

ADOPTION AND PERCEPTION OF CITIZEN JOURNALISM IN LOKOJA, KOGI STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The researchers examined the adoption and perception of citizen journalism among journalists in Lokoja, Kogi State, Nigeria, with the aim of understanding its impact on traditional journalistic practices. Premised on the Diffusion of Innovation Theory, the study employed a survey research design that utilized structured questionnaires to gather quantitative data from a defined population of 178 registered journalists in Lokoja, Kogi State. A census approach was adopted to ensure a comprehensive examination of the perspectives and experiences of all registered journalists in the area. The findings reveal that citizen journalism has gained significant acceptance among journalists in Lokoja, Kogi State, with a substantial proportion adopting it as a news source. However, a mixed perception of its effectiveness persists, with varying opinions on credibility and usefulness. Citizen journalism has enhanced traditional journalistic practices, facilitating faster information dissemination, eyewitness reporting, broader coverage of local stories, and collaboration among journalists. Despite these benefits, challenges related to credibility and accuracy persist. To address these concerns, the researchers recommend that journalists and media organizations actively seek opportunities for collaboration with citizen journalists, leveraging the strengths of both traditional and citizen journalism to enhance the quality and reliability of news reporting.

Introduction

The era in which people relied solely on conventional media as source of information has quickly faded away. The emergence of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the 21st century has provided smartphone users with the opportunity to share information online. The ability to quickly access and share trends has become deeply ingrained and unstoppable. This is primarily due to the fact that every smartphone user has

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the ability to report events on communication platforms where others can watch, read, and listen to the latest news. Essentially, this gives everyone in this generation the opportunity to act as a reporter without the need for professional journalism ethics.

The concept of citizen journalism, or participatory journalism, cannot be dismissed, as "eyewitness reporters," "citizen journalists," or "participatory journalists" have become a permanent presence with the help of social media (Ashong & Nwanyanwu, 2018). In January 2018, the internet celebrated its 35th birthday, marking a significant shift in the manner in which information is gathered and shared. Before 2020, over 20 billion people had connected to the internet to share information, completely changing the world (Johnson, 2023).

In 1992, media and communication theorist Dennis McQuail proposed that news is a selective, socially constructed product with the power to determine and define events. However, in this era of social media, news is no longer solely selective or socially constructed because technological advancements have provided Nigerian citizens with ample opportunities to report events without the traditional gatekeeping and authentication processes of the news media (Mohammed, Agbana, Otebe, Anum, Onakpa & Ogwo, 2023). Trained journalists will not be the only ones reporting news in the 21st century. Nigerians now have the freedom of expression to analyze events in the nation and exercise their right to speak and be spoken to on social media platforms. The battle for freedom of expression has gained momentum in both Nigeria and worldwide. The Freedom of Information Act 2011 ensures that Nigerians have the freedom to seek and share information through various media platforms (Ola, 2020).

The triumph of citizen journalism is the result of freedom of expression and is considered a departure from the standard ethical practices of professional journalism. Citizen journalism refers to the unprofessional reporting of events by citizens of a country, disseminating information through available platforms at a rapid pace. With the presence of social media platforms, everyone reports witnessed events and stories without verifying their authenticity. Citizen journalism is characterized by citizens or groups of citizens actively participating in the collection, reporting, analysis and dissemination of news and information using the internet as a means of circulation (Aliyu, 2022). This form of journalism is a reversal of the traditional top-down communication system of mainstream media. However, there is controversy over the term "citizen journalism," as some professional journalists believe that only trained journalists can understand the rigor and ethical considerations involved in reporting the news. Nevertheless, many trained journalists also engage in what can be seen as citizen journalism through personal blogs or online commentary outside the traditional journalism hierarchy (Apeh & Didiugwu, 2017).

In the age of globalization, information on social media platforms cannot be hindered from reaching users. Both businesses and social media users have shifted their marketing strategies toward online information sharing (Onalaja, 2024). Advertisements can be made on social media platforms, allowing companies to interact with customers and receive immediate feedback (Nwaoboli, Nwammuo & Asemah, 2023). The passive relationship between companies and customers has become obsolete because questions can be asked and customized feedback can be provided promptly. Social media encompasses various online platforms, including blogs, business networks, collaborative projects, enterprise social networks, forums, microblogs, photo sharing, product reviews, social bookmarking, social gaming, video sharing, and virtual worlds (Nwaoboli, Ezeji & Osife-Kurex, 2022; Lewis, Kaufhold & Lasorsa, 2010).

The state of affairs reporting in this digital age of social media has caused confusion for journalists. The involvement of untrained citizens in reporting events in Nigeria has led to confusion and misconceptions. However, the simultaneous communication exchange provided by social media has also made citizen journalism an accepted form of journalism, where news content is user-generated without defined censorship. Although a new Facebook Community Policy has been implemented to discourage the sharing of violent videos or images,

censorship is not absolute, as offensive posts without videos are not explicitly addressed (Abdullahi, 2021). Therefore, the researchers examine the adoption and perception of citizen journalism among journalists in Kogi State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

In accordance with the constitutional provisions of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution, which guarantees freedom of speech and expression to every citizen, as well as Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, individuals have the right to express their opinions and share ideas through any medium. Nevertheless, there is a lack of understanding regarding the extent to which citizen journalism has been adopted as news source by journalists in Kogi State, Nigeria as studies related to this are scant. As such, despite the constitutional provisions guaranteeing freedom of speech and expression and the prevalence of social media platforms that have encouraged citizen journalism, studies on how professional journalists in Kogi State are utilizing citizen journalists as news sources remain scant. This study intends to address the gaps in our understanding by conducting research and gathering data on the practices and attitudes of Kogi State journalists toward citizen journalism and its use as a news source. Furthermore, this study seeks to identify any challenges or opportunities that may arise from the adoption of citizen journalism by Kogi State journalists. This includes exploring issues related to information verification, credibility, professional ethics, and the impact of citizen journalism on traditional journalistic practices.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are as follow:

1. Examine the extent to which journalists in Kogi State have adopted citizen journalism as a news source is examined.
2. The effectiveness of citizen journalism as a news source
3. The impact of citizen journalism on traditional journalistic practices in Kogi State.

Conceptual Review

An Overview of Citizen Journalism

Citizen journalism refers to the practice of ordinary individuals, often using digital technologies and social media platforms, actively engaging in the collection, reporting, and dissemination of news and information. This involves non-professionals taking on the role of journalists, observing and documenting events, sharing eyewitness accounts, and offering alternative perspectives on news stories (Nah, Yamamoto, Chung & Zuercher, 2015). Citizen journalists often operate independently, outside of traditional news organizations, and rely on personal experiences, networks, and digital tools to contribute to public discourse.

In another sense, citizen journalism can be seen as a response to the democratization of media production and distribution (Okeke, Nwabunze, Chukwu & Ogidi, 2022). With the widespread availability of smartphones and internet connectivity, more people have the means to capture and share real-time news events, thus giving rise to a decentralized and participatory media landscape. Citizen journalism empowers individuals to contribute to the public sphere, challenge mainstream narratives, and amplify underrepresented voices and stories that might otherwise be overlooked by traditional news outlets.

Additionally, citizen journalism can be viewed as a double-edged sword. While it offers opportunities for diverse perspectives and grassroots reporting, it also presents challenges in terms of verification, accuracy, and ethics (Riaz & Pasha, 2011). Unlike professional journalists who adhere to established standards and ethical guidelines, citizen journalists lack the training and experience required to navigate complex journalistic practices. Thus, there is a need for critical evaluation and verification of citizen-generated content to ensure its reliability and credibility.

Citizen journalism can also be understood as a form of participatory media in which ordinary individuals actively engage in the process of news gathering, reporting, and analysis, often through online platforms and social media channels. This involves individuals assuming the role of both news consumers and producers, thus blurring the traditional boundaries between the audience and news media. Citizen journalism represents a fundamental shift in how news and information are created and consumed. In the past, the flow of news was largely unidirectional, with professional journalists acting as gatekeepers and disseminators of information to a passive audience (Thurman, 2008). However, with the rise of digital technologies and widespread internet access, citizens now have the means to actively participate in the news ecosystem (Riaz & Pasha, 2011). In this context, citizen journalists not only consume news, but also contribute to its creation. They use smartphones digital cameras, and other tools to capture images, record videos, and document events in real time. They also leverage social media platforms, blogs and online forums to share their observations, experiences and perspectives with a wider audience.

Effectiveness of citizen journalism as a news source.

The effectiveness of citizen journalism as a news source is a topic of great interest and debate in today's media landscape (Okocha & Ola-Akuma, 2022). While traditional journalism has long been the primary source of news, citizen journalism has emerged as a powerful complement, offering unique perspectives, capturing real-time events, and providing alternative viewpoints that enrich the overall news discourse.

One of the key strengths of citizen journalism is its ability to provide real-time reporting. With the widespread use of smartphones and social media platforms, citizen journalists can capture and share news events instantly (Nah, Yamamoto, Chung & Zuercher, 2015). In situations where traditional journalists are not present, citizen journalists can intervene and disseminate information quickly. For example, during natural disasters or protests, citizen journalists on the ground can provide immediate updates and firsthand accounts, often before traditional news outlets can mobilize their resources. This speed and immediacy of citizen journalism contribute to its effectiveness as a source of news, allowing the public to stay informed in real time (Riaz & Pasha, 2011).

Citizen journalism brings diverse perspectives and alternative voices to the news landscape. Traditional media outlets may have limitations in representing all segments of society, but citizen journalists can cover stories and issues that are often overlooked or underrepresented. For instance, citizen journalists from marginalized communities can shed light on social issues, grassroots movements, and local events that may not receive significant coverage from mainstream media (Nah, Yamamoto, Chung & Zuercher, 2015). This diversity of perspectives enhances the overall news discourse, promotes inclusivity, and provides a more comprehensive understanding of complex issues.

Furthermore, citizen journalism often fosters grassroots reporting and community engagement. Citizens who are intimately connected to their local communities can provide unique insights into neighborhood developments, community initiatives, and local events (Okocha & Ola-Akuma, 2022). The close proximity and personal connections enabled the participants to capture stories that may be of particular relevance to their community. By engaging with citizen journalists, the audience becomes active participants in the news process, fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility for news production and consumption. Citizen journalism strengthens the bond between news producers and consumers, creating a more participatory news ecosystem.

In addition, citizen journalism has demonstrated its effectiveness in holding power to account. In cases where traditional media might face limitations or constraints in reporting on sensitive issues, citizen journalists can intervene and expose wrongdoing or highlight injustices (Riaz & Pasha, 2011). For example, citizen journalists have played a crucial role in documenting police misconduct, government corruption, and human rights violations. Their ability to capture and disseminate evidence, often through video recordings or social media posts,

has led to increased transparency, accountability, and calls for justice (Thurman, 2008). By acting as watchdogs, citizen journalists can contribute to a more democratic society by supplementing traditional journalism's role in exposing abuses of power.

Impact of citizen journalism on traditional journalistic practices

Citizen journalism has had a significant impact on traditional journalistic practices, reshaping how news is gathered, reported, and consumed. This influence can be observed in several key aspects of journalism. First, citizen journalism has expanded the pool of potential news sources and contributors (Thurman, 2008). Traditional journalists now have access to a vast array of citizen-generated content, including eyewitness accounts, photos, videos, and firsthand reports shared through social media platforms and online communities. This abundance of user-generated content has transformed the news gathering process allowing journalists to tap into a wider range of perspectives and sources. Rather than relying solely on their own reporting, traditional journalists can incorporate citizen-generated content to provide a more comprehensive and nuanced view of a particular event or issue. This collaborative approach to reporting enhances the diversity, depth, and accuracy of news coverage.

Moreover, citizen journalism has fostered increased stakeholders' engagement and participation in the news process (Umaru, 2022). With the advent of social media platforms and online forums, news consumers have the opportunity to actively contribute to the news ecosystem. They can share their experiences, opinions, and observations about current events, often in real time. Traditional journalists have had to adapt to this shift by engaging with their audience through comment sections, social media interactions, and even soliciting user-generated content. This direct line of communication between journalists and the public has created a more interactive and participatory news environment, where audiences have the opportunity to shape and influence news narratives. As a result, traditional journalistic practices have evolved to include a greater emphasis on audience feedback, dialog and the creation of news stories (Umaru, 2022).

Additionally, citizen journalism has prompted a renewed focus on verification and fact checking within traditional journalistic practices (Oladokun, Nsirim, Otebe, Agih, Mbazu & Mohammed, 2022). As citizen-generated content floods the digital space, journalists must verify the accuracy and credibility of the information before incorporating it into their reporting. Traditional journalists employ rigorous fact-checking processes that apply to journalistic standards and ethics to ensure the veracity of citizen-generated content. This heightened emphasis on verification has become even more critical in combating the spread of misinformation and disinformation. Traditional news outlets often act as gatekeepers, sifting through a vast volume of citizen-generated content to identify reliable sources and separate fact from fiction (Apeh & Didiugwu, 2017). The impact of citizen journalism has reinforced the importance of rigorous verification and fact-checking practices in traditional journalism.

In addition, citizen journalism has challenged the traditional notion of who a journalist is. In the past, journalists were typically seen as professionals working for established news organizations, adhering to specific ethical standards, and following established journalistic practices. However, citizen journalism has blurred these boundaries by empowering ordinary individuals to take on the role of a journalist (Okeke, Nwabunze, Chukwu & Ogidi, 2022). As a result, the definition of a journalist has become more fluid, and the lines between professional and citizen journalists have blurred. This redefinition of journalists has prompted traditional journalists to reflect on their own practices, adapt to evolving norms, and redefine their unique value and expertise in the news ecosystem (Aliyu, 2022). This shift has led to a broader understanding of journalism as a collaborative effort that incorporates diverse voices and perspectives.

Challenges in adopting citizen journalism as a source by professional journalists

While citizen journalism offers significant benefits and can enrich the news landscape, it also presents several challenges that must be addressed when adopting it as a news source. Unlike professional journalists who undergo formal training and adhere to ethical guidelines, citizen journalists often lack the same level of expertise and

understanding of journalistic practices (Aliyu, 2022). This can lead to inaccuracies, bias, and the spread of misinformation. The absence of standardized training and adherence to professional standards poses a challenge in ensuring the reliability and credibility of citizen-generated content. News organizations must implement mechanisms to evaluate the quality and accuracy of citizen journalism contributions before incorporating them into their reporting (Okeke, et al, 2022).

Moreover, verifying the authenticity and accuracy of citizen-generated content can be challenging. With the rapid dissemination of information on social media platforms, false or misleading information can quickly go viral (Oladokun, Nsirim, Otebe, Agih, Mbazu & Mohammed, 2022). Traditional journalists must invest additional time and resources to verify the information provided by citizen journalists before using it in their reporting. This process can be time-consuming and may require specialized skills and tools. The responsibility falls to news organizations to implement robust fact-checking procedures to maintain the integrity of their reporting.

In the same vein, citizen journalism can raise legal and ethical concerns (Thurman, 2008). For example, citizen journalists may inadvertently infringe on privacy rights or violate legal restrictions when capturing and sharing content. News organizations must navigate these legal and ethical complexities when incorporating citizen-generated content. They should establish clear guidelines and protocols to ensure that the rights of individuals are respected and that legal boundaries are not crossed.

Citizen journalism can also be influenced by personal biases and agendas (Okeke, Nwabunze, Chukwu & Ogidi, 2022). As individuals contribute news content based on their own perspectives, there is a risk of partiality and subjectivity in reporting. This can undermine the objectivity and impartiality that traditional journalism strives to maintain. The proliferation of citizen-generated content has also contributed to the spread of misinformation and disinformation. In the absence of editorial oversight, false or misleading information can easily be circulated, leading to confusion and harm. News organizations must implement robust fact-checking measures and educate their audiences about media literacy to combat the spread of misinformation (Oladokun, Nsirim, Otebe, Agih, Mbazu & Mohammed, 2022).

In addition, citizen journalists do not always have the same level of accountability as professional journalists. Traditional journalists are bound by professional codes of conduct and are subject to editorial oversight, which ensure a level of accountability and responsibility. Citizen journalists, on the other hand, may not face the same consequences for inaccurate or irresponsible reporting (Thurman, 2008).

Theoretical Framework

Diffusion of Innovation Theory

Diffusion of Innovations theory, developed by Everett Rogers, explains how new ideas, technologies, or innovations spread and are adopted by individuals or groups within a social system. The theory was first proposed by Everett Rogers in 1962 and has since become widely used in various fields, including communication, marketing, and technology adoption. The theory is grounded in the fundamental idea that the adoption of innovations is a social process influenced by interpersonal communication and social networks (Nwaoboli, Ezeji & Osife-Kurex, 2022). It assumes that individuals may have different levels of readiness or willingness to adopt new ideas, and their adoption decisions are influenced by several key factors.

One central tenet of the diffusion of innovation theory is the categorization of individuals into different categories based on their relative willingness to adopt an innovation. These categories include innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards. Innovators and early adopters are more likely to be open to new ideas and take risks, whereas the majority may require more evidence of an innovation's benefits before adopting it (Yaroson & Asemah, 2008).

The theory also identifies five key factors that influence adoption. These factors are known as the "Societal-Level Variables" and include the relative advantage of the innovation (how beneficial it is compared to existing alternatives), its compatibility with existing values and practices, the complexity of adopting and using the innovation, the ability to observe and try the innovation before fully adopting it (trialability), and the ability to reverse the decision to adopt (reversibility).

Furthermore, this theory emphasizes the role of interpersonal communication and social networks in the diffusion process. Opinion leaders, individuals with a high degree of influence and credibility within a social system, play a crucial role in spreading information and encouraging adoption. The theory also recognizes the importance of social norms and influence in shaping adoption behaviors.

The Diffusion of Innovations theory is applicable to the current study because, it provides a framework for understanding the adoption of citizen journalism by journalists. The theory's tenets, such as relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, treatability and observability, can help explain the motivations and barriers influencing journalists' decisions to adopt citizen journalism. Additionally, the theory's emphasis on interpersonal communication and social networks highlights the role of opinion leaders and social influence in spreading information and encouraging adoption.

Empirical Review

Umaru (2022) examined the motivations and barriers influencing the adoption of citizen journalism by journalists. The diffusion of innovation theory served as the theoretical framework, providing insights into the factors that shape the adoption process. The researchers used a mixed-methods approach, combining survey questionnaires and in-depth interviews to gather data. The findings revealed that although journalists are motivated by increased audience engagement and diverse perspectives, perceived risks, a lack of technological skills and credibility concerns act as significant barriers. The researcher recommended training programs to enhance digital skills and credibility,

and collaborations between traditional media organizations and citizen journalists.

Johnson (2023) examined the influence of organizational culture on the adoption of citizen journalism by journalists in Lagos State. Drawing on the diffusion of innovation theory, this study explored how organizational culture shape adoption behaviors. Through a qualitative research design comprising semi-structured interviews and observations, this study revealed that news organizations with a supportive and innovative culture foster a positive environment for the adoption of citizen journalism. Open communication, encouragement of experimentation, and recognition of digital initiatives are crucial. The researcher recommended that news organizations in Lagos State should cultivate a culture that values and supports digital innovation to enhance adoption.

Abdullahi (2021) employed a longitudinal approach to investigate the temporal patterns of citizen journalism adoption among journalists in Abuja. Grounded in the Diffusion of Innovations theory, this study sought to understand the adoption process and its temporal dynamics. The research design included conducting survey and content analysis of news articles at multiple time points. The findings indicate an initial slow adoption followed by exponential growth in the

use of citizen journalism. Increased familiarity, positive word-of-mouth, and demonstrated benefits contribute to accelerated adoption. The researcher recommended ongoing monitoring and evaluation to inform strategies for encouraging and sustaining the use of citizen journalism by journalists in Abuja.

Aliyu (2022) examined the influence of individual attributes on the adoption of citizen journalism by journalists in Southeastern Nigeria. Informed by the Diffusion of Innovations theory, the researcher examined how individual characteristics shape adoption behaviors. Employing a quantitative research design with a survey questionnaire,

the researcher collected data on journalists' demographic information, professional experience, attitudes, and perceived barriers to adoption. The findings reveal that digital literacy, younger age, and positive attitude toward citizen journalism are associated with higher adoption rates. However, concerns about credibility and lack of organizational support also exists. The researcher recommended digital literacy training programs and provide guidelines and support from news organizations.

These studies collectively contribute to the understanding of citizen journalism adoption among journalists in Nigeria. While they may share some common themes and theoretical frameworks, their specific scopes, methodologies, and research questions differentiate them from each other and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing adoption in different contexts.

Methodology

The researchers employed a survey research design, which is particularly effective for gathering quantitative data from a defined population. The research instrument used was a structured questionnaire. A survey design was chosen for its ability to provide a comprehensive overview of journalists' attitudes and practices regarding citizen journalism, allowing for the collection of data that could be easily analyzed and presented in a systematic manner. The study population consisted of registered journalists in Lokoja, Kogi State 178 individuals. Given the manageable size of this population, a census approach was adopted, meaning that the entire population was included in the sample. This decision was justified because it allowed for a complete examination of the perspectives and experiences of all registered journalists in the area, ensuring that the findings would accurately reflect the views of this specific group without the limitations associated with smaller sampling techniques.

Data collection involved distributing questionnaires to all 178 registered journalists. Out of these, 102 completed questionnaires were retrieved, while the remaining were lost. The data collected were presented using frequency tables, thereby enabling a clear visualization of the responses. Simple percentages were calculated to quantify the extent to which respondents adopted citizen journalism providing a straightforward interpretation of the findings.

Data Presentation

Table 1: Extent to which Kogi State journalists have adopted citizen journalism as a source of new

Response	Frequency
Very High	24.5% (n= 25)
High	40.2% (n= 41)
Neutral	0% (n= 0)
Low	21.6% (n= 22)
Very Low	13.7% (n= 14)
Total	100% (N= 102)

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Table 1 implies that a significant proportion of journalists in Lokoja, Kogi State have adopted citizen journalism as a source of news to a high or very high extent. This suggests that citizen journalism has gained significant acceptance among State journalists.

Table 2: Effectiveness of citizen journalism as a news source for journalists in Lokoja, Kogi

Response	Frequency
Very Effective	17.6% (n= 18)
Effective	30.4% (n= 31)
Neutral	0% (n= 0)
Ineffective	26.5% (n= 27)
Very Ineffective	25.5% (n= 26)
Total	100% (N= 102)

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Table 2 shows a mixed perception of the effectiveness of citizen journalism as a source of news among journalists in Kogi State. While some researchers find it effective, a similar percentage perceive it as ineffective or very ineffective. This indicates varying opinions on the effectiveness of citizen journalism.

Table 3: Impact of citizen journalism on traditional journalistic practices in Lokoja, Kogi.

Response	Frequency
Increased democratization of news production	3.9% (n= 4)
Faster dissemination of information	24.5% (n= 25)
Broader coverage of local and niche stories	14.7% (n= 15)
Enhanced eyewitness reporting	20.6% (n= 21)
Challenges to credibility and accuracy	22.5% (n= 23)
Collaboration and partnership	13.2% (n= 14)
Total	100% (N= 102)

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Table 3 shows that citizen journalism has had notable impacts on traditional journalistic practices in Kogi State. These include faster dissemination of information, enhanced eyewitness reporting, challenges to credibility and accuracy, broader coverage of local and niche stories, and collaboration and partnership. This suggests that citizen journalism has influenced various aspects of state traditional journalistic practices.

Conclusion

The findings in Table 1 indicate a significant adoption of citizen journalism by journalists in Lokoja, Kogi. This implies that citizen journalism has gained acceptance and recognition as a valuable source of news for professionals in the field. This finding is significant because it suggests that traditional journalists in Lokoja, Kogi State are acknowledging the potential of citizen-generated content to supplement and enhance their reporting. Table 2 reveals a mixed perception of the effectiveness of citizen journalism as a news source. While some journalists find it effective, a considerable percentage perceive it as either ineffective or very ineffective. This finding highlights the importance of critically evaluating the quality and reliability of citizen-generated content. The findings suggest that journalists in Lokoja, Kogi State have varying opinions on the credibility and usefulness of citizen journalism. This aspect emphasizes the need for further research and discussion on the challenges and opportunities associated with citizen journalism and its impact on traditional journalistic practices.

Table 3 provides insights into the impact of citizen journalism on traditional journalistic practices in Lokoja, Kogi. The findings indicate that citizen journalism has influenced various aspects of traditional journalism. For example, it has led to faster dissemination of information, enhanced eyewitness reporting, broader coverage of local and niche stories, and collaboration and partnership among journalists. These findings suggest that citizen journalism has complemented and expanded the capabilities of traditional journalism in Kogi State. The study's focus on the impact of citizen journalism shed light on the ways in which this form of journalism has transformed and shaped the media landscape in the state.

Studies by Ashong and Nwanyanwu (2018), Johnson (2023), Lewis et al. (2010), and Mohammed et al. (2023) support the findings that citizen journalism has gained acceptance among traditional journalists in Lokoja, Kogi State. Ashong and Nwanyanwu's research in South-South Nigeria shows similar attitudes toward citizen journalism. Johnson's study in Lagos State highlights organizational culture's influence on citizen journalism adoption. Lewis et al.'s work emphasizes philosophical and practical challenges, which is consistent with the mixed perceptions of effectiveness in Table 2. Mohammed et al.'s study in Kogi State underscores the importance of critically evaluating citizen-generated content's quality and reliability. Overall, these studies corroborate the

findings that citizen journalism complements traditional journalism by enhancing reporting capabilities and highlighting its potential for faster information dissemination, broader coverage, and collaboration.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several conclusions can be drawn. First, citizen journalism has gained significant acceptance among journalists in Lokoja, Kogi with a substantial proportion adopting it as a news source. Second, there is a mixed perception of the effectiveness of citizen journalism, with varying opinions on its credibility and usefulness. Finally, citizen journalism has had notable impacts on traditional journalistic practices in Lokoja, Kogi State, including faster dissemination of information, enhanced eyewitness reporting, broader coverage of local and niche stories and collaboration among journalists. However, challenges related to credibility and accuracy. Therefore, the researchers recommend the following:

1. Given the positive impact of citizen journalism on traditional journalistic practices, journalists and media organizations should actively seek opportunities to collaborate with citizens.
2. To address the concerns related to credibility and accuracy, journalists and media organizations should establish robust verification processes for citizen-generated content. This can involve implementing fact-checking procedures and providing citizen journalists with training and guidelines to ensure the reliability of their contributions.
3. Media consumers and the public must develop critical media literacy skills to evaluate and verify information from both traditional and citizen journalism sources. This includes being aware of potential biases, fact-checking claims, and seeking multiple perspectives before accepting the information as accurate.

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