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Nasarawa Audience Perception of Citizen Journalists' Reportage of Climate Change on Select Social Media Platforms in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigates audience perceptions of citizen journalists' reportage of climate change on select social media platforms in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The research aims to assess how citizen journalism shapes public understanding of climate change through digital channels. Employing a survey design with questionnaires as the primary instrument, the study reveals that audiences in Nasarawa State perceive climate change reportage on YouTube, X (formerly Twitter), and Facebook as both effective and satisfactory. However, the findings also indicate that not all climate change information disseminated through these platforms is accurate. The study concludes that social media serve as a double-edged tool in climate change communication, offering both credible insights and the risk of misinformation. Nevertheless, these limitations do not diminish the overall credibility of the reported findings. The study contributes to scholarship on media and environmental communication by highlighting the role of citizen journalism in climate change awareness, while underscoring the need for third-party regulation to mitigate misinformation and enhance the reliability of online climate discourse.

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Keywords: Citizen Journalism; Climate Change; Audience Perception; Social Media; Environmental Communication

INTRODUCTION

There is a variety of communication needs that must be met for a society to exist. "Primitive tribes had sentinels who scanned the environment and reported dangers. Councils of elders in most African societies, interpreted facts and made decisions on behalf of the communities. Tribal meetings were used to transmit these decisions to the rest of the group (Dominick, 1993). However, as society became larger and more complex, the jobs of modern reporting grew and became so burdensome on individuals to handle alone. With the advent of technology that allowed the development of mass communication, these jobs were taken by the mass media". (Dominick, 1993) Dominick states that it is those sentinels and lookouts of the ancient that have transformed into the media. Journalists and correspondents gather news and information for television networks and newspapers they consider important for the public, but which they cannot get by themselves. This has certain consequences for the society and research shows that, the public has grown increasingly skeptical of the news industry.

Another transition took place in the realm of communication across all the media typologies for example, print, broadcast and cinematography. In the context of Dizard(1997), what is happening across the world at the moment is that "the media industries are going through a transitional period in which old technologies are being adapted to new tastes. The most interesting example of this is the Internet, which relies on old-fashioned telephone circuits and ordinary computer modems. The emergence of new media technologies over the past 20 years has dramatically changed the media environment that many of us have been familiar with adding that the internet has changed the way in which most of us work and live.

Most recently, more contents are made available or redistributed using computational and electronic devices, bringing the expression 'new media' more into the center stage. The term became visible in the 1960s and encompasses an expanding and diversifying set of applied communication technologies. Burton (2010), quoting McQuail (2000) identified four main characteristics of new media, namely: Interpersonal

communication media such as email, Interactive play media, example is computer games, Information search media, i.e Net search engines, and Participatory media, such as Net chat rooms.

Features of the new media such as those listed above in the context of Hanson (2005) points to the fact that the coming on board of new media is a development that resonate with a populist political movement where citizens have great access to the political world than ever before. Almost every company in the computer industry is involved with new media in one way or the other. It generally refers to the various new communication outlets that now pervade the present world. It makes communication easier and faster.

Journalists by their professional calling were mandated to set agenda and act as watch dog to monitor happenings around the world that can affect the society positively. It appeared as if this mandate was tempered with at the time that the power to gather, process and finally disseminate information was consecrated in the hands of a coterie of individuals. This unfortunately, no longer gave journalists the power to also act as agents of checks and balances of other powers in the society. Citizen journalism as it were, is an extension of this role to act as checks on the powers. This also requires that an arm popularly referred as the fourth estate of the realm must not only exercise her mandate but be seen to be doing so. Political thinker, Edmund Burke referred to it as the "Fourth Estate of the realm" (McNair, 2009). In this context, it is suggested that journalism has becomes part of governance process which means that while the powers of law-making lies with the legislators, the power to implement the laws and policies of government is with the executive, and the judiciary interprets the laws. Within this arrangement journalism regulate the conduct of these three arms through constant exposure of ills in the function of governance and reportage and so regarded by members of the public as the powerful "*fourth estate of the realm"* This developments in new media technology and journalism have brought about what has been termed as *citizen journalism*, (McNair, 2009p.239). Be that it was, Citizen journalism with its several branches, which include the social media, blogs, online newspaper forums and the likes have not only gained prominence but have also become so powerful that it may be right to call them the "*fifth estate of the realm"* a term that McNair, (2009) takes full ownership of, (p. 22).

Statement of the Problem

The traditional and social media in a democratic setting such as in Nigeria is vital to

citizen mobilization and assists the government to remain accountable. Analyses of climate change communication and its impact on the public have been proliferating in communication and related discipline since the late 1990s. Despite this, carbon emissions continue to increase both globally and domestically, and society continues to be vulnerable to climate variability.

This raises questions about the effectiveness of current communication efforts, and about the ability of their audiences to implement change in response to these communications. There is an apparent important link between how the public perceive climate change and the impact of available communication strategies. However, it is the contention of this study that the growing global urgency of climate change issues as reported in international media, shows that audience perception of climate change reportage in Nasarawa State remains under explored and poorly understood. This presents a significant challenge in effectively communicating the gravity of climate change and mobilise public action. In Nasarawa State various factors such as educational background, access to credible climate change information, cultural beliefs and economic priorities may influence how residents perceived and respond to climate change news. This study therefore, investigates Nasarawa State audience' awareness, understanding and trust on citizens journalists reportage of climate change.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate Nasarawa Stateaudience perception of citizen journalist's reportage of climate change on select social media platform in Nigeria. Accordingly, the specific objectives of the study are to:

i. Examine Nasarawa State's audience awareness of citizen journalists' reportage of climate change on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook.

ii. Determine the level of trust Nasarawa State audience place on citizen journalists' reportage of climate change.

iii. Find out the influence of the audience perception of citizen journalists' reportage of climate change via social media.

Review of Concepts

Major concepts that constitute this study were review to provide better context.

The Concept of Citizen Journalism

Citizen journalism is all around us. Radsch (2013), defines citizen journalism as an alternative form of newsgathering and reporting that functions outside mainstream media organizations but is driven by different goals. Citizen journalism is speedy in disseminating news stories and this could be as a result of its lack of editorial policy. Apeh and Didiugwu (2017) posit that citizen journalism allows no room for gatekeeping where information gets to the members of the public in its raw and undiluted form. According to Bowman and Willis (2003), citizen journalism is a bottom-up, emergent phenomenon in which there is little or no editorial oversight rather it is the result of many simultaneous, distributed conversations that either blossom or quickly find their way in the web's social network. The arrival of the new media has empowered anyone to spread news to the rest of the world. Citizen journalism does not need professionalism nor does it require a skill. Anyone can be a citizen journalist. All one needs is a good smartphone that has a good camera and is internet enabled. One also needs coincidence to play its part where a newsworthy event meets a citizen journalist unlike the mainstream media where a journalist meets a newsworthy event.

According to Rosen (2008), citizen journalism occurs when people formerly known as the audience use press tools they possess to inform one another. An individual does not necessarily need a formal journalistic training to be a citizen journalist but requires a fair knowledge of the operations and manipulations of the social media (Okoro, Diri, &Odii, 2013).The internet has changed a lot of things. Untrained people have become journalists with the help of technology, disseminating news across the globe without the gatekeeping role which is so crucial to the media. This has given rise to fake news, false alarms and sensationalism which in turn can cause panic, civil unrest and worry. The social media are platforms where one can easily find citizen journalism. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, and YouTube are used to upload contents and break news before they are seen or heard on the mainstream media. Shootings which occurred during the EndSARS protests and were captured by DJ Switch and uploaded on Instagram. In fact, some mainstream media reported the event from her Instagram handle. It is no more surprising to find most breaking news on social media courtesy of citizen journalists than on mainstream media.

The Concept of Climate Change

The term climate change refers to a defined change in the atmosphere, the water cycle, the land surface, ice and other living components of earth. This is usually an outcome of the quantity of greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere; occasioned by human activities such as burning of fossil fuels, land use change and agriculture. Wiley (2010) notes that since climate change caused by human activities first emerged on the public agenda in the mid-to-late 1980s, public communication of climate change and issues relating to how to communicate it most effectively have witnessed a steep rise. Schneider (2011) said climate change is today, seen as one of the greatest challenges facing humanity. Since climate change is expected to have severe consequences for many citizens around the globe, considerable money and effort have been initiated in educating the public on the causes and effects of climate change and of how people should behave to mitigate and adapt to a changing climate.

Nigeria is one the developing nations in the world that are being impacted by the elements of the climate. According to United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), Nigeria ranks 52 among the world's top 100 most vulnerable countries. Thirteen out of the fifteen countries with the highest vulnerability are in Africa. Also, Nigeria is one of the largest countries in the world in terms of land mass and water body. It is also a major oil and gas producing nation with a huge population of about 180 million, mostly engaged in subsistent farming, fishing, and grazing, hence, Nigeria has lost a large amount of its forest vegetation due to man's activities.

Review of Related Literature

Reportage of Climate Change by Citizen Journalists

The United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has played pivotal role in reportage of global effort to combat climate change. In 1994 the US had actively contributed to the development of international agreements and strategies aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to changing climatic conditions. In 2015, world leaders had an agreement in Paris under the UN, which was a historical achievement because of the global consensus on action plan to prevent dangerous climate change (UNFCCC 2024).

Since then, the world has witnessed vigorous documentations and reporting on climate change from both professional and non-professional reporters locally and

internationally. Over the years, citizen reporters like Dinah Voyles Pulver dominates climate reporting terrain with focus on climate change, sea level, hurricanes, endanger species, wild weather and the environment. Her recent works such as "Climate Change Driving More Rain, Flooding in the Midwest and the Impact of Climate Change on Extreme Rain Fall" have drawn attention to global warming becoming an environmental threat that might have adverse effect on human life on earth (Weingart et al., 2000, p.19).

In one of her most recent publications on USA TODAY, an online newspaper on June 25, 2024 titled 'Why the Antarctic ice sheet may be in more danger than we thought' she explained how the ice sheet in Antarctica are melting faster than the scientists predicted.Drawing her conclusion from a science study on climate, she revealed that ice sheet was undermined by warm sea water beneath them substantially validating the potential of more coastal flooding sooner than expected.

In a citizen reporters partnerships with over 70 national media in Cambodia, Lao and Vietnam, a project to develop radical media reports on the benefit of conserving wetlands for livelihoods and biodiversity to mitigate climate change was conceived (IUCN'S Mekong WET Project 2020). Citizen reporters, on the basis of this project came up with innovative ideas highlighting ways to engage community members in wetland protection that benefit both local livelihoods and the environment. Citizen reporters were said to have been armed with their phone sets reported on wider range of issues covering World Wetland Day Celebration in Lao PDR, ecotourism development in the Vietnamese Mekong Delta and the impact of wetland in buffering against flooding, drought, erosion and increased storm severity (IUCN'S Mekong WET Project 2020).

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted Elaboration Likelihood Theory as theoretical foundation for the study.

Elaboration likelihood model

Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) was developed by Petty &Cacioppo in 1983. It is a persuasion-based theory which propounds that recipients of a message will process the message through either a central route or a peripheral route. The main tenet of the theory is that there are two routes that can affect information receiver's attitude towards the information; the central and the peripheral routes: (1) the central route that requires lots of diligent consideration of informational factors, such as content and argument strength of information; and (2) the peripheral route that considers less cognitive work but focuses

on information-irrelevant factors that information consumer use to assess the information. ELM suggests two factors—information consumer's motivation and ability—can be the significant moderators to shift the effects of central and peripheral factors on people's perception of information credibility. When people have high level of ability to evaluate the information credibility, he or she will take central route that consider information content very carefully. When people have minor level of ability to evaluate the information credibility, he or she will take peripheral route that put effort to evaluate medium that provide information.

Previous research has argued that readers are less likely to pay attention to information that they do not believe. Therefore, perceived information credibility has been considered important for the social media survival. Citizen journalism does not need professionalism nor does it require a skill, therefore, there have been debates on audience willingness to adopt viewpoint of the received information. Researchers have used several perspectives to explain how to judge the information credibility of citizen journalism. According to ELM, conventionally, information credibility can be investigated by three dimensions—medium, message and source credibility. Medium credibility refers to the perceived levels of credibility a specific medium that individuals used. Message credibility refers to the perceived credibility of the communicated message itself, such as informational quality, accuracy, or currency. Source credibility focuses on the expertise or trustworthiness of the source as the likelihood to provide credible information. Source credibility rates the authors who provided the information in a way they are credible or not.

METHODS

This study utilizes a survey method of data collection to investigate and x-ray audience perception of citizen journalist's reportage of climate change on select social media platformsin the study. The population of the study will comprise 9,606 active citizen journalists, three (3) online blogs and social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, X Space and Instagram used by citizen journalists for climate change reportage in Nasarawa State.

The study will use four 400 respondents using Taro-Yamane Formula. This technique will give the respondents equal opportunity of being selected thereby, reducing the bias effect

that may interfere with the validity and reliability of the study. Procedure for obtaining Sample Size is defined below:

Taro-Yamane's Formula: $\boldsymbol{n = \frac{N}{1 + N\,(\alpha^2)}}$

Where:

n = Sample Size

N = Population

α = Level of Significance

But:

N = 9606

α^2 = 0.05

n = 400

Therefore, $n = \frac{9606}{1 + 9606(0.05^2)}$

$$n = \frac{9606}{1 + 9606\,(0.05^2)}$$

$$n = \frac{9606}{9606\,(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{9606}{49.0175}$$

$n = 399.97 \approx 400$

$\boldsymbol{n = 400}$ (Sample Size)

RESULTS

The analysis and presentation is based on the data obtained from the questionnaire administered from the field work through the instrument of questionnaire. Below is a tabular presentation of the data obtained.

Table 1. The information on climate change I access on social media platforms from citizen journalist is satisfactory

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	36	31.0%
Agree	62	53.4%
Neutral	0	00.0%
Disagree	12	10.3%
Strongly Disagree	6	5.2%
Total		**100 %**

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Table 1 above shows if the information on climate change they access on social media platforms from citizen journalist is satisfactory. 36 respondents represented by (31.0%) say they strongly agree and 62 respondents represented by (53.4%) say they agree that the information on climate change they access on social media platforms from citizen journalist is satisfactory, and 0 respondents were neutral, and 12 respondents represented by (10.3%) say they disagree while 6 respondents represented by (5.2%) say they strongly disagree that the information on climate change they access on social media platforms from citizen journalist is satisfactory. This implies that majority of the respondents agree that the information on climate change they access on social media platforms from citizen journalist is satisfactory, as shown by 62 respondents represented by (53.4%) of the entire population.

Table 2 the information on climate change I access on social media platforms from citizen journalist is effective.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	29	25.0%
Agree	77	66.4%
Neutral	2	1.7%
Disagree	5	4.3%
Strongly Disagree	3	2.6%
Total	**116**	**100 %**

The table above shows if the information on climate change they access on social media platforms from citizen journalist is effective. 29 respondents represented by (25.0%) say they strongly agree and 77 respondents represented by (66.4%) say they agree that the information on climate change they access on social media platforms from citizen journalist is effective, and 2 respondents represented by (2.1%) say they are neutral about the information on climate change they access on social media platforms from citizen journalist is effective, and 5 respondents represented by (4.3%) say they disagree while 3 respondents represented by (2.6%) say they strongly disagree that the information on climate change they access on social media platforms from citizen journalist is effective. This implies that majority of the respondents agree that the information on climate change they access on social media platforms from citizen journalist is effective as shown by 77 respondents represented by (66.4%) of the entire population.

Table 3 The Information on Climate Change I Access on Social Media Platforms from Citizen Journalist is Convincing to Enable me Take Appropriate Action.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	69	59.5%
Agree	28	24.1%
Neutral	5	4.3%
Disagree	11	9.5%
Strongly Disagree	3	2.6%
Total	**116**	**100 %**

Source: Field Survey: (2023)

Data on the table above shows if the information on climate change they access on social media platforms from citizen journalist is convincing to enable me take appropriate action. 69 respondents represented by (59.5%) said they strongly agree and 28 respondents represented by (24.1%) say they agree that the information on climate change they access on social media platforms from citizen journalist is convincing to enable them take appropriate action, and 5 respondents represented by (4.3%) say they are neutral about the information on climate change they access on social media platforms from citizen journalist is convincing to enable them take appropriate action, and 11 respondents represented by (9.5%) say they disagree and 3 respondents represented by (2.6%) say they

strongly disagree that the information on climate change they access on social media platforms from citizen journalist is convincing to enable them take appropriate action. This implies that a good number of respondents strongly agree that the information on climate change they access on social media platforms from citizen journalist is convincing to enable them take appropriate action, as shown by 69 respondents represented by (59.5%) of the entire respondents.

Table 4 Information Credibility is an issue in reportage of climate change in Nasarawa state on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	75	64.7%
Agree	26	22.4%
Neutral	1	0.9%
Disagree	7	6.0%
Strongly Disagree	7	6.0%
Total	**116**	**100 %**

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Table 3 above shows the Information credibility is an issue in reportage of climate change in Nasarawa state on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook. 75 respondents represented by (64.7%) say they strongly agree and 26 respondents represented by (22.4%) say they agree that Information credibility is an issue in reportage of climate change in Nasarawa state on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook, and 1 respondent represented by (0.9%) say they are neutral that Information credibility is an issue in reportage of climate change in Nasarawa state on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook, and 7 respondents represented by (6.0%) say they disagree while 7 respondents represented by (6.0%) say they strongly disagree that Information credibility is an issue in reportage of climate change in Nasarawa state on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook. This implies that majority of the respondents say they strongly agree that Information credibility is an issue in reportage of climate change in Nasarawa state on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook, as shown by 75 respondents represented by (64.7%) of the entire population.

Table 5 Content creator's ignorance and bias are issues in reportage of climate change in Nasarawa state on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	32	27.6 %
Agree	57	49.1%
Neutral	6	5.2%
Disagree	12	10.3%
Strongly Disagree	9	7.8%
Total	**116**	**100 %**

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Data on the table above shows if content creator's ignorance and bias are issues in reportage of climate change in Nasarawa state on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook. 32 respondents represented by (27.6%) say they strongly agree and 57 respondents represented by (49.1%) say they agree that Content creator's ignorance and bias are issues in reportage of climate change in Nasarawa state on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook, and 6 respondents represented by (5.2%) say they are neutral about Content creator's ignorance and bias are issues in reportage of climate change in Nasarawa state on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook, and 12 respondents represented by (10.3%) say they disagree while 9 respondents represented by (7.8%) say they strongly disagree that Content creator's ignorance and bias are issues in reportage of climate change in Nasarawa state on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook. This implies that a good number of respondents say they agree that Content creator's ignorance and bias are issues in reportage of climate change in Nasarawa state on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook, as shown by 57 respondents represented by (49.1%) of the entire population.

Table 6 Media/ICT literacy is an issue in reportage of climate change in Nasarawa state on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	73	62.9%
Agree	26	22.4%
Neutral	3	2.6%

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	9	7.8%
Strongly Disagree	5	4.3%
Total	**116**	**100 %**

Source: field Survey (2023)

Data on the table above shows if Media/ICT literacy is an issue in reportage of climate change in Nasarawa state on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook. 73 respondents represented by (62.9%) say they strongly agree and 36 respondents represented by (22.4%) say they agree that Media/ICT literacy is an issue in reportage of climate change in Nasarawa state on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook, and 3 respondents represented by (2.6%) say they are neutral about Media/ICT literacy is an issue in reportage of climate change in Nasarawa state on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook, and 9 respondents represented by (7.8%) say they disagree while 5 respondents represented by (4.3%) say they strongly disagree that Media/ICT literacy is an issue in reportage of climate change in Nasarawa state on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook. This implies that majority of the respondents strongly agree that Media/ICT literacy is an issue in reportage of climate change in Nasarawa state on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook, as shown by 73 respondents represented by (62.9%) of the entire population.

Table 7 Climate change misinformation is an effect of citizen journalists' reportage via YouTube, Twitter and Facebook on Nasarawa state audience.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	37	31.9%
Agree	61	52.6%
Neutral	2	1.7%
Disagree	10	8.6%
Strongly Disagree	6	5.2%
Total	**116**	**100 %**

Source: Field Survey (2023)

The table above shows Climate change misinformation is an effect of citizen journalists' reportage via YouTube, Twitter and Facebook on Nasarawa state audience. 37 respondents represented by (31.9%) say they strongly agree and 61 respondents

represented by (52.6%) say they agree that Climate change misinformation is an effect of citizen journalists' reportage via YouTube, Twitter and Facebook on Nasarawa state audience, and 2 respondents represented by (1.7%) say they are neutral about Climate change misinformation is an effect of citizen journalists' reportage via YouTube, Twitter and Facebook on Nasarawa state audience, and 10 respondents represented by (8.6%) say they disagree while 6 respondents represented by (5.2%) say they strongly disagree that Climate change misinformation is an effect of citizen journalists' reportage via YouTube, Twitter and Facebook on Nasarawa state audience. This implies that a good number of the respondents agree that Climate change misinformation is an effect of citizen journalists' reportage via YouTube, Twitter and Facebook on Nasarawa state audience, as shown by 61 respondents represented by (52.6%) of the entire respondents.

Table 8 Audience positive response to climate change is an effect of citizen journalists' reportage via YouTube, Twitter and Facebook on Nasarawa state audience.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	77	66.4%
Agree	19	16.4%
Neutral	6	5.2%
Disagree	11	9.5%
Strongly Disagree	3	2.6%
Total	**116**	**100 %**

Source: Field Survey (2023)

The table above shows Audience positive response to climate change is an effect of citizen journalists' reportage via YouTube, Twitter and Facebook on Nasarawa state audience. 77 respondents represented by (66.4%) say they strongly agree and 19 respondents represented by (16.4%) say the agree that Audience positive response to climate change is an effect of citizen journalists' reportage via YouTube, Twitter and Facebook on Nasarawa state audience, and 6 respondents represented by (5.2%) say they are neutral about Audience positive response to climate change is an effect of citizen journalists' reportage via YouTube, Twitter and Facebook on Nasarawa state audience, and 11 respondents represented by (9.5%) say they disagree while 3 respondents represented

by (2.6%) say they strongly disagree that Audience positive response to climate change is an effect of citizen journalists' reportage via YouTube, Twitter and Facebook on Nasarawa state audience. This implies that majority of the respondents strongly agree that Audience positive response to climate change is an effect of citizen journalists' reportage via YouTube, Twitter and Facebook on Nasarawa state audience, as shown by 77 respondents represented by (66.4%) of the entire population.

Table 9 Audience indifference to climate change issues is an effect of citizen journalists' reportage via YouTube, Twitter and Facebook on Nasarawa state audience.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	52	44.9%
Agree	27	23.3%
Neutral	0	00.0%
Disagree	13	12.2%
Strongly Disagree	24	20.7%
Total	**116**	**100 %**

Source: field Survey (2023)

Data on table 8 above shows Audience indifference to climate change issues is an effect of citizen journalists' reportage via YouTube, Twitter and Facebook on Nasarawa state audience. 52 respondents represented by (44.9%) say they strongly agree and 27 respondents represented by (23.3%) say they agree that Audience indifference to climate change issues is an effect of citizen journalists' reportage via YouTube, Twitter and Facebook on Nasarawa state audience, and 0 respondents were neutral, and 13 respondents represented by (12.2%) say they disagree while 24 respondents represented by (20.7%) say they strongly disagree that Audience indifference to climate change issues is an effect of citizen journalists' reportage via YouTube, Twitter and Facebook on Nasarawa state audience. This implies that a good number of respondents strongly agreed that Audience indifference to climate change issues is an effect of citizen journalists' reportage via YouTube, Twitter and Facebook on Nasarawa state audience, as shown by 52 respondents represented by (44.9%) of the entire population.

DISCUSSION

Sub-themes were generated from the objectives of the study in order to guide the discussion of findings for this study. In line with that, the findings of this study were discussed here thematically to answer the research questions towards meeting the overarching objective of the study.

What is the audience perception of citizen journalists' reportage of climate change on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook?

This objective aimed to investigate Nasarawa audience perception of citizen journalist's reportage of climate change on select social media platforms in Nigeria. In determining the perception of respondents on citizen journalists' reportage of climate change on Youtube, Twitter and Facebook, results indicated that 36 respondents represented by (31.0%) said they strongly agree that the information on climate change they access on social media platforms from citizen journalists is satisfactory, and 62 respondents represented by (53.4%) said they agree that the information on climate change they access on social media platforms from citizen journalists is satisfactory. In addition, 29 respondents represented by (25.0%) said they strongly agree that the information on climate change they access on social media platforms from citizen journalists is effective, and 77 respondents represented by (66.4%) said they agree that the information on climate change they access on social media platforms from citizen journalist is effective. The perception of the audience on citizen journalists' reportage of climate on Youtube, Twitter and Facebook is shown to be convincing to enable users take appropriate action as evidenced in the study by 83.6%.

This slightly agrees with the findings of Edogor, Jonah and Ojo (2015) who found out that 201 respondents (68%) accepted that social media are reliable sources of information to them while 87 respondents (29%) responded negatively. The study revealed that majority (171) of the respondents affirmed that Facebook was their most trusted social media site on information. On contents which they consider as not often credible on the social media, 97 respondents were of the opinion that contents bordering on some political issues are often exaggerated facts, 26 respondents spotted contents encouraging tribalism in Nigeria,33 other respondents noted some religious contents as not credible, 45 of the respondents outlined contents presenting information about business opportunities and job alerts as not credible, noting that most of them were fake.

It is apparent that from the findings of these two studies to note that social media have become credible source of information to many people in the contemporary society. Albeit, there is the infiltration of fake news and misinformation but this has not discredited the social media from the users. Abishek(2012) also averred that citizen journalism courtesy of the social media has equipped citizens of the world to report breaking news accompanied with live pictures and images faster than the traditional media. Etemad (2020) also found that personal blogs and social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook are the best places for sharing and being a citizen journalist. The study also revealed that citizen journalism is considerably faster than old media as speed is a factor in disseminating news. The study noted that modern technology tools, such as smart phones and high-speed internet, provide opportunities for citizens to upload significant events, pictures or videos.

However, in the aspect of media usage, the findings of this study contrast the findings of Dare(2017), who discovered contrary to the current study that Facebook was the most used social media platform followed by Twitter. Be that as it may. It still shows that Facebook and Twitter are both popular and competing platforms in different study areas.

What are the issues in reportage of climate change in Nasarawa state by YouTube, Twitter and Facebook?

This objective pinpointed the issues in reportage of climate change in Nasarawa State on Youtube, Twitter and Facebook. Findings from the study showed that majority of the respondents said they strongly agree that Information credibility is an issue in reportage of climate change in Nasarawa state on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook, as shown by 75 respondents represented by (64.7%) of the entire population. Another issue revealed in the study is the bias and ignorance of content creators as indicated by an overwhelming affirmative percentage of 76.7%. An additional pressing issue revealed in the study is that majority of the respondents strongly stated that Media/ICT literacy is an issue in reportage of climate change in Nasarawa state on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook, as shown by 73 respondents representing (62.9%) of the entire population.

Diehl, Huber, Zuniger and Liu(2019), stated that outright climate denial is common in Western conservative parties. These movements reject scientific consensus on the causes and consequences of climate change, and thus enforce the idea that

environmental concerns are a distant, abstract problem. Some persons were denying the veracity of climate change existence because of their anti-scientific stance. Okeke, Nwosu, Okpala and Ajagu(2022) noted the issues with citizen journalism to be it has equally contributed to the rise of security challenges around the country. Further finding shows that major issues associated with the credibility of citizen Research Journal of Mass Communication and Information Technology journalism are issues of ethics, professionalism, and training which pose a security threat to the stability of the country. The study recommends that these challenges require to be crucially addressed before they cause mayhem and chaos in the country.

This aligns with the findings of Edogor, Jonah and Ojo (2015) in their study, "Nigerian users' evaluation of credibility of social media sites," examined Nigerian users' evaluation of credibility of the sites and revealed that credibility of facts and figures were serious issues with social media usage by citizen journalists. Adum and Ekwugha (2010) once observed that: In a situation where internet connectivity becomes rife in Nigeria, like the GSM is, the practice of citizen journalism may mean that many Nigerians would freely exchange information without the intermediary of gatekeepers or fear of government censorship.

What is the effect of Citizen Journalists' Reportage ViaYouTube, Twitter and Facebook on Nasarawa State Audience?

This objective explored the effects of citizen journalists' reportage via Youtube, Twitter and Facebook on Nasarawa State audience. Findings from the study indicated that a good number of the respondents stated that misinformation is one of the effects of citizen journalists' reportage of climate change via YouTube, Twitter and Facebook on Nasarawa state audience, as shown by 61 respondents represented by (52.6%) of the entire respondents. Additionally, majority of the respondents strongly agreed that audience positive response to climate change and audience indifference to climate change issues are effects of citizen journalists' reportage via YouTube, Twitter and Facebook on Nasarawa state audience, as shown by overall percentages of (82.2%) and 52 respondents represented by (68.2%) of the entire population respectively. This clearly revealed that the positive benefits of climate change reportage by citizen journalists demonstrated through positive response of the audience outweigh the negative effects of citizen journalists'

reportage which causes misinformation and indifference. It is safe to say that citizen journalists' reportage of climate change has two-pronged effect of both negative and positive but the positive outweigh the negative.

This is in line with Diehl, Huber, Zuniger and Liu(2019), who stated that social media for news has a positive impact on pro-social beliefs about climate change in nine countries in the sample (e.g., Russia, Philippines, Ukraine, Indonesia, United Kingdom). In the remaining 11 countries, social media for news is decreasing pro-social beliefs about global climate change (e.g., US, Germany, Spain, and Korea).Despite the evidence of ideological filter bubbles that form on social media around science issues (Williams et al., 2015), the study further revealed that this is most likely a local phenomenon driven by country-level contexts. In four countries in the sample(United States, Germany, Spain, and South Korea), both using social media for news and right-wing ideology lead to a decrease in pro-social beliefs about climate change.

However, there is also evidence that using social media for news leads to bucking the country-level trend. In countries where pro-social beliefs about climate change are much lower than the sample average (Russia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, New Zealand, Poland), social media for news is positively related to increased pro-social beliefs about climate change. In these countries, social media may be closing the gap in pro-social beliefs about climate change between high and low GDP countries. This finding also suggests that social media use may be dependent upon system-level attributes of the media market. In countries where the state exerts a higher level of control over media content, social media may play a different role; people are using these platforms to learn and express opinions about issues that are simply not covered in the state press.

In another work, Etemad (2020) studied, "Impact and characteristics of the citizen-journalist on international relations and citizenship rights," The study found that personal blogs and social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook are the best places for sharing and being a citizen journalist. The study also revealed that citizen journalism is considerably faster than old media as speed is a factor in disseminating news. The study noted that modern technology tools, such as smart phones and high- speed internet, provide opportunities for citizens to upload significant events, pictures or videos.

CONCLUSION

This study has brought to the fore the imperative of using social media platforms by citizen journalists to report issues on climate change on Youtube, Twitter and Facebook in Nasarawa State. The study clearly concluded that the implication of social media usage for climate change reportage is double-edged with both positive and negative sides. However, the positive surpassed the negative thereby affirming the credibility of social media platforms as the new public sphere for information dissemination and enlightenment challenges notwithstanding.

Recommendations

Based on the Conclusion of the study, the following recommendations that:

i. There is the need for proper enlightenment of citizen journalists on climate change in order to reduce misinformation.

ii. There should be a third party regulation of the social media by either social media administrators or by means of artificial intelligence in order to curtail the misuse and abuse that is thriving unchallenged at the moment.

iii. The mainstream media need to also utilise social media platforms for public education on climate change so as to consolidate the efforts of citizen journalists as well as curtail the spate of misinformation.

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