

**Citizen Journalism Involvement and Perception of Security Challenges among Students
in The Polytechnic Ibadan, Oyo State**

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Abstract

Engagement in citizen journalism through the use of social media has a broad impact on the security of every nation. This study reviewed citizen journalism on security challenges in Nigeria among The Polytechnic Ibadan Students, and the descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. 403 respondents were selected using the multi-stage sampling technique, and a validated instrument named “citizen journalism social media questionnaire” (CiJoSoMeQ) was used for data collection, while data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings revealed that students’ involvement in citizen journalism was very high (weighted mean 1.85), and the majority of the students had a good perception of the use of social media in discussing national security challenges (weighted mean 2.83). There was no significant difference ($r = 0.053$, $p < 0.05$; $r = 0.941$, $p < 0.05$) in the level of engagement in online discussion and perception of social media use in discussing security challenges in Nigeria. Thus, the study concluded that The Polytechnic Ibadan Students’ engagement in citizen journalism does not have any influence on security challenges in Nigeria. This study recommends that students as well as citizens should be adequately trained on the need to filter information before spreading, and also, topical security updates as they affect the nation should be disseminated on social media, thereby limiting the spread of wrong news regarding security matters.

Keywords: Engagement, Social Media, Citizen Journalism, Security Challenges

Word Count: 219

Introduction

The rise of technology has made it easier for citizen journalists to collect and share news through personal websites, blogs, and social media. People at disaster scenes, tragedies, or political crises often use social media to post updates and photos of live events as they happen.

This can lead to breaking stories before traditional media can react. However, this trend has sparked some debate. Without formal training, nonprofessionals may not be seen as credible as professional journalists. The global impact of citizen journalism has continued to increase in the twenty-first century as traditional media outlets faced declining audiences (Kivak, 2025). New media technology, like social networking and media-sharing websites, along with the growing use of cell phones, has made citizen journalism more available to people around the world. Recent developments in new media have begun to significantly affect politics (Gilardi, 2016).

Kivak (2025) defined Citizen journalism as the process whereby regular people report news events without formal training. They often use the internet and social media to share information. This movement started to grow in the early 2000s as an alternative to traditional media outlets, which can miss certain stories or viewpoints. Citizen journalists are usually everyday individuals who cover important events, including disasters and political crises. They use smartphones and social media to spread real-time updates and footage. Albarado (2024) posed that over time, Citizen Journalism has grown its global impact, even though there are ongoing worries about the reliability of citizen journalists compared to trained professionals. People in disaster areas have shared immediate text and visual reports from the ground. In nations experiencing political turmoil, and often where print and broadcast media are controlled by the government, citizens have used various technological tools to spread information about key locations.

Adaobi & Chibuike 2022 revealed that the credibility of citizen journalism poses significant challenges, as individuals have easy access to a plethora of sources but simultaneously face the risk of disseminating false information to the public without proper verification. A pertinent example is the security crisis that affected the eastern region of the country, particularly Anambra state, which experienced the most severe impact. Numerous killings occurred in the state, and much of the information circulating online attributed blame to various groups seeking recognition. The state's security was fundamentally undermined due to the overwhelming amount of information regarding the true perpetrators of the violence. Rather than alleviating tensions, many citizen journalism posts exacerbated the crisis to such an extent that residents had to turn to traditional media for reliable information regarding the situation. Furthermore, many Nigerian celebrities financially incentivise online bloggers to promote their affluent lifestyles through their posts, thereby motivating young people to engage in questionable activities to meet societal expectations. The content produced by citizen journalists often introduces issues into the subconscious of consumers that could potentially incite security challenges, which is why such posts should undergo verification and source credibility assessments before being shared with the public.

Security, akin to other components within the business landscape, serves to enhance and optimise business operations; conversely, insecurity obstructs these operations, thereby posing a significant threat to business entities. In Nigeria, for example, there exists considerable scepticism regarding the potential for the nation to realise its ambition of ranking among the top 20 countries globally if the prevailing levels of insecurity are not effectively reduced. Consequently, citizens must endeavour to reach a point where criminal activities are curtailed at their inception, prior to their execution. It is essential for the government, civil society

organisations, business entities, and individuals to collectively combat insecurity, thereby fostering an environment conducive to business organisations, allowing them to operate freely and securely, and enabling the nation to pursue sustainable development.

In a world where security is a top concern, Nigeria has its own challenges that need attention and careful thought. Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, is facing many security issues that significantly impact its stability and growth. There is insurgency in the northeast, along with banditry and kidnappings in the northwest and central areas. The security situation in the nation is complex and varied. To address these challenges, we need a thorough approach that deals with the root causes and puts in place lasting solutions and information. The northeastern region has suffered greatly as a result of the Boko Haram insurgency, which started in 2009. The group and its offshoot faction, the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), continue to assault security troops and civilians despite considerable military efforts. Millions have been displaced, thousands have died, and extensive damage has been caused by the battle (The Newspaper Stand, 2024). Also, banditry is rife in the northwest, where armed organisations commit major kidnappings, brutal raids, and cattle rustling. This has resulted in increased instability, interruption of livelihoods, and fatalities (The Newspaper Stand, 2024). The problem is made worse by the alarming trend of kidnapping schoolchildren for ransom. Likewise, conflicts between farmers and herders over land and water resources are common in the central and some southern regions, as are communal conflicts. Ethnic, religious, and economic considerations frequently fuel these confrontations, which result in large numbers of casualties and displacement. Amongst other challenges, poverty and corruption serve as significant catalysts for insecurity in Nigeria. Economic difficulties render communities susceptible to extremism and criminal activities, whereas corruption undermines security forces and misappropriates resources. To tackle these challenges, it is imperative to invest in job creation, education, and social services to provide legitimate opportunities. Additionally, addressing corruption through stringent anti-corruption policies and transparent governance is crucial for establishing a resilient security framework (The Newspaper Stand, 2024).

However, with the advent of technological advancements, individuals frequently have the ability to report breaking news more swiftly than conventional media journalists. Significant instances of citizen journalism covering major global events include the 2010 Haiti earthquake, the Arab Spring, the Occupy Wall Street movement, the 2013 protests in Turkey, the Euromaidan events in Ukraine, the Syrian Civil War, the 2014 Ferguson unrest, the Black Lives Matter movement, and the Russian invasion of Ukraine (Gilardi, 2016). The advent of new media technologies, including social networking platforms and media-sharing websites, along with the growing ubiquity of mobile phones, has significantly enhanced the accessibility of citizen journalism for individuals across the globe. Recent developments in new media have begun to exert a substantial influence on political dynamics (Seong-Jae & Gilardi, 2016)

Citizen journalism has transformed the sources and methods of news dissemination in the twenty-first century. Numerous alternative news websites have emerged online, while millions of individuals operate their own blogs, social media accounts, and newsletters through platforms such as Substack (Kivak, 2025). Individuals lacking formal journalism education can leverage technological tools to cover breaking news and disseminate it worldwide and instantaneously via the internet. Citizens utilise their smartphones to capture images and videos

of live events, sharing their accounts on social media platforms. It is important to highlight that citizen journalism has come under scrutiny from various critics, including established journalists. The lack of formal training among citizen journalists raises concerns regarding their objectivity and potential biases. They are often accused of disseminating fear and misinformation. Unlike mainstream media, they are not bound by established protocols, which places them in an unregulated environment. In spite of these criticisms, the prominence of citizen journalists has increased significantly. Websites dedicated to citizen journalism have gained credibility by operating outside what they perceive to be the limitations or agendas of mainstream media, thereby offering readers alternative news sources. A notable network of regional news websites focused on citizen journalism, known as Bylines Network, was launched in 2020 in the United Kingdom (Kivak, 2025). That same year, it was widely reported that a Chinese citizen, who was later arrested, had recorded and produced several videos intended to reveal the reality of the country's response to the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak in Wuhan. Additionally, citizen journalism related to the pandemic was observed in various countries throughout the early 2020s, while Russia's contentious invasion of Ukraine in 2022 led to numerous instances of citizen journalism documenting the ongoing conflict, including reports of alleged human rights violations shared on social media from Ukraine. In view of this, participation in citizen journalism is closely linked to issues of security or insecurity within every nation; therefore, the study seeks to assess the involvement of The Polytechnic Ibadan Students in citizen journalism and their perception of security challenges in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Up-to-date, citizen journalism, which is also known as participatory journalism, plays a pivotal role in shaping, reporting and analysing general conversation on the security challenges in Nigeria, also proffering up-to-date information, even though it is still faced with the challenge of safety and verification of information. The media plays a crucial role in the worldwide struggle against terrorism and insecurity, yet it has also been exploited to incite different forms of terrorism and other unlawful activities in the nation at large but on the contrary, Citizen journalism significantly influences security issues in every country due to its accessibility for anyone to utilize technology for researching, collecting, processing, and reporting news and information. Furthermore, participation in citizen journalism is closely linked to issues of security or insecurity within every nation. Consequently, this research reviewed citizen journalism on security challenges in Nigeria among The Polytechnic Ibadan Students.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to assess “The Polytechnic Ibadan students’” involvement in citizen journalism and their perception on security challenges in Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- i. ascertain the extent of “The Polytechnic Ibadan students’ involvement in citizen journalism regarding security challenges in Nigeria;
- ii. determine the perception of “The Polytechnic Ibadan students on the use of social media in discussing citizen journalism regarding security challenges in Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What is the extent of The Polytechnic Ibadan Students' involvement in citizen journalism regarding security challenges in Nigeria?
2. What is the perception of The Polytechnic Ibadan Students on the use of social media in discussing citizen journalism regarding security challenges in Nigeria?

Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between citizen journalism and security challenges in Nigeria

Methodology

The research utilised a descriptive survey design. The study's participants were randomly chosen from four distinct levels: ND1, ND2, HND1, and HND2, within the Faculty of Business and Communication Studies at The Polytechnic. This faculty encompasses four departments: Mass Communication, Computer Science, Business Administration, and Public Administration, with participants aged 18 and older. Based on initial data obtained from the institution's administrative department, the estimated population is approximately 18,000.

Additionally, the research utilised a multi-stage sampling method. The initial stage consisted of deliberately selecting students, followed by the implementation of a mix of random and convenience sampling methods among the students at the institution. The subsequent stage involved randomly choosing departments according to their perception and assessment of communication. The sample included four departments: Mass Communication, Computer Science, Business Administration, and Public Administration. The final stage involved selecting students from these chosen departments using the snowball sampling technique to facilitate the identification of students through referrals.

The sample size for this research was calculated using Taro Yamane's formula, resulting in a total of 403 participants. (Table 1 displays the demographic characteristics of the participants.) Data for the research were gathered through a survey titled "Citizen Journalism Social Media Questionnaire" (CiJoSoMeQ). The reliability of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, which resulted in $r=0.874$.

The collected data was processed and examined using descriptive statistical methods, including frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation, alongside inferential statistical techniques such as Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Table 1 displays the demographic features of the participants.

Table 1: Demographic Information of the Respondents (N=403)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	154
	Female	213
	Missing Values	36

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Age	8 - 23yrs	234	58.1%
	24 - 29yrs	137	34.0%
	30 - 35yrs	20	5.0%
	36 – 40yrs	1	0.2%
	41 – 45yrs	-	-
	Missing values	11	2.7%
Course of Study	Computer	77	19.1%
	Mass Communication	195	48.4%
	Business Admin	18	4.5%
	Public Admin	113	28.0%
Marital Status	Single	347	86.1%
	Married	33	8.2%
	Separated	1	0.2%
	Divorced	5	1.2%
	Missing values	17	4.2%
Level	ND I	131	32.5%
	ND II	151	37.5%
	HND I	75	18.6%
	HND II	40	9.9%
	Missing values	6	1.5%
Religion	Christianity	256	63.5%
	Islam	130	32.3%
	Traditional	11	2.7%
	Missing values	6	1.5%

Source: Fieldwork (2022)

The demographic data indicated that four hundred and three (403) students from Polytechnic Ibadan participated in this study. Table 1 illustrates that a majority of the respondents, 213 (52.9%), were male, while 154 (38.2%) were female and 36 (8.9%) did not specify their gender. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are detailed in Table 1. The table also

shows that a significant majority (86.1%) of the students were single, and most respondents fell within the age group of 18 to 23 years (58.1%). With regard to the field of study, the largest proportion of respondents were from the Mass Communication Department (48.5%), followed by 28.0% from the Public Administration Department, 19.1% from the Computer Studies Department, and 4.5% from the Business Administration Department.

Results and Findings

Research Question One: What is the extent of The Polytechnic Ibadan Students' involvement in citizen journalism regarding security challenges in Nigeria?

Table 2: Involvement in Citizen Journalism regarding Security Challenges in Nigeria

S/N	Dissemination of content on issues relating to:	Highly involved	Minimally involved	Not involved at all	Mean	Std. Dev
1	Bomb attacks leading to killings	124 (30.8%)	121 (30.0%)	158 (39.2%)	1.92	.833
2	Kidnapping of School children	142 (35.2%)	124 (30.8%)	137 (34.0%)	2.01	.833
3	Kidnapping of commuters/villagers, and farmers	115 (28.5%)	127 (32.5%)	161 (40.0%)	1.98	.821
4	Banditry leading to robbery attacks	126 (31.3%)	124 (30.8%)	153 (38.0%)	1.93	.830
5	Political thuggery and gang activities	126 (31.3%)	114 (28.3%)	163 (40.4%)	1.91	.843
6	Brutal killing by Bandits	128 (31.8%)	107 (26.6%)	168 (41.7%)	1.90	.852
7	Religious violence and killing	133 (33.0%)	113 (28.0%)	157 (39.0%)	1.94	.847
8	Unknown gunmen attack among rural dwellers	118 (29.3%)	113 (28.0%)	172 (42.7%)	1.87	.839
9	Community clashes on boundary issues	104 (25.8%)	118 (29.3%)	181 (44.9%)	1.81	.820
10	Intertribal conflicts at the market and local communities	86 (21.3%)	132 (32.8%)	185 (45.9%)	1.75	.783

Source: Fieldwork (2022)

Table 2 shows the extent to which the Polytechnic Ibadan students are involved in citizen journalism regarding security challenges in Nigeria. The table revealed that the level of involvement of The Polytechnic Ibadan students in citizen journalism regarding security challenges is very high in the relation to; Kidnapping of School children 142(35.2%), Religious violence and killing 133(33.0%), Banditry leading to robbery attacks 126(31.3%), Bomb attacks leading to killings 124(30.8%), Armed robbery 126(31.3%), Political thuggery and gang activities 126(31.3%), Unknown gunmen attacks among rural dwellers 118(29.3%), Community clashes on boundary issues 104(25.8%), Kidnapping of commuters/villagers and farmers 115(28.5%), Unknown gunmen attacks among rural dwellers 118(29.3%). These findings show that out of the 10 related issues raised in relation to research question one, students were frequently involved in 9 contents listed in their involvement.

Research Question Two: What is the perception of The Polytechnic Ibadan Students on the use of social media in discussing citizen journalism regarding security challenges in Nigeria?

Table 3: Perception of Students on the use of social media in discussing citizen journalism regarding security challenges in Nigeria

S/ N	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Mean	Std Dev
1	Social media popularity is a threat to security in Nigeria	144 (35.7%)	81 (20.1%)	66 (16.4%)	112 (27.8%)	2.64	1.227
2	Social media platforms have contributed to insecurity challenges in Nigeria	119 (29.5%)	111 (27.5%)	79 (19.6%)	94 (23.3%)	2.63	1.137
3	Online discussion of security matters on social media has led to several forms of insecurity in Nigeria	116 (28.8%)	104 (25.8%)	95 (23.6%)	88 (21.8%)	2.62	1.119

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4	Online discussion on social media contributes to reporting crimes in Nigeria	192 (47.6%)	112 (27.8%)	39 (9.7%)	60 (14.9%)	3.08	1.079
5	Social media provides terrorists with opportunities to attack people through online tracking	130 (32.3%)	132 (32.8%)	62 (15.4%)	15.4 (19.6%)	2.78	1.102
6	Online discussion on social media encourages misinformation	131 (32.5%)	122 (30.3%)	70 (17.4%)	80 (19.9%)	2.75	1.112
7	Online discussion on Social Media spreads uncontrollable threats	124 (30.8%)	124 (30.8%)	72 (17.9%)	83 (20.6%)	2.72	1.111
8	Information provided by eyewitnesses of breaking events is easily accessible through social media.	176 (43.7%)	133 (33.0%)	34 (8.4%)	60 (14.9%)	3.05	1.057

Weighted mean = 2.83, N = 403; Decision mean = 2.50

Source: Fieldwork (2022)

Table 3 shows the perception of Students on the use of social media in discussing security challenges in Nigeria. The table revealed that the Polytechnic of Ibadan students have positive perception on the use of social media in discussing security challenges and also agreed that Social media popularity is a threat to security in Nigeria 144(35.7%), Social media platforms have contributed to insecurity challenges in Nigeria 119(29.5%), Online discussion of security matters on Social Media has led to several forms of insecurity in Nigeria 116(28.8%), Social media provides terrorist with opportunities to attack people through online tracking 130(32.3%) Again, online discussion on Social Media encourages misinformation 131(32.5%), online discussion on Social Media spreads uncontrollable threats 124(30.8%) and information provided by eye witnesses of breaking events are easily accessible through social media 176 (43.7%) (Mean scores less than the weighted mean score of 2.83). However, in general, students have a good and adequate perception of the use of social media in discussing national security challenges (weighted mean of 2.83, greater than the general decision mean of 2.50)

Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between citizen journalism and security challenges in Nigeria

Table 4: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Perception of the Social Media Use in discussing Security Challenges in Nigeria Based on Course of Study

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	61.137	3	20.379	.132	.941
Within Groups	61614.774	399	154.423		
Total	61675.911	402			

Source: Fieldwork (2022)

Table 4 shows the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of perception of the social media use in discussing security challenges in Nigeria based on the course of study. The table revealed that there was no significant difference in the perception of social media use in discussing security challenges in Nigeria based on the course of study (p-value of 0.941 greater than 0.05 level of confidence. This implies that, course of study does not determine how the students perceive the use of social media as it relates to discussing security challenges in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The first research question indicated that The Polytechnic Students are significantly engaged in citizen journalism concerning security issues, particularly in areas such as the abduction of schoolchildren, sexual assault, and homicides, internet fraud/cybercrime (commonly referred to as yahoo yahoo), violence and killings related to religion, banditry that results in robbery, bomb attacks that lead to deaths, armed robbery, political violence, and gang-related activities. Additionally, there are reports of unknown gunmen attacking rural communities, the kidnapping of commuters, villagers, and farmers, along with further incidents of unknown gunmen targeting individuals in rural areas.

Research question two revealed that students have a good and adequate perception of the use of social media in discussing national security challenges. Although, some disagreed that: social media popularity is a threat to security in Nigeria; social media platforms have contributed to insecurity challenges in Nigeria; online discussion of security matters on social Media has led to several forms of insecurity in Nigeria; social media provides terrorist with opportunities to attack people through online tracking; online discussion on social Media encourages misinformation online discussion on Social Media spreads uncontrollable threats; and social media use aids coordination and recruitment of terrorist groups. This corroborates the findings in a work on students' perceptions of the use of social media in higher education in Saudi Arabia, which was carried out by Victoria & Elizabeth (2019), and it indicated that all of the students were familiar with social media and had used at least one type of social media for learning. It was found that all students had very positive attitudes towards the use of social media and welcomed using these tools as a supplement to the curriculum.

Findings on Hypothesis One revealed that there was no significant relationship between citizen journalism and security challenges in Nigeria, which supports the findings that none of the popular social media platforms can be regarded as the root cause of social or national insecurity in the northern and south-eastern parts of Nigeria (Chukwuere & Onyebukwa, 2018). The

results also demonstrate that social media plays a role in the spread of different types of rumours, encouraging hate speech, tribal conflicts, and acts of terrorism. These factors result in a significant increase in insecurity and jeopardise lives and property both in the region and across the country as a whole. This, however, opposed the findings in a work on students' perceptions of the use of social media in higher education in Saudi Arabia, according to Yemisi Oyewole et al (2019)

Conclusion

The findings also indicated that Polytechnic students are highly engaged in citizen journalism related to security issues and have a positive view of using social media to address national security challenges. Additionally, the social media activities of students at The Polytechnic Ibadan do not impact security issues in Nigeria, and these results may provide a foundation for additional research on this subject.

Recommendations

Based on the hypothesis of this research, the study recommends that:

1. Government and security agencies should focus more on improving and encouraging students' personnel trainings, improving intelligence gathering and enhancing surveillance systems because the real drivers of insecurity lie within institutional or systemic factors rather than citizen-generated content. Students' level of engagement in online debates on other social media platforms should also be evaluated.
2. Students should be trained in citizen journalism about Nigeria's security challenges to avoid using social media to spread false news that could jeopardise the country's security, and topical security updates as they affect the nation should be disseminated on social media, limiting the spread of false news about security issues.
3. Communication channels such as social media should disseminate accurate, timely information, counter misinformation proactively, and build public trust through transparency in order to reduce the space where unverified citizen reports might otherwise gain influence.

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