

Assessing the Operational Difficulties and Coping Strategies of Journalists in Ebonyi State in the Age of Internet Revolution

ONWE, Emmanuel Chike

Department of Mass Communication,

Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki

chikeisworking@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study investigated the self-perception and coping strategies among journalists who lack internet literacy in Ebonyi State. The major objective of the study was to determine how journalists that lack requisite knowledge of internet cope with their job of filing in their reports to their organisations. Situated within the framework of the Technological Determinism Theory, the research was designed as a survey on ninety-four (94) out of the Two Hundred and Sixty-Two registered journalists in the state who indicated lack of full Internet literacy. A structured questionnaire was employed as the data collection tool. Findings show that the journalists in Ebonyi State who lack internet literacy experience operational difficulties in gathering, writing, editing and filing their reports. It was equally discovered that the majority of these journalists adopt certain survival strategies to circumvent these difficulties and these include dependence on internet literate colleagues; employment of services of cybercafé operators and handing over of their hardcopy reports to the office for completion. The research further found that the journalists perceive their lack of internet literacy as some form of deficiency particularly with reference to speed of operation, finesse and professional growth. However, majority of the respondents are not taking the necessary steps to solve their internet deficiency. The study concluded that this inaction could be attributed to factors like poor remuneration of media practitioners and lack of training/exposure to internet driven modern reporting skills. The study recommended, among others, that the curriculum of institutions where journalism and media studies are taught should include training on ICTs and how to apply them in the context of modern journalism.

Keywords: *coping strategies, digital divide, internet literacy, journalism, self-perception.*

Introduction

The dawn of the 21st century, no doubt, witnessed great changes in the media industry. These changes consequently brought new ways and innovations to the industry. It surely affected the way news gatherers go about their business; editors were not left out in the change; media owners also became aware of the shifting paradigm from the old ways of running the media business to the new innovative and technologically propelled media management. What this new advancement means is that media practitioners became conscious of the changing world of the mass media; it became clear that organisations and individuals that would be left out in the shift would probably lose relevance in the media world and business.

Allen, et al. (2015) is of the view that the change that hit the media changed the landscape. It brought about a situation where even the demographics changed dramatically, the willingness to hear the progressive media increased speedily, shifting demographics created both

challenges and opportunities for content producers; different groups began using the media in different ways and everything experienced a glacier that needed to be corrected.

One might wonder the reason for the change in the media world? Endong (2015) notes: the notable change that was witnessed in the media world was precipitated by the renaissance in technology; the consequences of melding ICT with the media world resulted in the emergence of a new alternative communication paradigm – a tangible symbol of the people’s desire to appropriate a technology with which they feel increasingly identified. Thanks to the telephone (fixed or cellular) listeners and viewers moved from being passive to active participants in the political changes unfolding before them. Thus, testifying to the gradual evolution of Nigeria and its people toward Information and Communication Technology. Globally, the rise of digital media has brought in its wake sets of opportunities and challenges for traditional media. Descriptively, what this meant was that digital broadcasting became facilitated through the use of the internet and networked technologies that are powered through these means (Okon & Ihejirika, 2014, p. 39;& Da-Costa, et al., 2021).

ICT has minimized manual efforts by the decrease of the defeats of distance and time relatively than ever before. “The media is one of the industries that has benefited greatly from the usage of ICTs. News processing and reporting is faster and more accurate; thanks to ICTs, which also helps to eliminate space limits and distance barriers. As a tool for easing the generation, storage, and dissemination of information using electronic means, ICTs are essential component for improving timely news delivery in the broadcast sector. Using ICTs, events can be covered in real-time regardless of whether journalists are there at the venue or watching from the studio or at home” (Oyedokun & Oladesu, 2021, p.1). The truth at these point remains that journalists need the understanding of these new technologies to cope in their work and that those who lag behind in the use of the new technologies would of course be challenged in the discharge of their duties. In this regard, the problem of how the latter (journalists without ICT knowledge) would survive becomes a growing concern. Against this backdrop, this paper sets out to investigate the self-assessment and coping strategies among journalists who lack Internet literacy, with Ebonyi state as the focal context.

Statement of Problem

The importance and usefulness of the internet to the journalists in the 21st century is no longer in doubt, some media practitioners are yet to be fully abreast with the operations of the internet as a means of gathering and sending information. Put in another way, some journalists are still technologically backward, as they are yet to embrace internet literacy. They are still as Adekoya (2013, p.55) puts it, “caught in the analogue era.” This category of practitioners, apparently, would be faced by a plethora of challenges. To this end, one might wonder how these people cope in their profession. How do they manage to survive in the highly competitive media landscape of the current ICT-saturated world? Are they measuring up with the demands of today’s practice? All these become of concern in view of the imperative of the ICTs in modern day news reporting (Mark, 2018; Apuke & Omar, 2021).

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

- i. Ascertain the operational difficulties experienced by Ebonyi journalists who lack internet literacy.
- ii. Determine the survival strategies adopted by journalists in Ebonyi State in a bid to circumvent the difficulties created by their lack of internet literacy.
- iii. Determine the extent journalists in Ebonyi State perceive their lack of Internet literacy as professional deficiency.
- iv. Determine the efforts that are being made by these journalists to acquire internet literacy.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide this study;

1. What are the operational difficulties experienced by Ebonyi journalists who lack internet literacy?
2. What are the survival strategies adopted by the journalists to circumvent the difficulties created by their lack of Internet literacy?
3. To what extent do journalists in Ebonyi state perceive their lack of ICT as professional deficiency?
4. What are the efforts being made by these practitioners to acquire Internet skills?

Literature Review

Sociologists, media scholars, and political scientists have since shown interest in the role played by the media in advancing the course of citizen participation in the social process. In media scholarship circle, the earliest tendency, following the triumph of liberal thinking from the 18th to 20th century, was that the media have become “an independent mouthpiece of the common people” (Duru, 2011; Laor, et al., 2020). The media were assumed to be in a position of a watchdog that monitors the society, checking dictatorial tendencies and ensuring social justice generally. This quest gave birth to what has become popularly known as the “Fourth Estate of the Realm” – an attribution given to the media to reflect their perceived role as the institution that watches over the government; the fourth arm of the government (Miller, 2017). What this presupposes is that the role of the media in the socio-political realm of any society cannot be jettisoned. They have by this role become the voice of the voiceless and the hope of the common man (Ndolo, 2011; p. 22).

The media have continually developed with society it monitors. The height of this development is technological; where the internet has been one of the uniting factors that made the world a “global village”. For a media organization to survive in its roles to the society, they have to go digital; inclusive of the media men and women. Some factors that favoured the growth of the media included the industrial revolution which introduced the railway and the airplane, the financial support by advertising and the increases in the flow of up-to-date news transmitted by telegraph microwave and lately satellites (Thurman, 2015; Welbers & Opgenhaffen, 2018)

The growth of other forms of communication media developed from application of technology such as photography (1839), the telegraph (1840), the success of Marconi and Popoff in transmitting and independently receiving wireless messages and the tele-printer in 1930 (Rubin 1989, p.66; cited in Allen et al., 2020). Telephone, radio, television and cinema also came into existence and together with the newspaper, launched a new era of what was referred to as mass communication and mass consumption of information.

The history of the growth of the media industry is the history of the development of technologies and convergences “For mainstream media, something quite fundamental is changing how traditional media are going about news collection, writing, editing, storage, retrieval, and dissemination in the news industry. On the mission for data, information execution and need for speed in a data field society are creating considerable opportunities that are inciting a reexamination of digital work tools that will enhance journalism's fundamental purpose and goal, as well as the shape and ethics of the news industry. Hence, the survival of the media career, therefore, is tied to the dynamism of the media worker. Today the innovation that is witnessed in the media industry, via the advancement of digital technology, has changed the landscape and brought about different ways of journalism practice. It changed rapidly the face of what the media industry looked like during the period of Guttenberg the founder of printing press and Reverend Henry Townsend who established the first newspaper in Nigeria.

It is not in doubt that the media offers employment to different cadres of professionals. These are men and women that work hard to create knowledge, information, programmes and operate on machines that make up the media. These professionals, around the early sixties and late eighties, had run the media on what Okon and Ihejirika (2014, p.155) called “The analogue media.” Igbashangev (2021) add that the 21st century technological revolution had brought about transformation in the media landscape - where the traditional print media had been transformed to the modern digital ICTs; telephone changed to mobile phones and internet phones, fax machines taken over by e-mail, radio and television improved to projection TV, telephone to internet and intranet networks, news print to data base websites, plate makers to digital offset colour printers and a plethora of other ICT platforms derived by media technology.

Against this backdrop, the above authors wonder how a media professional who is not literate in the present media landscape can explore the possibilities as provided by the new technologies and cope in the competitive environment. One of the strategic areas of this media innovation is the internet – a platform that has proven to be of immense value to media practice. The internet, according to Omenugha (2004), is “A worldwide means of exchanging information and communication through series of interconnected computers.” Tagged information superhighway, the internet contains a wide range of information from different individuals, organizations, government and institutions across the whole world. With the use of its search devices and services, one could look for any important information needed. Victor (2014, p.4) defines the internet as “a global network, connecting millions of computers.” More than 190 countries are linked to the exchange of data, news and opinion on the internet. According to the Internet Live Statistics, as at December, 2014, “There are an estimated number of

3,037,608,300 internet users worldwide.” What this indicates is that the number of internet users all over the world represents nearly 40% of the whole world population.

The largest number of internet users by country is China followed by the United States and India (Victor, 2014; p.4). These countries thrived better in journalism practice. The internet includes the World Wide Web, which enables one to access documents in richly formatted texts and pictures in different websites, through the medium of a computer. Nkwocha (2014, p.147) notes that, “It is instructive to say that the internet is an invaluable asset to the 21st century journalists, as it has introduced new ways and improved media practice. Today, newspapers can be printed and published on the Internet. To publish on the internet, the user must first and foremost have understanding of the workings of the technology. Regarding the way print media practitioners work, the internet has made things easier. Gone are the days when media practitioners did the work of journalism without basic understanding of the internet technology. Oshotshe Obong, former special adviser to Maryam Babangida, would rather put it this way: Journalism practice in those days was a hand-on-vocation, of course with the aid of good reporters, notebook, midgets and the ball point pen. Today, the profession has gone beyond journalists being trained to write their stories on the move, inside taxis or buses, the slow process of news gathering then, made deadline a dreaded word in the newsroom, but today the game has changed and it is only people who would change with the game that will win in the game (Nkwocha, 2014).

The Media and Digitization

One of the outstanding changes that came along with the technological innovation witnessed in the media is digitization. The new world of digitization, which particularly was more pronounced in the broadcast media, enabled single broadcast units to distribute high fidelity signals to the mass audience (Leonardi & Treem, 2020). In this instance, messages uploaded unto various World Wide Web (which is Internet enabled) and servers are accessible to all who possess the proper technology to download and view them. This type of digital broadcasting is facilitated through the use of internet and networked technologies. Bloomberg (2018) underscores this point when they note that, “The advent of the internet is undoubtedly the biggest game changer in the world of communication, since the invention of broadcasting. Nwosu, (2009) wonders “how media houses can achieve the much spoken of migration without training and retraining of their workers on the mechanism of this technology that will facilitate the digital migration.”

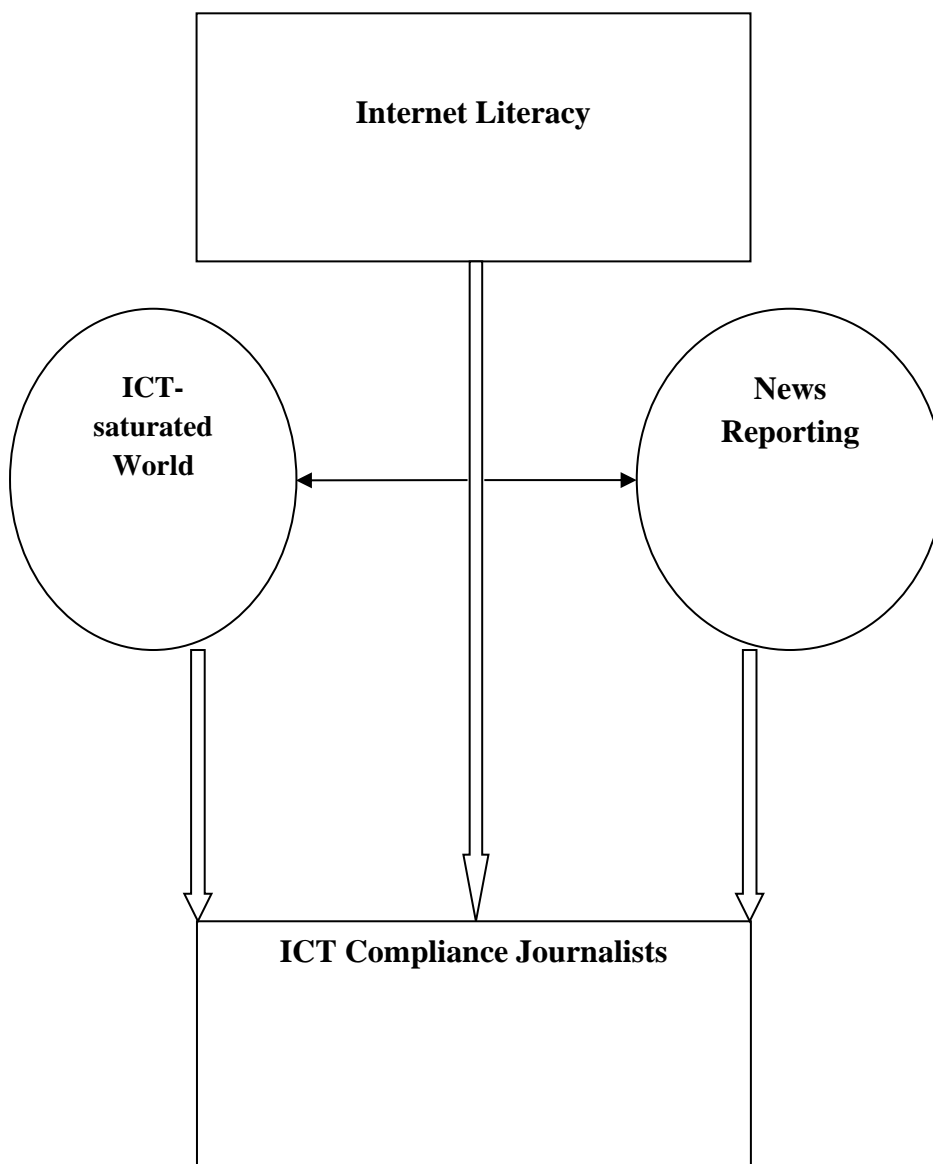
Again, the concept of digital convergence has remained one other factor that has changed the media realm. Journalists that are not at home with the convergence technology would have difficulty coping (Ihejirika, 2014; p.22). Digital convergence is the fusion and blending of several important diverse technologies, services and products from a range of industries, including telecommunication, entertainment, cable TV, broadcasting, publishing, video electronics and computers (Ihechu & Uche, 2012; p.10). It also connotes the application of the new media in performing conventional journalism roles: today called media-morphosis. Viewed from Ihechu and Uche’s position, a journalist or media organisation that underestimates the value of the internet technology in the 21st century would, like Obi, et al.

(2021) argue, “experience great number of uncertainties that may put them away from business.” The internet is creating big changes in the field of journalism. Creating a situation where the audience is fast abandoning the printed word, the world’s leading media houses are creating presence of them on the Internet and making imaginative efforts to transform the whole business of providing news and information.

Single news source is now a thing of the past, the internet has made it possible for media professionals to mix and match at will between newspapers, radio, television, press agencies and archives. Leonardi & Treem (2020) summarizes the argument when he reasons that: tomorrow’s journalists will no longer be able to be simply journalist. They will have to at least have two different trades: the journalist specializing in information systems and the journalist specializing on the documentary system, the editing journalist, the visual journalist, the computer graphic journalist etc all boiling down to the fact that the media profession today, transcends the writing, reporting, anchoring and editing of news; it calls for specialization in both the art of the profession and technology, which has changed the rules of the profession.” The practice of being in the media profession and not being in tune with technological advancements therein and learning related skills is a dilemma of different media professionals today (Yina, 2020). At the rate technology is changing, what we learnt in the past or in the present may become outdated in a matter of few years. This calls for training and retraining of the press men, in order to flow with those changes. Curtin (1998, p.256) cited in Bolat (2019) argues that “too many people won’t give up until they see their industry die.” What Curtin is saying here is that no media organisation would want to hire journalists who only sit around without innovative ideas to move the system forward. If journalists would make it in the media profession today, they must possess the required technological skills and proficiency to help their organisations grow.

The Study Framework

Source: (Onwe, 2020)



Prominent among these skills is the internet literacy, but regrettably, one of the greatest challenges facing the journalist or other employees in the media industry in Nigeria is the need to possess a body of skills, especially those related to the use of the modern ICTs (Amachi, 2011; p.140.). Many studies have concluded that the spread of computers and the increasingly problem-solving nature of many jobs may underlie the non-neutral nature of ICTs, which are said to have increased the demand for skills (Bolat, 2019). This is so because, overall ICT-based new technologies tend to require lower levels of traditional skills and higher levels of

abstract and synthetic reasoning abilities (Mansell and Wehn, 1998; p.243, in Obi, et al., 2021). The bottom line is that the media of today is technological-driven, and the understanding of this would be a plus for all media practitioners who would want to excel in their profession. In addition, the understanding of the internet would be of great importance to media workers who can, through it, explore the world of limitless possibilities to support his career. However, some measures have been recommended towards confronting the problems related to lack of ICT skills among journalists. They include:

1. Training and Retraining of the Journalist

Staff training, according to Ikpe and Ibekwe (2006, p.56), “has become a major focus of human resource development in media organizations in Nigeria, mostly for new intakes and middle level management cadres.” Yina (2020) underscores this point when he writes that, “Successful adoption and implementation of ICTs require considerable learning on the part of the organisation, whilst some of this can be facilitated by the provision of traditional training.” From top to the bottom, there is need for training and retraining of the staff through the concept of organisational learning. Curtin (1998, p.9) notes that “many firms in the industrialized countries have been successful in completing this cycle and firms are now giving priority to the need to build a learning capacity within the organisation.” The Nigerian media industry on the threshold of ICT application and utilization must enhance organizational training to save careers and businesses.

2. Acquisition of the Internet and other ICTs Infrastructure

When it comes to availability of information, the internet has it all. There is far more information on computers and other ICT platforms than one can possibly digest. The great thing about the internet is that “you can use it to keep in touch with the changes in the field and group that make these changes happen.” The journalists have got the choice to download information about the equipment or print out pages for demonstration and information on how you can procure one. Udeze (2005, p.99), while assessing the situation of ICTs in Nigerian media organizations, opines that “most media houses in Nigeria, funny enough do not have ICT facilities.” The advantages of the internet and computers are notable both in the technical and administrative levels of every media organisation. These facilities undoubtedly free up work space, facilitate information storage and dissemination and streamline filing (Agu, 2014, p.121). The presence of the ICT facilities could affect constant practice between internet literates and illiterates in the media house.

3. Reading for Professionals Growth

Newspapers, magazines and journals are a common way to learn about new areas in one’s field and keep up to date. They are published daily, weekly or monthly. Those aimed at people in particular fields are called trade papers. Goldhaber (1993) in Yina (2020) averred that it makes professional sense that one should always subscribe to those publications that address the things that interest one. Be it local or international publication, it pays to subscribe, as it affords the opportunity to keep in touch with cutting edge development in one’s field. In Nigeria there are such informative journals like Computer World Media Review, Info Tech etc. Outside Nigeria

there are such ones like Journalism Quarterly, the Reporter, and the host of other media journals (Ikpe and Ibekwe, 2006; p.78).

Theoretical Framework

The study is based on the Technological Determinism Theory. The theory was originated by Thorstein Veblen based on the assumption that the technology of a society determines the development of its social structure and cultural values. The world of today has been entirely permeated by Information and Communication Technologies which now increasingly determine not only how humans communicate with each other but equally how they live their entire life (McCarthy, 2007; p.34). The technological determinism school of sociology believes humans are conditioned by technological advancements as they actualize their existence; that their decisions and actions are inevitably shaped by the nature and the extent of technological structures existing in the society at any point in time (Leonard, 2008, p.12). This view, to some extent, would appear to be valid given the increasing reliance of humans on technology in their everyday life. Such dependency implies that, to whatever extent, the modern man must be under the dictates of technology (McCarthy, 2007; p.34). While this school of thought has been challenged by some scholars, the truth, however, remains that, to a greater or lesser extent, human social life comes under the influence of technologies that he relies on. This implies that not following the trend of the changes means being left behind. Among the technologies that have been of particular influence in the world of today is the Internet which, according to Asemah, et al. (2017) brings so much information empowerment to humans. The reason for this lies first in the fact that the audience is in greater control, selecting what he/she needs as against the traditional media where choice is limited.

Nonetheless, it has also been pointed out that media technologies have their limits in terms of the impact they have on both individuals and the society as a whole, positive or negative. Media technologies, in bringing their effects on humans, usually have to reckon with other social factors which could either enhance or limit such effect (Okoye, 2008; Baran, 2010). Among these factors is access. A human person ought to first of all have access to a media technology before such technology could be of effect on him/her. Viewed from the core assumptions of the technological determinism theory, humans, (journalists included) are conditioned by technological advancements as they actualize their existence; that is, their decisions and actions are unavoidably shaped by the nature and extent of technological structures existing in their society at a point in time. The import of this submission vis-à-vis the phenomenon under study is that the internet being one of such technological advancements that have changed the face of the mass media in recent times, would determine, to a great extent the practice, nature and decisions of the journalists in their profession. Hence, individuals who fail to get informed and skilled on the present day prevailing technology might lose relevance in their organisation, so also, journalists who fail to become internet literate in the present media dispensation.

Methodology

The study employed the survey research method. The population of the study encompassed all the registered journalists in Ebonyi state which according to the Nigerian Union of Journalists, Ebonyi State chapter is put at Two Hundred and Sixty-Two (262). In view of our research goal, the researcher used purposive sampling technique to select all the journalists who indicated that they lack internet literacy. Based on this approach, a total of Ninety-four journalists drawn from the 7 chapels of the Nigerian Union of Journalists, Ebonyi State Chapter were selected. The instrument of data collection was the questionnaire. The questionnaire's validity and reliability were tested through a pilot study.

Results

Table 1: Demographic Data of Respondents.

Demographics	Variables	Outcomes N (%)
Sex	Male	53(56.4)
	Female	41(43.6)
Age	Between 18 and 25	15 (15.9)
	Between 26 and 35	45(47.9)
	Between 36 and 45	25(26.6)
	46 years and above	9(9.6)
Marital Status	Married	60(63.8)
	Single	34(36.2)
Education	OND/NCE	48(51.1)
	Degree/HND	36(37.3)
	Postgraduate	10(10.6)

Source: Onwe and Nwamini, 2020

The demographics of the respondents in the study indicated that males were slightly higher in number than the females. The data on the table also shows that the respondents were predominantly between the ages of 26 and 45 years constituting 74.5%. Furthermore, 63.8% of the respondents are married, while 36.2% are single. Analysis of the academic qualifications of the respondents showed that there was no respondent with SSCE. However, 51.1% of them possessed OND/NCE, 37.3% had First Degree and HND, while 10.6% had postgraduate qualifications.

Research Question One: What are the operational difficulties experienced by Ebonyi journalists who lack internet literacy?

Table 2: Operational difficulties of Journalists who lack Internet literacy

	Difficulty in gathering reports n(%)	Difficulty in writing and editing reports n(%)	Difficulty in filing reports n(%)
Yes	66 (70.2)	66 (70.2)	74 (78.7)
No	28 (29.8)	28 (29.8)	20 (21.3)
Total	94 (100)	94 (100)	94 (100)

Source: Onwe and Nwamini, 2020

The above table indicates the difficulties that emanate from lack of internet skills in journalism practice among registered journalists in Ebonyi State. Accordingly, majority of the respondents who indicated lack of requisite knowledge of internet usage, are of the view that they have problems in gathering, writing and filing of their reports. Though, despite the identified existing knowledge gap on internet skills among the greater number of journalists in news gathering, writing/editing and filing reports, 29.8% indicated that they can apply internet skills in gathering, writing and editing of news while 21.3% can regardless of the difficulty fill their report.

Research Question Two: What survival strategies are adopted by journalists in Ebonyi State to circumvent the difficulties created by their lack of internet literacy?

Table 3: Survival strategies adopted by journalists in Ebonyi State

	Depending on Internet-literate colleagues n(%)	Employ services of professionals at cafes n(%)	Hand over hardcopy reports to the office for completion n(%)
Yes	33 (34)	44 (57.4)	24 (72.3)
No	61 (66)	40 (42.6)	70 (27.7)
Total	94 (100)	94(100)	94 (100)

Source: Onwe and Nwamini, 2020

The foregoing (as indicated in table 2) suggests that some of the respondents adopt certain survival strategies in circumventing the difficulties created by their lack of internet literacy. Such survival strategies: include dependence on internet-literate colleagues; employment of the services of professionals at cybercafés and handing over of their hardcopy reports to the office for completion. This undoubtedly reveals the undeniable role of internet in journalism practice.

Research Question Three: To what extent do these journalists in Ebonyi state perceive their lack of internet literacy as professional deficiency?

Table 4: Extent Ebonyi Journalists Perceive Lack of internet literacy as Professional Deficiency

	Slows down speed of operation n(%)	Hampers finesse in operation n(%)	Hampers professional growth n(%)
Yes	74 (78.7)	50 (52.3)	68 (72.3)
No	20 (21.3)	44 (46.8)	26 (27.7)
Total	94 (100)	94 (100)	94 (100)

Source: Onwe and Nwamini, 2020

A look at these data suggests that the journalists perceive their lack internet skills as some form of deficiency. This is with particular reference to speed of operation, finesse and professional growth. These perceived snags ought to trigger innovation.

Research Question Four: What efforts are being made by journalists in Ebonyi State to acquire Internet skills?

Table 5: Efforts by journalists in Ebonyi State to acquire internet skill

	Ever registered in any ICT training centre n(%)	Subscribe to ICT professional journals n(%)	Attend seminars and workshops on ICT skills n(%)
Yes	40 (42.6)	14 (14.9)	32 (34.8)
No	54 (57.4)	80 (85.1)	62 (66.0)
Total	94 (100)	94 (100)	94 (100)

Source: Onwe and Nwamini, 2020

Table 5 above shows that 42.6% of the respondents said they have ever registered in ICT centres to improve their internet skills, while 57.4% said they never. Again, only 14.9% of the respondents agreed that they have subscribed to ICT professional journals or other publications to help them improve on their internet skills, while 85.1% of them indicated otherwise. Also, 34.8% of the respondents said that they attend seminars and workshops to help improve on their internet skills; while 66.0% of them said they do not. The foregoing data suggest that the majority of the respondents are not taking the necessary steps to make up for their internet deficiency to enhance their proficiency and high productivity in their work place.

Discussion of findings

Journalism practice is innovative as the society which it operates is in constant state of flux, which is inevitably affects its operation. As presented by Ikpe and Ibekwe (2006), the relevance of the media is their role in society as a watchdog and the Fourth Estate of the Realm. These roles can only be achieved when the media become like the society- the society is digital, so should the media and their men.

It is imperative to note the data collated in table one above shows that the operational difficulties experienced by journalists are due to their lack of technological innovativeness in this digitized era, where those who are internet literates are the main umpires in the game of gathering, writing, editing; and filing of news reports. Today's media operation has been overwhelmed by the internet and journalist lack of internet know-how will continually have strong deficiencies in their profession. However, the survival strategies adopted by most of the respondents (who indicated lack of media literacy) in averting their digitization snags could be adjudged to be responsible to some problems of ethics and professionalism facing journalism in Ebonyi state and Nigeria at large. This becomes necessary for further probation since the strategies like; depending on internet elite rate colleagues, employing café operators, or relegating duties are the major cause of skewed work load format in some media houses, plagiarism, time, armchair journalism etc.

Although a reasonable percentage of the respondents agreed to have taken some steps to amend their lack of internet literacy (as presented in table 4), it seems that such steps were not effective in equipping them in their works as the identified deficiencies are still glaring. In that, the researchers submit that such pitfall, could be caused by lack of inadequate or unpaid remunerations, terms and conditions of employment, time constraints, media policy or house style or other socio- political factors which, if not averted, could cause a journalist his relevance or his job, dearth of capable hands.

Professionalism in journalism in this time of the internet-driven social ecology is highly rated with internet literacy as a major yardstick. This sticks to the fact that journalists without professional knowledge of the internet are generally considered quacks. If this is not averted it could cause harm to the ever growing journalism practice in Ebonyi and in Nigeria at large.

Conclusion

The prevailing reality shows that the 21st century journalism is technologically propelled and with the internet now playing a focal role, journalists who are deficient in the use of this technology are likely to be professionally deficient. Lack of internet literacy will likely translate to career deficiency especially in journalism practice. Hence, while describing the shift from the old journalism culture to the new ICT-driven journalism culture as a "thaw", Deifell (2009) cautions that "journalists and media practitioners who fail to cope with the thaw will consequently be out of business or career." However, while the fact that these journalists see their lack of internet literacy as a deficiency might offer some encouragement, the same might not be said about the finding that most of them are not making sufficient effort to change their

status. Perhaps, this seeming inaction could be attributed to factors like economic handicap as a result of characteristically poor remuneration of media practitioners and the fact that these journalists are somehow still finding ways to survive on the job despite their internet literacy handicap.

Recommendations

Based on the foregoing, the study recommended as follows:

Media organizations enlighten their workers on the prime place of ICT skills in their profession by way of organizing ICT seminars, lectures and symposiums.

In addition, ICT skills (including internet literacy) should form a compulsory part of the requirements for hiring journalists in media houses today, as this will motivate prospective journalists to go for these skills in preparation for their career.

The government might have to lead by example here by pursuing a policy that will ensure that internet literacy is an inevitable requirement for employment in any public media house. Furthermore, the curriculum of institutions where journalism and media studies are taught should henceforth be designed in a way that the new ICTs will be reflected. Thus, training on ICTs and how to apply them in modern journalism context should form part of the theoretical and practical knowledge imparted in these institutions. This will ensure that new generations of journalists to be produced come out of school already fully armed – ICTs-wise – for their career.

References

- Adekoya, O. A. (2013, February 10). Digital broadcast in Nigeria: Meeting the 2015 Deadline. *Vanguard Newspaper*.
- Agba, P. C. (2001). *Electronic Reporting: Heart of the new communication age*. University of Nigeria Nsukka Press.
- Agostin, A. (1997). The new communication network: An Asset or a Threat to the Press?. [www.http://www.mondodiplo.com/1997/10/internet](http://www.mondodiplo.com/1997/10/internet).
- Allen, N. A., Emeka C. O., Chibuikwe, J. N., & Henry, C. D. (2015). Digital divide: self-perception and coping strategies among journalists who lack internet literacy in Anambra state. *Communication panorama african and global perspectives*. volume 1(1).
- Amechi, R. (2011). Uses and Impact of ICT in Print Media. In I. S. Ndolo (ed.), *Contemporary Issues in Mass Communication and Society*. RhyceKerex Publishers Enugu.
- Apuke, O. D. (2021). The ethical challenges and issues of online journalism practice in Nigeria: what do professionals and academics think? *Technology in society* volume 67(1)
- Baran, S. J. (2010). *Introduction to Mass Communication, Media, Literacy and Culture* (Second Edition). New York: McGraw-Hill.

- Bessant, J. (1994). Learning to use advance manufacturing technology. Commissioned by UNU/INTECH. *Background Paper for Working Group in IT development.*
- Da-costa caroline aboagye, fausta kilian ganaa, and ephraim nana apeakorán (2021). Technological determinism: new media applications and adaptations within traditional media in Ghana. The information technologist: *International journal of information and communication technology* (ICT) vol. 18(1).
- Deifell, T (2009) *The Big Thaw Charting a New Course for Journalism: A Guide for Evolution of Independent Media.* London: The Media Consortium.
- Duru, H. C. (2011). Expanding the learning environment through the internet: Towards a more dynamic curriculum for communication education in Nigeria. Paper Presented at Prof. Nwuneli International Conference held at Awka, Anambra State, July 4 and 5, 2011.
- Endong, F. P. (2015). Digitization of media broadcast in Nigeria: the journey so far and challenges. *International Journal of Computer Science and Innovation.* Vol 6(1), 19 - 28
- Goldharber, I. I. (2003). "Understanding the work place conflict. [www.http://crisesmanagement.Crises/place/03638111. ,articles on crises mgt](http://crisesmanagement.Crises/place/03638111. ,articles on crises mgt).
- Ikpe, I., & Ibekwe, A. (2006). Information and communication Technology and the Media Career in the twenty-first century. *International Journal of Communication*, vol 1(2), 62-81.
- Igbashangev, P. A. (2021). Analysis of the Influence of Information and Communication Technologies on News Processing, Reporting and Dissemination on Private Radio Stations in Nigeria: Sun Rays 103.1 FM, Korinya City in Focus. *New Idea Management Consultants*, Abuja – Nigeria.
- Loar, T., & Galily, Y. (2020). Offline vs. online: attitude and behavior of journalists in social media era. *Technology in society*, volume 61.
- Leonard, B. O. (2008). *Towards a Technological Discourse.* Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.
- Leonardi, P. O., & Treem, J. W. (2020). Behavioral Visibility: A new paradigm for organization studies in the age of digitization, digitalization, and datafication. *Sage journals*. Volume 41(12) <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840620970728>
- Mansell, A., & When, E. (1998). *Knowledge Society Information Technology and Sustainable Development.* York: Oxford University Press.
- Mark, Coekellbergh (2018). Technology and the good society: a polemical essay on social ontology, political principles, and responsibility for technology. *Technology in society*. volume 52, 4-9
- Miller, L. S. (2017). Paradigm shift: why radio must adapt to the rise of digital. *Igwebuike: an African Journal of Arts and Humanities*. Vol. 8. No. 1.
- Ndolo, I. S. (2006) *Mass Media System and Society.* Enugu: RhyceKerex Publishers.
- Ndolo, I. S. (2011). Media as the fourth estate of the realm: real or imagined. In I. S. Ndolo (ed.), *Contemporary Issues in Communication and Society.* Enugu: RhyceKerex Publishers.
- Nkwocha, J. (2004). Computer application and public relation. In J. Nkwocha (ed.), *Digital Public Relations New Techniques.* Lagos: Zoom Lens Publishers.
- Nwosu, I. E. (1993). *The Internet, Society and Contemporary Public Relations Issues in Nigeria.* Aba: Dominican Press.

- Obi, C., Bartolini, F., and D’Haese, M. (2021). Digitalization and migration: the role of social media and migrant networks in migration decisions. An exploratory study in Nigeria. Emerald Publishing Limited. ISSN: 2398-5038.
- Okon, G. B., & Ihejirika, W. C. (2014). The 2015 deadline for digitisation of broadcasting and awareness/knowledge ratio among information workers in Port Harcourt. *Review of Communication and Media Studies*, vol.1(1), 9-47.
- Okoye, J. S. (2011). “Impact of the Social Media on the Academic Endeavours of undergraduates in Lagos State. *A Master’s Thesis* submitted to the Department of Mass Communication, University of Lagos.
- Omenugha, Nelson Obinna (2019). *Media Management and Disruptive Technology: The Nigerian Newspaper Industry Today*. The University of Liverpool (United Kingdom) ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2019. 28209134.
- Rees, C (1994). IT vocational education and training in Europe: An overview. In K. Ducat (ed.), *Employment and Technical Change in Europe: Work Organisation Skill and training*. Aldershot: Edward Edger.
- Senker, J. & Senker, P. (1990). *Technical change in 1990: Implications for Skills Training and employment report on training agency*. Brighton: Science Policy Research Unit Sussex University
- Severin, W. J., & Tankard, J. W. (2001). *Communication Theories: Origins, Methods and Uses in the Mass Media*. New York: Longman.
- Silverberth, A. (2000). *Media Literacy in the Digital Age*. [www.http://www.readingonline.org/newsliteracylitt_index](http://www.readingonline.org/newsliteracylitt_index).
- Victor, N. (2014). Visual or media literacy? *Journal of media literacy*, vol 23(2), 119-138.
- Yina, Martin N. (2020). The challenges of digital technologies for Nigeria. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*. Vol. 32, Issue 1-2.