

CITIZEN JOURNALISM AND GRASSROOTS' DEVELOPMENT**OKUNADE, Joshua Kayode**Department of Mass Communication, Caleb University, Imota, Lagos.
e-mail: joshuakayodeo@yahoo.com**OLOPHA, Ifidon Anthony**Department of Mass Communication
Crawford University, Faith City, Igbesa, Ogun State
e-mail: anthonyolopha2012@gmail.com**RABIU, Yetunde Mariam**Department of Mass Communication
Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State
e-mail: rabiuyetundemariam@gmail.com**Abstract**

As media houses concentrate on making money in order to keep the organization running, citizens tend to be ignored and short-changed in the process. Most of the contents of the news covered do not really reflect the interest of the people. Hence, the people not being satisfied by the development resort to citizen journalism. The study was therefore set to appraise the impact of citizen journalism on grassroots development. The study adopted primary data generated from the administration of questionnaire and interview carried out on staff and audience of Rock City FM, Abeokuta and Channels Television, Lagos. The population of the study comprises of 242 audience and staff of Rock City FM and Channels Television. The respondents were selected using convenience sampling technique and 151 respondents were sampled. The data collected from the administration of questionnaire were analyzed with simple percentage, correlation analysis and regression analysis. The findings of the study revealed that there was significant relationship between citizen journalism and grassroots development. It also revealed that literacy played significant role in the relationship between citizen journalism and grassroots development and gratification has negative impact on citizen journalism. It was recommended that citizen journalists should conduct eyewitnesses report with high degree of honesty and sincerity. Also, the media houses should endeavour to air the views of eyewitnesses on their national broadcast with the view of passing the plight of those concerned to relevant authorities among others.

Keywords: Citizen, Journalism, Grassroots, Development, Media**Introduction**

In recent times, media organizations which hitherto have become highly commercialized in their operations to sustain their existence have inadvertently failed to capture events that are actually people-oriented. News events that deals with, and captures happenings that affects the common people at the grassroots' level are now put in the backburner. The aspects of gender, age and literacy of the people are not taken cognizance of in their reportage. Grassroots' development is thus hindered owing to this lackluster performance of the media organizations whose concentration is majorly on events that can generate economic dividend to their organizations. The coming of the modern form of communication technology has, however, brought about a change in the tone of news coverage of events. This change has metamorphosed into the people adopting the use of modern form of communication to relay news events to the media organizations in the hope that such will be disseminated to the greater number of the people in a quest to help grassroots' development.

This growth of modern communication technology and the sophistication of society over a period of time became a big challenge for traditional media of communication. In order for the media to survive this challenge, they resorted to the coverage of news with economic benefits as against the interest of the citizens. On the other hand, the citizens having discovered this development looked for the way out in satisfying their quest to know the happenings around them. "The consequence of this development evolved a situation where the citizens would source for news themselves without passing through the normal journalistic process" (Adelabu, 2007:364).

Adelabu (2007) also noted that many mass media organizations are busy repacking and becoming more interested in meeting advertiser's needs rather than readers' audience needs. Hence, many people through the help of information technology, most especially the internet, are redefining the role and rules of the game. Often, major news happens and there is no one around to report it. By way of interviews and records of the event,

reporters are able to recreate it for the morning paper. Unfortunately, there is usually not the opportunity to capture news in the making with a photograph. When the London underground was bombed on July 7, 2005, photos of the event were published on websites and blogs and made their way to the mainstream media. It was the people with camera cell phones that captured the images, not reporters. The people were able to do that through the prevalence of modern technology.

By definition, citizen journalism is a term which describes the act of individuals within a given society, community, state or nation in the gathering, processing and publishing of news materials. In this case, individuals on their own create web pages where they publish news materials collected within the society. They are able to do this due to the prevalence of modern technology. In most cases, they employ mobile phones and other recording materials which enable them to take pictures and cover events which are later posted on the web. Donald (2013:234) asserted that “Citizen Journalism (also known as public participatory, democratic or street journalism) is the concept of members of the public playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating news and information, in order to provide independent, reliable, accurate, wide ranging and relevant information that a democracy recourse”.

The latest trend in citizen journalism is the concept called “hyper local citizen journalism”. This term represents a situation where media houses call on resident individuals within the community where they operate to submit news stories articles. Donald (2013:234) gave more insight into this new development when it notes that “a trend in citizen journalism has been the emergence of what blogger, Yeffjavis, terms hyper local journalism, as online news site invite contributors from local residents of their subscription areas, who often report topics that conventional newspapers tend to ignore”.

Glaser (2006) notes that “there is some controversy over the term citizen journalism, because many professional journalists believe that only a trained journalist can understand the rigours and ethics involved in reporting the news. And conversely, there are many trained journalists who practice what might be considered citizen journalists by writing their own blogs or commentary online outside of the traditional hierarchy.”

Radsch (2013:23) vividly captures the spirit and essence of citizen journalism in his definition of the concept as: “An alternative and activist form of newsgathering and reporting that functions outside mainstream media institutions, often as a repose to shortcoming in the professional journalistic field, that uses similar journalistic practices but is driven by different objectives and ideals and relies on alternative source of legitimacy than traditional or mainstream journalism.”

With the advancement of technology and the expansion of the internet, the phenomenon known as “Citizen Journalism” has risen. On his blog, Digging Deeper, Mark Glaser, a freelance journalist, noted that, “The idea behind citizen journalism is that people without professional journalism training can use the tools of modern technology and the global distribution of the internet to create, augment or fact check media on their own or in collaboration with others”. Considering the rich nature of the subject under investigation, the researchers researched on the impact of citizen journalism on grassroots development.

Statement of the Problem

It is believed in some quarters that citizen journalism is more effective than traditional journalism in disseminating information to people because of its reach. As media houses concentrate on making money in order to keep the organization running, the citizens tend to be ignored and short-changed in the process. Most of the contents of the news covered do not really reflect the interest of the people. Hence, the people not being satisfied by the development resort to citizen journalism. However, most people at the grassroots lack computer knowledge and the country lack some basic infrastructural facilities that will make manifest the concept of citizen journalism practices. The situation informed the need for investigation into citizen journalism and grassroots’ development, as research unveiled that citizen journalism is popular among experienced and rich journalists.

From the review of relevant journals, it was observed that many studies had been conducted on citizen journalism and its impact on traditional media but few of the studies was conducted on citizen journalism and grassroots’ development. The study is therefore an attempt to appraise the relationship between citizen journalism on grassroots’ development which was previously neglected by past studies.

Also, the previous studies on citizen journalism did not consider the impact of demographic variables such as literacy level on citizen journalism. The present study attempts to bridge this gap by appraising the relationship of literacy level of citizen journalist on grassroots’ development.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to appraise the impact of citizen journalism on grassroots development. The specific objectives are to:

- (i) Appraise the relationship between citizen journalism and grassroots' development.
- (ii) Ascertain the relationship between literacy of citizen journalist and grassroots' development.
- (iii) Determine the role of gratification to citizen journalist in relation to grassroots' development.

Research Hypotheses

The study is guided by three hypotheses of relationship between citizen journalism, literacy, gratification and grassroots' development. These hypotheses are stated below:

Hypothesis 1

H₀: There is no significant relationship between citizen journalism and grassroots' development.

Hypothesis II

H₀: Literacy does not have significant relationship with grassroots' development.

Hypothesis III

H₀: Gratification to citizen journalist has no significant relationship with grassroots' development.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research work is anchored on two mass communication theories known as Democratic-Participant Media Theory and Uses and Gratification Theory.

Democratic-Participant Media Theory (DPMT)

The Democratic-Participant Media Theory was propounded by Dennis McQuail in the year (1987:122). The emphasis of this theory is on the basis of society and on the value of horizontal rather than vertical (top down) communication (McQuail, 1987:122). The main thrust of the theory lies in its insistence that the existing bureaucracy as well as commercial and professional hegemony in media systems be broken down, so as to guarantee easier media access for all potential users and consumers (Folarin, 2005:43).

McQuail (1987) proposed this theory to take account of many ideas expressed to take care of the needs of citizens. The theory found expression in the 1960s and 1970s in pressure for local and community radio and television. It challenged the dominance of centralized, commercialized, state controlled and even professionalized media (McQuail 1987:122). Making reference to Ezenberger (1970), McQuail (1987) notes that the key to applying this theory was seen to lie in the new technology of the times. It favoured media that would be small in scale, non-commercial and often committed to a cause. Participation and interaction were key concepts.

The theory has been against the system of parliamentary democracy which has seemed to become detached from its grassroots origins, to impede rather than facilitate movement in political and social life. It also takes exception to a 'mass society' which is over-organized, over-centralized and fails to offer realistic opportunities for individual and minority expression. McQuail (1987:122) notes that, "The central point of a democratic-participant theory lies with the needs, interests and aspirations of the active 'Received' in a political society. It has to do with the right to relevant information, the right to answer back, the right to use the means of communication for interaction in small scale settings of community, interest group, and subculture". Essentially, the theory cautions that communication should not be left in the hands of professionals alone, but, find practical expression in the structure and general operations of citizen journalism. This is orchestrating the tenets of the Democratic-Participant Media Theory.

The Uses and Gratification Theory

This theory was propounded by Elihu Katz Jay, Blumber and Micheal Gurevith, in the year 1974 and belong to the indirect effect theory. It is concerned with what people do with the mass media, instead of what the mass media do with the people. The assumption is that the people influence the effects that the mass media have on them. The people are not just passive receivers of the messages, but active influences of the message effect. This is because they selectively choose, attend to, perceive and retain the media messages on the basis of their needs, beliefs, et cetera.

The uses and gratification theory takes a more humanistic approach to looking at media use. Blumber and Katz believe that there is not merely one way that the populace uses the media. Instead, they believe there are as many reasons for using the media, as there are media users. According to the theory, media consumers have a free will to decide how they will use the media and how it will affect them.

History of Citizen Journalism Practice

Right from the time of modern man, people have long to exercise their right to communicate their personal views and opinions over issues of their personal views and opinions over issues of public importance and concern. A history of citizen journalism also sometimes called network journalism, participatory journalism, Web 2.0 journalism therefore also a chronicle of shifts in the nature of news, the authority of professional media producers, the media business, the shape of public debate, and the technologies of social life more generally. That history divides broadly into two threads, one about change and one about continuity. One school of thought begins with the programmatic statements of the enthusiasts for citizen journalism among them Dan Gilmor, Jay Rosen, and Axel Bruns and explores the enormous potential of experiments in reshaping journalism from the bottom up. Many of the arguments in the debate about the potential and power of citizen journalism have been made by people who are themselves active in emerging media.

The weakening of the business models of the news business in much of the western world have focused attention on arguments emerging here, particularly on what journalists can learn from the flowering of new media practices and on the potential trajectories for the social institution of the news. A second, more skeptical, school of thought has focused on questions such as why change to the news industry has happened so slowly and how far the nature of power in society is challenged by citizen journalism developments. It could be a mistake, however to see this history as too organized by these trains of thought. Much of the story of the rise and reception of citizen journalism has been told in relation to dramatic moments, such as disasters and conflicts, and in relation to particular technologies, such as blogs and twitter. Many of the arguments also connect with or extend longstanding debates about civic journalism, particularly in the United States, about alternative media and role of media in community. The term is therefore embedded in the range of different contexts in which it is invoked. On the hand, it describes initiatives by news organizations that can be criticized as attempts to reinforce their own centrality in the news landscape. On another hand, the term describes a claim made by certain individuals about the democratic legitimacy of the media they produce. The better accounts acknowledge that citizen journalism is something both contested and fluid. Because the history of citizen journalism is young, this entry references both the small number of accounts that take a broad view and also the research that belong to key stages in the development of the subfield. This bibliography has been prepared with the aid of researcher Emma Hyde.

Donald (2013:2) gave its own version of the history of citizen journalism but with reference to United States of America. To Donald, “the idea that coverage citizens can engage in the act of journalism has long history in the United States. The modern citizen journalist movement emerged after journalists themselves began to question the medicability of their coverage of such events as 1998 V.S. Presidential election. Those journalists become part of the public, or civic journalism movement, a counter measure against the eroding trust in the news media widespread public disillusionment with politics and civic affairs. Initially, discussions of public journalism focused on promoting journalism that was “for the people” by changing the way professional reporters did their work”.

In Nigeria, citizen journalism has not really had strong footing due to the numerous challenges therein. Adelabu (2007:367) notes that, “The challenges facing Nigerian journalism is how to redefine the old model of journalism which sees the audience as an empty receptacles, waiting to be filled with information selected by omniscience editorial and sees the consumers as those whose only interaction with the media is to buy what is sold or not (exception few occasions when the audience had the privilege of writing a letter, or opinion article which must beat the mercy of the editor to publish or dump in the refuse baskets)”.

Though, most of the media houses in Nigeria are already going online, some still find it too difficult to manage online publications. It is important to state at this point that online journalism practice has been a problem to many media organizations in Nigeria and they are not doing much to brace up with the challenges posed by the internet and the multimedia technology.

However, since the media finds it difficult to meet up, with the current challenges of using the internet most citizens who are computer literates are beginning to make judicious use of the internet. Some have gone as far as opening their own, Webzines while others have open blogs for themselves. To make sure that these sides and blogs are functioning effectively, some of their owners are posting materials online for others to read. Some net

users unconsciously posting materials online for others to read. Some net users unconsciously post materials that are newsworthy. Gradually, citizen journalism will become the other of the day. Again, Adelabu (2007:367) avers that, "As more and more people embrace the internet and other multimedia technology, they will no longer depend on traditional mass media to supply them with information; rather, they will source and create their own news to meet their taste". This assertion is an indication that citizen journalism practices would one day become a household name in Nigeria and that it would become an alternative and reliable source of news for the citizens.

Citizen Journalism: An Overview

The concept of citizen journalism also known as online, digital or better still participatory journalism is a form of journalism where editorial content is distributed via internet as opposed to publishing via print or broadcast. It is a current development whereby news gathering and dissemination has become a collective pursuit between trained journalist and amateur journalist. "The emergence of the internet and other communication gadgets, like cell phones, cameras, laptops, palmtops and the like has given fillip to this form of journalism" (Aina 2003:24).

Citizen journalism has democratized the flow of information that was previously controlled by traditional media (newspapers, magazines, radio and television). This is not far from the fact that this type of journalism is strengthened by the new modern communication technologies which are sophisticated cell phones, camera etc and the social media network which includes blogs, e-mails, facebook, my-space, twitter, mailing-lists, chatrooms etc. Virtually, every individual using sophisticated phones now practice citizen journalism, which means that any individual who desire to be a citizen journalist does not need to acquire a degree either in any communication related courses or other non-related communication courses before he/she could practice journalism aided by modern communication technologies.

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

Another reason for the rise of citizen journalism is the fact that many mass media organizations are pre-occupied with trying to get and sustain advertisers and have thus relegated public interests and their needs to the background. Adelabu (2007:367), citing Wikipedia, states: Citizen media bloomed at the birth of the internet and into the 1990s as a response to traditional mass media's neglect of public interest and partisan portrayal of news and world events. Citizen journalism places emphasis on local and community news and events rather than on traditional and national news.

Barnes (2012:264) states that, "blogs, forums, uploading of photographs or videos to the internet are now being labeled "citizen journalism" as distinct from traditional mainstream or professional journalism". Buttressing the untrained nature of its practitioners, Barnes said "The idea behind citizen journalism is that people without professional or formal training in journalism have an opportunity to use the tools of modern technology to create content that would otherwise not be revealed".

FORMS OF CITIZEN JOURNALISM

Citizen journalism can be categorized into two forms namely: Semi-Independent and Fully Independent Citizens' Journalists.

Semi-Independent Citizen Journalism

Semi-independent citizen journal are involved in the following activities:

- Posting comments alongside stories done by professional reporters. It is a 21st century version of letter to the editor. Some websites require readers to register in order to avoid obscenity or objectionable messages.
- Some add their information to articles done by professional journalists. Some also post information on an article covering areas not covered by the article writer.
- Some actively work with professional reporters in putting a story together. This is especially required when a professional journalist is writing on a topic that requires professional expertise from people in other fields like laws, medicine, etc.

Fully Independent Citizen Journalism

Fully Independent citizen journalism involves in the following activities:

- Some of them create blogs in which individuals can report on events in their communities or offer community on the issue of the day.
- Some have websites that are run by individuals or a group of people that reports on news events in their local community, some even have print editions.
- Some have hybrid sites in which professional and citizen journalists work together.

OVERVIEW OF CITIZEN JOURNALISTS

Citizen Journalists are the mass media audience now turned to journalists. According to Rosen (2006:1), they are “The people formerly known as the audience”. They were those at the receiving end – reading, listening and watching contents of the mass media packaged by professional journalists. Citizen journalists are members of the public who have a passion for information gathering and sharing and have access to new media technologies to disseminate such information. With citizen journalism, the audience who were consumers of mainstream media content have now become ‘pro-consumers’ a hybrid of producers and consumers. Mass media audiences are no longer content creators and disseminators.

Activities of Citizen Journalists

Bowman and Willis (2003:10-14) present the following as the activities of citizen journalists:

- Commentary is the most common activity of citizen journalists.
- With the facilities of blogs, SMS, chat groups, etc., members of the public can - engage in online discussion on any subject matter. They analyze, deliberate a give opinion on different issues.
- Citizen journalism provides localized reporting for community members.
- It is a forum for eyewitnesses to give first-hand accounts of happening within their community.
- They also engage in fact-checking, that is, ascertaining the accuracy or otherwise of information. The truth of an issue is derived from the various posts sent in by people.
- Citizen journalists engage in annotated reporting. They add to or supplement information, angles, points of view that are missing from mainstream media’s coverage of an event or issue.
- Citizen journalists use the internet and its accessories as tools for collecting and sharing personal and corporate knowledge. With simple content publishing and hypertext linking, weblogs help people amass a searchable and distributable knowledge base related to personal interests, academic research or the workplace (Bowman & Willis, 2003).
- Citizen journalists promote commerce. They discuss and analyze different products and services that they use and they offer advice to one another as to the best products/services to use, buy or rent.

CITIZEN JOURNALISM PRACTICE IN NIGERIA

With the advent of citizen journalism practices, journalism is no longer restricted to the trained professionals. The internet audits associated multimedia technology such as cell phones, iPod and video cameras have expanded the frontiers of journalism practices to include practically everybody that has access to those technologies.

In Nigeria, citizen journalism has not really had strong footing due to the numerous challenges therein. Adelabu (2007:367) notes that “The challenges facing Nigerian journalism is how to redefine the old model of journalism which sees the audience as an empty receptacles, waiting to be filled with information selected by omniscience editorial and sees the consumers as those whose only interaction with the media is to buy what is sold or not (exception few occasions when the audience had the privilege of writing a letter, or opinion article which must beat the mercy of the editor to publish or dump in the refuse baskets.

Though, most of the media houses in Nigeria are already going online, some still find it too difficult to manage online publications. It is important to state at this point that online journalism practice has been a problem to many media organizations in Nigeria and they are not doing much to brace up with the challenges posed by the internet and the multimedia technology.

However, since the media finds it difficult to meet up, with the current challenges of using the internet most citizens who are computer literates are beginning to make judicious use of the internet. Some have gone as far as opening their own websites while others have open blogs for themselves. To make sure that these sides and blogs are functioning effectively, some of their owners are posting materials online for others to read. Some net users unconsciously post materials that are newsworthy. Gradually, citizen journalism will become the other of the day. Again, Adelabu (2007: 367) avers that “As more people embrace the internet and other multimedia technology, they will no longer depend on traditional mass media to supply them with information; rather, they will source and create their news to meet their taste”.

The above quotation is an indication that citizen journalism practices would one day become a household name in Nigeria and that it would become an alternative and reliable source of news for the citizens.

GRASSROOTS' DEVELOPMENT

Grassroots also known as rural areas means the common or ordinary people, especially as contrasted with the leadership or elite of a political party, social organization etc. "While most people are familiar with the famous residential classification of world inhabitants into first world, second world and third world based on living standards and general economic output, a new classification which appears new to some is the fourth world" (Oso, 2003:97).

The grassroots approach to development eliminates the problems inherent in the top down approach. Western society does not function in a desirable manner. Fourth world countries cannot be developed in a way that outreaches the same end point as the western world. The western world development strategy results in industrialization and mass consumptions that is both environmentally unsustainable and promotes social inequality. Grassroots participation in development means consulting and involving the local people in the identification of local.

Role of Citizen Journalism On Grassroots' Development

Oso (2003) identifies the following as the roles of citizen journalism on grassroots' development:

- **Social Mobilization:** can be defined as conscious efforts to boost the awareness of community members concerning developmental goals and the collective attempt to move them in the direction of actualizing these goals. Citizen journalism mobilize the people to achieve set goals through various discussion programmes, jingles and the publication of well-informed articles.
- **Political Consciousness:** Citizen Journalism motivate and energize the rural populace by increasing their political consciousness so that they can act as a check on bad governance. In addition, a boost in their political consciousness will not only enhance their understanding of the political process, but it will also serve as a basis for political participation.
- **Provision of Linkage between the Government and the People:** Citizen Journalism provide the link between the government and the people, it project the government to the people and vice versa. Government gauges the feelings of the rural citizens through the available citizen journalists, while rural dwellers through some indigenous language programmes and news bulletins, gain awareness of government intention or plan concerning their welfare. The bridge building role of citizen journalism is exemplified by programmes like Gbangbanlawa (A public complaints and discussion programmes), Who dey house (A public complaints and discussion programmes), Open day programmes on every Friday at Rock city FM 101.9 Abeokuta Asero and Eyewitnesses reporting on Channels Television. Through these programmes citizen journalists draw government's attention to rural neglects, while at the same time constituting feedback channels to community members.
- **Serving as the Voice of the People:** Citizen Journalism mould people's opinion, it enables them to ventilate their opinion about abandoned projects in their localities.
- **Facilitators of Economic Activities:** Citizen journalism sometimes attempt to bridge the economic gap between the urban and rural dwellers by focusing on the economic potentials of the rural communities, especially the available food and cash crops that can serve as raw material input for industrial production.
- **To Create Connection and Discussion at Grassroots Level:** Citizen Journalism creates an avenue for discussion, whereby the grassroots dwellers express their opinions. Though, there is no unanimity and agreement on the name of this method of collecting, analyzing and disseminating news by the citizenry for the general public, it is to be noted that its practice has increased over the last decade. Citizen Journalism is useful to society at two levels. While on one hand it educates and informs the society on the opportunity to tell and report their stories it aims to inform and educate, hold people and authority to account, document and interprets development and changes.

Impact of Citizen Journalism on Grassroots' Development

Lemann (2014:20) gave the following as the impact of citizen journalism in grassroots:

- Citizen journalism helps in creating a culture of transparency and efficiency, it give the quality of culture and make the grassroots dwellers understand the culture.
- It eradicates absence of participation by rural communities in mainstream media, mainstream media does not allow participation because they believed that they set agenda for the people but citizen

journalism creates opportunity for participation. Rural dwellers can connect on articles and start discussion boards to discuss articles.

- Citizen journalism represents a revolution of how news is consumed by the society and rural dwellers. It has given a room for community discussion, community from around blogs due to the interactive nature “Community” has been defined as a place where people conduct community activities, share common beliefs and share a means of communicating. With the use of technologies there is increased opportunity for reader to comment and interact with other readers.
- It creates an opportunity for grassroots dwellers, allowing them to have more options to what to view and read. Citizen journalism has given voice to the under privileged and numerous vulnerable individuals. Although some professional journalists criticize citizen journalism for understandable reasons, it is nevertheless important to note that the two types of journalism sustain a collaborative relationship that can be qualified as vertical. Their relation can be referred to as vertical because the information goes from the bottom; citizen journalist, up to professional ones even if the latter depend on the former to enrich their stories as it was the case at Boston Marathon bombing in 2013 when professional journalists heavily relied on citizens to enrich their narratives. Another example of their collaboration is embedded in the creation of television and radio programmes, websites, blogs, Facebook, Twitter and You Tube accounts by mainstream media to allow people from around the globe to contribute pictures and video of breaking news stories.

Media For Citizen Journalism

The media for citizen journalism basically revolves around the internet and its accessories. Outlets for citizen journalism include personal websites and blogs. Blogs are the major media for citizen journalism. According to Bowman and Willis (2003), a blog is a web page made of usually short, frequently updated text blocks or entries that are arranged in reverse chronological order (most recent to oldest). Weblogs provide commentaries and links about contents on the site. In a blog, an individual can upload text, mini essays, event listings, etc. weblogs enable the individual participant to play multiple roles simultaneously publisher, commentator, writer and moderator. Mobile telephones also place the power of reporting in the hands of the public. It provides low cost options for sharing news, information and pictures. They can be used to record scenes and take pictures, which can then be uploaded on the internet.

Personal broadcasting sites are websites owned by individuals where they upload video coverage of events, interviews, etc., for the public. Audience participatory news sites which are set up by independent agencies where the public can contribute and submit news, information, photos, etc., on various happenings they have witnessed, are other media for the citizen journalists. In addition to these email newsletters, mailing lists, etc., use personal e-mail to share news and information to people around the world. Mark Glazer, a freelance journalist who frequently writes on new media issues, said in 2006: “The idea behind citizen journalism is that people without professional journalism training can use the tools of modern technology and the global distribution of the internet to create, augment or fact-check media on their own or in collaboration with others. For example, you might write about a city council meeting on your blog or in an online forum. Or you could fact-check a newspaper article from the mainstream media and point out factual errors or bias on your blog. Or you might snap a digital photo of a newsworthy event happening in your town and post it online, or you might videotape a similar event and post it on a site such as You Tube”.

Blogging

The word blog is an abbreviation of the word weblog, a term coined to refer to a site which is a log of other websites visited by the blogger, and commented on in the weblog. A blog is a website, usually maintained by an individual, with regular entries of commentary on various topics, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics, music, video and audio. Individuals, organizations or groups can now communicate with one another or to the world without necessarily passing through the mainstream method of information gathering and dissemination. This implies a more tasking effort on mainstream journalism practitioners. The first African American President, Barack Obama explored the new media during his campaign for the White House thereby reaching the youth through blog, Facebook and YouTube. Many blogs provide commentary or news on a particular subject; others function as personal online diaries while some blog may gain popularity others may not necessarily be known.

Blogs have expanded to include the previous forms of the online journal, and personal home page that were popular five year ago. Technically, the term can be loosely applied, but it is generally assumed that a blog is hosted using one of the many blogging software systems that are available, and which impose basic structural and format convention on the user. The basic format of the weblog is a series of posts consisting of text, and possibly hyperlinks, which are delineated by time and date, and usually listed, in reverse chronological order,

with the most recent post at the top. Weblogs allows pictures to be included as well, but most blogging software limits the amount of formatting and fancy layout that the writer can impose. The words therefore are given priority on a weblog: it is primarily a textual, and hyper textual, form.

Facebook as Citizen Journalism

Social networking sites such as My Space and Facebook are phenomena on to themselves but share many of the attributes of citizen journalism. A social networking site is a large collection of template-based personal web site. Each is established after the owner fills out a questionnaire about demographics, personality and history. The software allows quick links to people sharing similar characteristics, creating an instant community of the lost or previously unknown “friend”. Although, social networking is primarily a place to meet friends, it as a growing news media value. The university of Missouri citizen journalism research team recently examined the perceived credibility of news information found on Facebook. The researchers found that Facebook users judged news content posted by their friends to be more credible than content posted on the site by traditional news organizations. The trend even held true for students on Facebook. As content creators, journalists are now outgunned by millions of bloggers, citizen reporters, flicker photographers and You Tube video producers. There will always be a place for the journalists who can craft a story better than anyone else, but there will be a bigger place for the journalist who helps media consumers find the information they want. The essence of the new journalism is to treat the internet as a massive wire service upon which billions of stories run each day. (www.kenn.org/Citizen Journalism).

You Tube as Citizen Journalism

You Tube is a video sharing website where users can upload view and share video clips. You Tube was created in February 2005 by three former pay pal employees. The San Bruno based uses Adobe Flash Video technology to display a wide variety user generated video content including movie clips, TV clips and music videos, as well as amateur content such as video blogging and short original videos. In October, 2006, Google Inc., announced that it had reached a deal to acquire the company for US \$1.65 billion in Google stock. Few statistics are publicly available regarding the number of videos on YouTube. However, in July 2006, the company revealed that more than 100 million videos were being watched every day, 2.5 billion video were being watched every day, cited in (www.kenn.org/ Citizen Journalism).

Methods Used By Citizen Journalists To Reach Out To The People At The Grassroots

- i. Citizen journalists transmit their knowledge about socio-economic issue and speak their minds via Rock City FM and Channel Television.
- ii. Proposition of eye report: A statement that expresses the people’s opinions on issues of importance, events and development that took place in the rural areas based on what they saw and what the people saw and felt should be put in consideration.
- iii. Programmes on issues of principle: Opinions based on manners and etiquette are used to know the views and feelings of the rural dwellers’.
- iv. Propositions of complaints via text message: Complaints are given via text message by the rural dwellers expressing their opinions on abandoned projects the government has left aside after promising them. For instance, a programme titled “Gbangbalawa” is always on air on Rock City FM, every Monday at 9pm to discuss the issues affecting the grassroots dweller and Open day on every Friday at 9am.

Gender, Age, Literacy Level And Citizen Journalism

To moderate the contributory roles of the study’s independent variables to the dependent variable, Age, Gender and Literacy Level are considered. Age is a sign of maturity. It tells about the experience an individual has obtained in the discharge of his duties. Matured citizen tend to understand their roles as a result of the experience they have gathered. People in the age bracket of 25-35 years were considered to be involved in citizen journalism (Bowman & Willis, 2003). This group of people gives information to media houses on happenings in the environments for media to digest and scrutinize. This implied that less people in the age bracket of 18-24 and 36-60 were involved in citizen journalism. As a result of these, Bowman and Willis (2003) concluded that there was a significant relationship between age and citizen journalism.

Another moderating variables on the relationship between citizen journalism and grassroots development is gender. Gender refers to the sex of individuals. It refers to whether an individual is male or female. Females visit internet for different reasons which include: social, economic and aesthetics reasons. Males are less glued to the internet. They only visit the internet for specific reason. Males are less likely to engage in citizen journalism than

their female folks. This implies that gender play significant role in the relationship between citizen journalism and grassroots development.

The third level of moderating variable is the Literacy Level of respondents. Literacy Level relates to the level of education attained by an individual on a particular career or profession. An educated individual tend to know what to do at the right time. They are knowledgeable and can distinguish between right and wrong. Citizen journalism requires high degree of literacy, one of which is ability to read and write and ability to operate the computer. Citizens who read and write have the potentials to report happenings in the locality to media houses via internet through facebook, twitter, whatsapp and other social medium. However, citizens with no formal education may find it difficult to engage in citizen journalism due to their low literacy level.

Empirical Review

Some studies that are closely related to the present work had been undertaken in the past. Onyebuchi (2010) carried out a research on the Benefits, Challenges and Prospects of Citizen Journalism Practice in Nigeria” with the aim of examining the concept of citizen journalism practice in Nigeria. The study adopted survey method and stand on sampling technique to gather primary data, using simple percentage analysis, it was found that the challenges facing citizen journalism included computer literacy, lack of access to internet facilities and high cost of surfing the net.

Mirvajovia (2013) studied the Golden Age of Citizen Journalism with the Purpose of Assessing the Effect of Citizen Journalism on current media - Using content analysis obtained through literature review, the study found that there was significant effect of citizen journalism on current media. It was also revealed that significant relationship existed between citizen journalism and current media practices in Nigeria.

Dare (2011) studied The Rise of Citizen Journalism in Nigeria, a case study of Sahara reporters. The main objective of the study was to provide a pioneering academic study of the birth of citizen journalism in Nigeria. The study adopted content analysis and found that citizen journalism in all ramifications has significant relationship with traditional media. Citizen journalism synergize with traditional media to enhance democratic value in democratizing country such as Nigeria.

Shaun (2006) appraised Uses and Gratification Investigation into the Rise of Citizen Journalism on Korea. It attempted to identify the motivations of citizen contributors. The study population included 1,200 citizen journalists in Korea. A sample of 192 citizen journalists was chosen using simple random sampling technique. The study employed and found citizen journalism has significant synergy with traditional journalism in Korea.

Research Design

Survey research method is adopted to generate relevant data for the study. The method was considered appropriate because the study involves workers and audience. This involves ascertaining opinions, attitudes and beliefs of the respondents on the subject matter.

Population of the Study

Population for this research work comprises the staff and bloggers (who are used as proxy for audience, as it will be impossible to obtain the total number of viewers and listeners) of Rock City FM and Channels Television. Rock City FM has staff strength of sixty (60) while Channels Television has eighty three (83) staff. The audience of Rock City FM and Channels Television were estimated at 40 and 59 respectively. This gives a population of 242 respondents. This information was obtained from the managers of the two media firms through the word of mouth. Therefore, the study population comprises of two hundred and forty-two workers and audience of the two media firms which make up the study area. The study population is heterogeneous because it comprises of different items (staff and audience) and it is finite because it has specific number of target.

Sample Size

Based on the above clarification, the sample size of 151 respondents was drawn from staff and audience of Rock City FM and Channels Television. The sample size was determined using Yamane (1967)’s formula. According to Yamane (1967), the sample size of an enquiry can be obtained using the formula below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Whereby n is required sample size

N is total number of population

e is the level of tolerance

N = 242

$$\begin{aligned}
 e &= 5\% (0.05) \\
 \text{Therefore } n &= \frac{242}{1+242 (0.05)^2} \\
 &= \frac{242}{1+ 242 (0.0025)} \\
 &= \frac{242}{1+ 0.605} \\
 &= \frac{242}{1.605} \\
 &= 150.7788 \\
 &= 151
 \end{aligned}$$

Sampling Technique

The technique adopted for the study is the convenience sampling method. The sampling method was used to choose respondents that could be found at the time of the study, i.e. the staff of Rock City FM and Channels Television and, other respondents were chosen based on availability. The other respondents for the study were selected from the two media houses in the study area.

Research Instrument

The instruments used for this research work are questionnaire and interview. The study questionnaire contains two sections: Section 1 on personal data of respondents while Section 2 contains research questions items. The items in the questionnaire were scored using four-point scale: Strongly disagree = 4; Disagree =3; Agree = 2; Strongly agree = 1. The interview contained questions such as: What do you understand by citizen journalism? What types of programmes do you use to provide linkage between the government and rural dwellers? What is the difference between citizen journalism and conventional journalism?

Method of Data Analysis

The data obtained from the administration of questionnaires was analysed using simple percentage, correlation analysis and regression analysis.

Test of Hypotheses:

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between citizen journalism and grassroots’ development

Correlations

		Citizen journalism	Grassroots development
Citizen journalism	Pearson Correlation	1	.553**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	146	146
Grassroots development	Pearson Correlation	.553**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	146	146

The correlation analysis above showed a positive and significant relationship between citizen journalism and grassroots’ development (r=0.553; P<0.01).

Hypothesis Two: Literacy does not have significant relationship on grassroots’ development

Correlations

		Literacy	Grassroots development
Literacy	Pearson Correlation	1	.445**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.010
	N	146	146
Grassroots development	Pearson Correlation	.445**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	
	N	146	146

The correlation analysis above showed a positive and significant relationship between literacy and grassroots' development ($r=0.145$; $P \leq 0.01$).

Hypothesis Three: Gratification to citizen journalist has no significant relationship on grassroots' development.

Correlations

		Grassroots' development	Gratification
Grassroots development	Pearson Correlation	1	.649**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.020
	N	146	146
Gratification	Pearson Correlation	.649**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.020	
	N	146	146

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

The correlation analysis above showed a high positive and significant relationship between gratification to citizen journalist and grassroots' development ($r=0.649$; $P > 0.01$).

FINDINGS:

The result revealed that there is significant relationship between citizen journalism and grassroots' development. This finding is supported by Mirvajovia (2013) where it was revealed that there is significant relationship existing between citizen journalism and current media practices in Nigeria.

Literacy does not have significant relationship with grassroots' development, while gratification showed significant relationship between citizen journalism and grassroots' development.

Conclusion

The impact of citizen journalism on grassroots' development is immense as revealed by the result from the study. The findings of the study indicated that citizen journalism plays significant role in the grassroots' development of rural areas and also that citizen participation in journalism brings about development in rural areas.

Likewise, result indicated that disseminating information through Internet did not affect the development of the rural areas and that mobilizing rural dweller, providing linkage between the government and the people, connecting and discussing at grassroots level and serving as the voice of the people were the roles played by citizen journalism in the development of rural areas. However, citizen journalism is faced with the problems of contribution from rural dwellers and these include; uneasy access to the Internet, high cost of using Internet and computer illiteracy.

Through the analysis, it was revealed that media houses should include citizen participation programme on their programmes to provide platform for people to air their views on development needs of their area and influence people at the helm of affairs to see to the plight of rural dwellers. Based on these, it was concluded that significant relationship existed between citizen journalism and grassroots development in Nigeria.

It was shown that demographic variables such as age and gender play insignificant role in the relationship between citizen journalism and grassroots development and that literacy and computer operating efficiency of respondents play a significant role in the relationship between citizen journalism and grassroots development. As a result of these, it was concluded that there was no significant difference between male and female in term of citizen journalism and grassroots development, age does not determine the level of participation in citizen journalism while literacy have significant impact on citizen journalism.

It was also shown that citizen journalists are not motivated by their political affiliate in the discharge of their duties, citizen journalists do not expect monetary values in reporting items of news, bribery has negative impact on citizen journalism and grassroots development. As a result of this, it was concluded that gratification has negative impact between citizen journalism and grassroots' development.

Recommendations

The study has successfully determined the impact of citizen journalism on grassroots' development. Based on the findings of the study, it recommended as follows:

- i. Citizen journalists should conduct eyewitness report with high degree of honesty and with all sincerity.

- ii. The media houses should endeavour to air the views of eyewitness on their national broadcast with the view of passing the plight of those concerned to the relevant authorities.
- iii. Citizens should be involved in eyewitness journalism by reporting any social ills.
- iv. Bribery is a menace to the society. Media houses should not give bribe to any eyewitness for more information as this could jeopardize the effectiveness of eyewitness/citizen journalism.

References

- Adelabu, O. (2007). Citizen Journalism: The 21st century challenges for Journalism. In E. M. Mojaye, O. Oyewo, R. M'Bayo and I. A. Sobowale, (Eds.), *Globalisation and development communication in Africa*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.
- Aina, S. (2003). *Anatomy of communication*. Ibara, Abeokuta: Jedidah Publishers.
- Ambrose, J. (2007). Newspapers going, but not yet gone. *Providence journal*.
- Barnes, C. (2012) 'Citizen journalism vs. traditional journalism'. *Caribbean Quarterly*, 58(2-3), pp. 16-27.
- Bowman, S. & Willis, C. (2003) *We media: How audiences are shaping the future of news and information*. The media center at American Press Institute.
- Dare, S. (2011). The rise of citizen journalism in Nigeria – the case of sahara reporter. <http://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/about/article/the-rise-of-citizen-journalism-Innigeria.html>
- Donald, M. (2013). *War reporting in a digital age*. In K. Orton-Johnson and N. Prior (Ed.), *Digital Sociology: Critical perspectives*: 151-168. London: Palgrave Macmillan (Chapters in Books)
- Enzensberger, H. M. (1970). 'Constituents of a theory of the media'. *New left review*, 64:13-36.
- Folarin, B. (2005). *Theories of mass communication - An introductory*. Text, Ibadan; Stirling-Horden Publishers (Nig). Ltd.
- Glaser, M. (2006). Citizen Journalism, <http://www.pbs.org/mediastrip/2006> (accessed Aug., 2016).
- Glaser, M. (2006). *Your Guide to Citizen Journalism*. Retrieved March 22, from [http://www.pbs.org/media/shift/2012/09>Your Guide to Citizen Journalism 220thm](http://www.pbs.org/media/shift/2012/09>Your-Guide-to-Citizen-Journalism-220thm).
- Jay R. (2008) *A most useful definition of citizen journalism*. Retrieved February 19th, 2016 from press think
- Lemann, N. (2009). Journalism Schools can push coverage beyond breaking news. *Chronicle of higher education*.
- McQuail, D. (1987). *Mass communication theory*. London: Sage Publications.
- Mirvajovia, V. (2013). The Golden Age of Citizen Journalism. DOI:10.2478/curie
- Onyebuchi, C. A. (2010). *Benefits, challenges and prospects of citizen journalism practice in Nigeria*: University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Oso, L. (2013) *Community media: Voice of the Oppressed*, Ibara, Abeokuta: Jedidah Publishers.
- Radsch, Courtesy C. *The Revolutions will be Blogged: Cyberactivism and the 4th Estate in Egypt. Doctoral Dissertation, American University, 2013.*
- Rosen, J. (2006). *The People Formerly known as the Audience*. Sourced March 1, 2016 from http://journalism.nyu.edu/pubzone/weblogs/pressthink/2006/06/27ppl_frmr.html
- Shaun S. (2006). The "MY" In OHMYNEWS: A Uses and Gratifications Investigations into the Motivations of Citizen Journalists in South Korea". University of Leeds, UK.
- ViewPoint West Partners (2001). *The challenges of citizen journalism*. Sourced March 1, 2016, from <http://vpwpartners.blog.com/viewpointwestpartners/2006/01/the-challenges.html>
- Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia (2009). *Citizen journalism*. Sourced March 1, 2016 from

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Citizen>

You Tube (2012). www.kenn.org/ Citizen Journalism: You Tube and the Journalist. Sourced September 10, 2012

Facebook (nd). www.kenn.org/Citizen Journalism: Facebook and the Journalist

Yamane, T. (1967). *Statistics: An introductory analysis, 2nd edition*. New York: Harper and Row