students at the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) study center in Benin. Data were generated using questionnaires and focus group discussions (FGD). There were two focus groups with ten (10) participants each, discussing FGDS, and mass communication students from the NOUN Benin study center. Twenty (20) NOUN students received an open-ended questionnaire. Ten (10) journalists from the Vanguard Newspaper were interviewed. According to the findings, people in Nigeria lack the freedom to express themselves freely and frequently use fictitious names out of fear for their safety, which gives them the right to remain anonymous. There are no news values or ethics considered when covering news in citizen journalism. Agunbiade and Asiriwa (2015) investigated how technology in Nigeria supports citizen journalism. According to the survey, people are now able to report on news and events in real time due to the increasing usage of cellphones and social media platforms, which is upending established media norms. The study did, however, also highlight the digital gap and the requirement that all citizens have access to technology to engage in citizen journalism. The policy implications of citizen journalism in Nigeria were studied by Asemah & Uwajeh (2019), with a focus on media regulation. According to the study, current media laws were not created to handle the difficulties presented by citizen journalism, underscoring the need for new legal frameworks that strike a balance between accountability, credibility, and freedom of expression. The research on citizen journalism's impact on Afia TV's news programming emphasizes how this phenomenon is revolutionizing the media landscape. Nigerian news production, distribution, and consumption have changed as a result of citizen journalism, which is defined as the contribution to public discourse made by regular people. The literature emphasizes how citizen journalism has had a significant impact on Nigeria's media landscape and practices. It offers a thorough study of the body of research

on the subject, laying the groundwork for additional empirical investigation and a deeper understanding of citizen journalism's function in Nigeria's media environment. Overall, empirical studies on how citizen journalism affects Afia TV Enugu's news output are lacking.

Statement of Problem

Today, the professional practice of journalists in broadcasting media in Nigeria has shifted its reportage from issue-based to personality-based reporting. The newsworthiness of news content serves the citizens in all countries. The reliance on official news sources, which include powerful politicians, the elite, and opinion leaders who abuse the media for their self-serving interests or even propaganda, is a clear sign of the crisis in journalism (McChesney 2016). The news content is driven to report on influential people and situations that favour them. These influential people are the political big wigs and the elite. The journalists rely on politicians rather than interviewing those who are impacted by issues. As a result, the sources of news are not broadened. The emergence and growth of citizen journalism in Nigeria has raised significant questions and challenges for the media industry on the quality of news, believability, /credibility, and consumption/acceptability. While citizen journalism offers a platform for diverse voices and perspectives, its impact on the traditional media landscape in maintaining journalistic standards requires critical examination. The rise of citizen journalism poses a challenge to traditional media outlets in Nigeria. With citizens increasingly becoming sources of news and information, traditional media face competition for audience attention and advertising revenue. This raises questions about the impact of citizen journalism on the overall quality of broadcast journalism in Nigeria, particularly on Afia TV. The regulatory framework for citizen journalism in Nigeria is still evolving. While there are no specific laws governing citizen journalism, citizen journalists are expected to adhere to existing laws on defamation, hate speech, and national security. However, the enforcement of these laws and the protection of citizen journalists' rights pose challenges that need to be addressed. Citizen journalism has had a significant impact on the social and political landscape in Nigeria. It has provided a platform for marginalized voices and alternative narratives, leading to increased civic engagement and accountability. However, there are concerns about the spread of misinformation and its potential to incite violence or destabilize the country's fragile political environment. In light of these challenges, there is a need for an adequate investigation into the Influence of citizen journalism on the news contents of Afia TV in Enugu State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the Influence of citizen journalism on the news contents of Afia TV in Enugu. Specifically, it tends to:

1. identify the Influence of citizen journalism on the quality of news content of Afia TV in Enugu State.
2. ascertain the Influence of citizen journalism on the believability/credibility of news contents of Afia TV in Enugu State.
3. assess the Influence of citizen journalism on the consumption/acceptability of news content of Afia TV in Enugu State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. How influential is citizen journalism on the quality of news contents of Afia TV in Enugu State?
2. What is the Influence of citizen journalism on the believability/credibility of news contents of Afia TV in Enugu State?
3. To what extent does citizen journalism influence the consumption/acceptability of news contents of Afia TV in Enugu State?

Methods

This study employed a descriptive survey research design to assess how citizen journalism influences traditional media, entrepreneurial ventures, and journalistic standards in Nigeria. According to Bloomfield and Fisher (2019), this design is suitable for characterizing populations and addresses questions of what, when, where, and how, rather than why. It enables a detailed understanding of the subject without manipulating variables. The population is made up of all staff members of the Editorial and News department of Afia TV, Enugu State, totaling 50 individuals (Administrative Record, 2024). Given the small population size, the entire population was used as the sample, employing a census sampling technique. This method, also referred to as complete enumeration (Shah, 2021), ensured comprehensive inclusion of all units in the study, with questionnaires distributed physically to in-office staff. The research instrument was a structured questionnaire based on a 4-point Likert scale, divided into two sections: Section A captured demographic information. At the same time, Section B included closed-ended and multiple-choice items aligned with the study's objectives. The questionnaire consisted of 15 items and was developed with the supervisor's approval. To ensure validity, three experts in the Mass Communication department reviewed the instrument for clarity, relevance, and potential ambiguity. Reliability was assessed through a pilot study using the Test-Retest method with ten respondents from Afia TV. The retest showed only one discrepancy, indicating high reliability of the instrument. Data collection relied on primary sources. Hard copies of the questionnaire were administered to respondents physically during the office hour. For data analysis, frequency distribution and mean analysis were employed. Responses were summarized based on the highest frequency selections, and items with a mean of 2.5 or higher were considered significant for decision-making and interpretation of findings. This approach allowed a clear and systematic assessment of the Influence of citizen journalism on traditional media operations and practices in Nigeria.

Results

Data Presentation and Analysis of the Demographical Section of the Questionnaire

Table 1: Response Rate

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No. Administered	50	100
No. Returned	50	100

Due to the nature of the study population, the distribution of the questionnaire was not tedious leading to 100% return rate as the researchers distributed it in person and collected immediately after the respondents completed the form.

Table 2: Age distribution, Gender, Educational Qualification of the respondents etc.

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20-30	12	24
31-40	23	46
41-50	6	12
51-60	8	16
61 AND ABOVE	1	2
Total	50	100
Gender	Frequency	Percentage

Female	31	62
Male	19	38
Total	50	100%
Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
SSCE	8	16%
OND/NCE	4	8%
B.SC/HND	32	64%
MSC	6	12%
PHD	-	-
TOTAL	50	100
Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	19	38%
Married	31	62%
Divorced	-	-
TOTAL	50	100
Length of Practice in Journalism	Frequency	Percentage%
1-5	15	30%
6-10	21	42%
11-15	7	14%
16-20	6	12%
20 AND ABOVE	1	2%
TOTAL	50	100

Most of the respondents (46%) fall within the 31–40 years bracket, followed by 24% aged 20–30. This indicates that the sample is dominated by young to middle-aged adults, with limited representation of older age groups. Females constitute a higher proportion of the respondents (62%) compared to males (38%), suggesting a female-dominated sample. Majority of the respondents possess higher education, with 64% holding B.Sc./HND, and an additional 12% holding M.Sc. qualifications. Only a small fraction has SSCE (16%) or OND/NCE (8%). No respondent reported having a Ph.D. This reflects a highly educated population. A greater proportion of respondents are married (62%) compared to single (38%). The modal category is 6–10 years (42%), followed by 1–5 years (30%). Only 2% have practiced for more than 20 years. This suggests that the respondents are relatively experienced but not on the whole seasoned professionals.

Research 1: How influential is citizen journalism on the quality of news content of Afia TV in Enugu State?

Table 3: Mean rating on the Influence of citizen journalism on the quality of news content of Afia TV in Enugu State

S/N	Item Statement	SA 4	A3	D 2	SD 1	N	X	X2	SDV	Decision Rule U=3.0
1	Citizen journalism increases the current information embedded in the news content of Afia TV	31	18	1	0	50	4.5	13.47	3.00	Accepted
2	Citizen journalism incorporates shared meaning in the media report of Afia TV	30	20	0	0	50	4.6	13.71	3.02	Accepted
3	Citizen journalism provides a more straightforward writing style to promote the quality of the news content of Afia TV	31	18	1	0	50	4.5	13.47	3.00	Accepted
4	Citizen journalism creates suitable audio that aids the quality of news content of Afia TV	33	17	0	0	50	4.5	13.59	3.01	Accepted

5	Citizen journalism creates a corresponding video clip of the news content of Afia TV.	20	30	0	0	50	4.4	13.29	2.98	Accepted
Grand Mean							4.5	3.00	Accepted	

Field Source: 2025

In Table 3, in investigating the Influence of citizen journalism on the quality of news content of Afia TV in Enugu State, item 1, with a mean score of 4.5, suggests that citizen journalism increases the current information embedded in the news content of Afia TV. Item 2, with a mean response of 4.6, accepted that citizen journalism incorporates shared meaning in the media report of Afia TV. Item 3, with a mean score of 3.5, accepted that citizen journalism provides a more straightforward writing style to enhance the quality of Afia TV's news content. Item 4, with a mean score of 4.4, accepted that citizen journalism creates suitable audio sound that aids the quality of news content of Afia TV. Item 5, with a mean score of 4.4, accepted that citizen journalism creates a corresponding video clip of the news content of Afia TV. The grand mean of the items of the above research question showed 4.5, which is above the 3.0 cutoff for the decision rule. This shows that the items used to indicate the Influence of citizen journalism on the quality of news content of Afia TV in Enugu State Urban were accepted.

Research Question 2: What is the Influence of citizen journalism on the believability/credibility of news content of Afia TV in Enugu State?

Table 4: Mean rating of the Influence of citizen journalism on the believability/credibility of news content of Afia TV in Enugu State

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	SD 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	FX Total	X	Decision ule U=3.0	R
1.	Citizen journalism has increased the public perception of the media's accuracy of Afia TV	20	30	0	0	50	4.4	Accepted	
2	Citizen journalism has improved the public perception of the media's trustworthiness of Afia TV	18	32	0	0	50	4.4	Accepted	
3	Citizen journalism has improved the public perception of the media's factuality of Afia TV	22	18	6	4	50	4.1	Accepted	
4	Citizen journalism has undermined the Public perception of the media functionality of Afia TV	41	7	2	0	50	4.5	Accepted	
5	Citizen journalism has undermined the Public perception of	24	19	7	0	50	4.2	Accepted	

media standardization of
Afia TV

Grand Mean

4.3

Field Source: 2025

In Table 4, in investigating the Influence of citizen journalism on the believability/credibility of news contents of Afia TV in Enugu State, item 1, with a mean score of 4.4, indicates that citizen journalism has increased the public perception of media accuracy of Afia TV. Item 2, with a mean response of 4.4, accepted that citizen journalism has improved the public perception of media trustworthiness of Afia TV. Item 3, with a mean score of 4.1, accepted that citizen journalism has improved the public perception of the media's factuality of Afia TV. Item 4, with a mean score of 4.5, accepted that citizen journalism has undermined the public perception of Afia TV's media functionality. Item 5, with a mean score of 4.2, accepted that citizen journalism has undermined the public perception of media standardization of Afia TV. The grand mean of the items of the above research question showed 4.3, which is above the 3.0 cutoff for the Decision rule. This shows that the items used to indicate the Influence of citizen journalism on the believability/credibility of news content of Afia TV in Enugu State were accepted.

Research Question 3: To what extent does citizen journalism influence the consumption/acceptability of news contents of Afia TV in Enugu State?

Table 5: Mean rating on the Influence of citizen journalism on the consumption/acceptability of news contents of Afia TV in Enugu State

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD	FX	X	Decision Rule U 3.0
		4	3	2	1	Total		
1	Citizen journalism often provides accurate and reliable information on Afia TV	20	3	27	0	50	2.7	Rejected
2	Citizen journalist adequately verify their sources before podcasting news on Afia TV	5	5	30	10	50	2.5	Rejected
3	Citizen journalists to be trustworthy In analyzing the news of Afia TV	7	3	32	8	50	2.4	Rejected
4	Citizen journalism has led to a decline in the public trust in the credibility of news reported on Afia TV	10	2	36	2	50	2.6	Rejected
5	The overall quality of news reporting has been compromised due to the rise of citizen journalism in Afia TV news broadcasts	3	7	30	10	50	2.3	Rejected
Grand Mean								2.5

Field Source: 2025

In Table 5, in investigating the Influence of citizen journalism on the consumption/acceptability of news contents of Afia TV in Enugu State, item 1, with a mean score of 2.7, rejected the Influence of citizen journalism. Journalism often provides accurate and reliable information on

Afia TV. Item 2, with a mean response of 2.5, rejected that citizen journalist adequately verify their sources before podcasting news on Afia TV. Item 3, with a mean score of 2.4, rejected the citizen journalist as trustworthy in analyzing news on Afia TV. Item 4, with a mean score of 2.6, indicates that the rejection of the citizen journalist has led to a decline in the public trust in the credibility of news reported on Afia TV. Item 5, with a mean score of 2.3, rejected the idea that the overall quality of news reporting has been compromised due to the rise of citizen journalism in Afia TV news broadcasts. The grand mean of the items of the above research question showed 2.5, which is above the 3.0 cutoff for the decision rule. This shows that the items that were used to indicate the Influence of citizen journalism on the consumption/acceptability of news content of Afia TV in Enugu State were accepted.

Discussion

Research objective one aimed to find out the Influence of citizen journalism on the quality of news content of Afia TV in Enugu State. At the end of this study, it was found that there is a significant influence of citizen journalism on the believability/credibility of the news content of Afia TV in Enugu State. This aligns with the findings of Dare (2010) and Sibanda (2019), who both agree that citizen journalism has positively affected the quality of media contents put forward by media houses. For Research Objective Two, this study found that citizen journalism has increased the public perception of Afia TV's media accuracy, as citizen journalism now has a significant influence on the believability/credibility of Afia TV's news contents. This aligns with the findings of Onabajo (2016) and Apeh & Didiugwu (2017), who found that citizen journalism plays a significant role in the believability and credibility of news items. Findings for research question three showed that citizen journalism has raised questions about the credibility and truthfulness of news items, which aligns with the findings of Asemah & Uwajeh (2019), who underscored the need for new legal frameworks that strike a balance between accountability, credibility, and freedom of expression in citizen journalism.

Summary of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that user-generated content significantly improves the quality of news content broadcast by Afia TV, thereby contributing to the formation of public opinion on critical issues within the public space. The study further indicated that eyewitnesses are able to provide first-hand information, which enriches news coverage when such information is shared through their personal platforms, consequently enhancing the credibility and believability of Afia TV's news content. However, despite its usefulness, citizen journalism or user-generated content presents certain challenges, particularly in the areas of fact-checking, gate-keeping, and adherence to professional standards. These limitations expose such content to varying degrees of doubt, thereby making it less reliable for Afia TV to depend solely on it for improving news content consumption and overall acceptability.

Conclusions

Conclusively, the development of citizen journalism has changed the way news is produced and enabled people to take part in the creation, sharing, and consumption of news. By elevating a range of voices and viewpoints and upending established media systems, citizen journalism has democratized the information flow. It has promoted more accountability, transparency, and civic participation by empowering citizens to report on topics and occurrences that are missed by the mainstream media. The lack of professional standards and governmental control raises concerns regarding bias, disinformation, and the dissemination of damaging content. Therefore, in order to encourage ethical citizen journalism techniques, strong regulatory frameworks, ethical principles, and media literacy campaigns are desperately needed. The practice of citizen journalism has changed as a result of technological developments and digital platforms, which Present fresh chances for cooperation, creativity, and audience interaction. However,

they also present issues with platform liability, content control, and privacy rights, all of which call for careful thought and government action. There are both opportunities and challenges for citizen journalism in the future. Social media platforms and technology advancements continue to democratize information access and encourage public participation, but they also carry hazards of online censorship, algorithmic bias, and media manipulation. In order to effectively tackle these issues, it is imperative that all relevant parties including governments, media outlets, civil society, and tech firms cooperate. Let us follow Edward R. Murrow's famous advice as we negotiate the complexities of this mutually beneficial relationship: "To be persuasive, we must be believable; to be believable, we must be credible; to be credible, we must be truthful." As we embrace the opportunities and challenges that citizen journalism presents, let us uphold the values of honesty, truthfulness, and accountability that are fundamental to journalism in all of its forms. We can traverse the constantly shifting tides of media innovation and preserve journalism's essential role in enlightening, educating, and empowering populations around the world only by adhering to ethical and truth-seeking practices.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers proffer the following Recommendations:

1. Citizen journalism's advantages should be well harnessed to improve the quality of news broadcast on Afia TV. Pieces that sample the opinion of citizens on public issues and news items that emanate from citizens should be well-reported, as this can help improve the quality of news broadcast on Afia TV.
2. Seeing that citizen journalism influences the quality of news contents of Afia TV, citizen reporters should be better harnessed to help improve the believability of news contents of Afia TV.
3. Since there is a sharp connection between citizen journalism and audience acceptance of the quality of news contents of Afia TV, citizen journalists should be encouraged to participate more in the news production process but first undergo training through initiatives like cooperative training p, cooperative reporting projects, and shared resources, which empower citizen journalists and can promote information sharing amongst citizens and Afia TV. Independent media outlets, civic journalism projects, and community-based media groups should all get institutional and financial support from governments, international organizations, and philanthropic foundations. Policymakers can enhance media pluralism, encourage civic involvement, and advance democratic principles in society by funding citizen media initiatives, investigative reporting, and grassroots journalism.

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