

A Comparative Study of Digital Competence and Response to Digital Innovations by Korean and Nigerian Newspaper Journalists

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Abstract

This paper conducted a comparative study of digital competence and response to digital innovations by South Korean and Nigerian newspaper journalists. Both countries share some common experiences, like political and media history, and yet there are a lot different with regards to media newsroom culture, economy and opportunities in the digital age. How these realities may determine the capacity of newspaper journalists to acquire digital skills is the onus of the study. Mixed method enquiry was adopted; with survey questions and in-depth interviews conducted with newspaper journalists in South Korea and Nigeria. The survey and interviews were analysed, and the result showed a paradox: the newspaper journalists in both countries agree on the assumptions of innovation theory on the changes in newspaper journalism in this era; however, against the predictions of theories of digital divide, the Nigerian journalists showed a greater wiliness and actual competence on the tested digital skills. What accounts for this is the observed difference in the journalists' perception of the threat of the ongoing changes in their newsrooms.

Keywords: Newspaper; Digital media; Newsroom culture; Digital innovation; Digital competence

Introduction

The digital has seen innovation revolution overtaking many professions and industries. The media is not an exception of this. In fact, the media is at the heart of digital innovation, as a lot of changes take place in all aspects of the industry now: changes in how news are generated, transmitted and consumed. The deployment of hardware and software programmes in newspaper newsrooms to enhance the reach and speed of access of news, as well as increase interaction with the audience in the social media space are some of the areas where digital revolution are changing the industry. While these changes are often seen as positive development for the industry, there are also concerns about their negative consequences, especially on the journalists' job, welfare, and importantly, their changing professional roles.

Indeed, the deployment of digital facilities in the newsroom comes with some challenges for the industry and the journalists working there. Apart from the challenge of machines taking over some of the jobs, the remaining journalists need to continue acquiring new skills if they have to stand the chance of a successful career in the industry [1]. While some journalists accept the challenge of retraining, some others, given the nature of the industry and other challenges, are not able to do this. Given this background, this study aims at finding out how the journalists are adjusting to this digital reality by acquiring required digital skills despite the challenges they may face; hence a comparative study which focuses on the Korean and Nigerian newspaper journalists with respect to their willing response in acquiring digital skills to work in the modern newspaper newsroom.

A lot of studies have already been undertaken on the phenomenon of digital innovation changes in the media, however, not many of such studies have focused on the newspaper journalists specifically as an element in the chain of effects of digital revolution in the newsroom. That is the gap this paper hopes to fill; it hopes to throw some insight into the realities and possible factors that affect journalists' willingness to acquire new digital skills in their countries: here focusing on the experience of Korea and Nigeria newspaper journalists.

Theoretical framework and literature

In examining change in the newspaper newsroom in two different

countries in the age of digital innovation, three theories become important. These are Disruptive Innovation, Digital Competence and Digital Divide theories.

The concept on disruptive technologies was introduced by the researcher Christensen [2] who distinguishes between sustaining and disruptive technologies. His thesis argues that there are repeated pattern of incumbent business failure due to new, low end products introduced by small innovating firms. This happens because usually, the existing market leaders choose to concentrate on their core markets rather than adopt the new and initially weaker technology, until a tipping point is reached when the new technology takes over the market causing the big firms to fail.

Concerning the media and communications industry, scholars have written on how radical innovations are impacting on the industry today, noting the influx of 'smart' technologies, which disrupt the way today's media operate and how content is developed, consumed and shared: like news aggregation, data collection, tailor made content and service offer to consumers, user generated content services etc., [3-6]. Because of this, some traditional news outlets have found themselves on a downward spiral while some new media companies are on the rise. In the United States, for example, Google, BuzzFeed, Yahoo News, Flip board, YouTube, Facebook, etc., and in Korea, Naver and Daum, represent some of the new giants that emerged through digital disruption of the media market [7].

The concept of digital competence revolves around discourses about a person's ability in relation to ICT skills. Before the term 'competence' itself became widely adopted, scholars had variously discussed and

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researched on related terms like technology skills, 21st century skills, information literacy, e-skills, digital skills, and sometimes in a narrower sense, internet skills, media literacy skills, digital literacy etc. The debate among scholars, who hold divergent views and scholarly interests – from economics, academics, media and innovation etc. – as van Deursen and van Dijk say, is how to draw the standard criteria on this subject. Hence, many years after the discourse began there is not yet a general and research-based acceptance and justification of the concept. However, Ferrari et al.'s definition stands out because it was produced by merging and comparing definitions from different scholarly frameworks. Accordingly, he defines digital competence as: "The set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, strategies, values and awareness that are required when using ICT and digital media to perform tasks; solve problems; communicate; manage information; collaborate; create and share content; and build knowledge effectively, efficiently, appropriately, critically, creatively, autonomously, flexibly, ethically, reflectively for work, leisure, participation, learning, and socializing."

Ferrari et al. (Ibid), note that there are two main approaches to understanding digital competence; the first understands digital competence as 'the convergence of multiple literacies', the second understands digital competence 'as a new literacy that goes beyond the sum of the various literacies—internet literacy, ICT literacy, information literacy and media literacy—and involves other components that come into the framework of digital competence'. What is understood here is that journalism is one of the industries at the core of the discourse of digital competence. Every journalist, by virtue of requiring the mentioned literacies, cannot shy from obtaining digital competence, to whatever extent.

The concept of digital divide concerns the unequal access to and usage of new technologies. Norris identifies three broad categories of digital divide: the global divide, which accounts for the divergence of internet access between industrialised and developing societies; social divide, which accounts for disparity between the information rich and poor in each nation; and democratic divide which accounts for those who do and do not use the panoply of digital resources to engage, mobilize, and participate in public life. Korea and Nigeria do not exactly stand on opposite ends of the digital divide scale. While both countries were not early starters, Korea has been much faster in catching up and now is one of the leading digitally developed countries. Nigeria is much slower, but has done fairly well in the last few years. According to the website, Internet World Stat (2015) by November 30th 2015, among the South Korean population of 49,115,196 some 45,314,248 people have internet, and this accounts for 92.3% penetration; which is one of the highest in the world; whilst Nigeria at the same time, in a population of 181,562,056 some 92,699,924 have internet access, which accounts for 51.1% of internet penetration.

Newspaper journalist in the digital era

Scholars write that journalism in the digital age is changing fast, and a lot of challenges come with it. Digitalization has altered the way the public obtains its news and information, the revenue stream of media houses [3], and deprived the conventional media of its traditional monopoly. But most importantly digitalisation has forced changes in the way newspaper journalism itself is practised and also the works of the journalist have changed [1]. These days, in some contexts, the media organizations require fewer journalists to do more work (ibid). Also, there is a new competition of traditional journalists with bloggers, citizen journalists, and even user generated content on social media etc. Some companies lay off reporters and some impose pay reductions. Despite these enumerated challenges, the journalists are still expected

to adapt to the paradigm shift and acquire the necessary competence and skill set to practise in the media environment. As some scholars say, this is the only way the journalists can be relevant now and going into the future.

Current situation of the South Korean and Nigerian newspaper industries

Newspaper and magazines, according to Woo accounted for 8.2 percent of media consumed in South Korea in 2014. However, the business of newspaper in Korea presents an ironic contrast, between the big firms and small ones; with the big three newspapers Chosun Ilbo, JoongAng Ilbo and Dong-A Ilbo accounting for combined readership share surpassing 50 percent in 2014. However, their revenue of 918, 532 won is small when compared with the three big televisions which grossed 3, 094,462 won at the same period. A lot of changes have been witnessed in the newspaper media industry following the advent of the digital in Korea. One of these changes, sadly, is the newspaper's continually waning relevance. While television maintains its strong dominance in the market, smartphone has surged over radio and newspaper (Ibid). A recent survey conducted by Korea Communication Commission (KCC) in 2014, shows that only 0.9 percent and 0.3 percent of the 6,042 respondents considered reading newspaper as a daily necessity (Ibid: 63). In all, newspaper readership trend has been fluctuating since the early 2000s following the advent of the digital age (Ibid). As a consequence of this, companies employ containment strategies that affect journalists; which include downsizing of staff, imposition of unpaid leave of absence, drastic salary cuts, and, sometimes, forced resignation.

In Nigeria the newspaper journalism was robust and buoyant before digital era. Many scholars tout the peak of this industry to be about 1986 when the circulation of the popular Nigerian newspapers stood at about 2 million copies daily [8]. However, there has been a reverse since the introduction of digital/online journalism in the country [9,10]. Among the changes happening include; competition from news aggregators, perpetual decline of circulation, loss of readership, insolvency of some famous mastheads etc [8]. This situation leads to sad realities like on non-payment of journalist's salaries (in some media organizations), inadequate salary and benefits, poor funding of routine on the job training, and high staff turnover, among others [8]. As a coping mechanism, the media in Nigeria is moving to online, though this is said not to be profitable yet.

Methodology

This study adopts mixed method (MM) design of enquiry, in pursuance of which a brief survey questionnaire and in-depth interview were used simultaneously to gather the data for analysis. According to Bamberger MM evaluation "draws strengths of both the quantitative and qualitative approaches and integrates them to overcome their weaknesses and becomes important when "one is examining interactions among the complex and changing contextual factors that can influence impacts". Importantly, Small writes that MM is effective for small size population.

The survey sampling method used is purposive, non-probability sampling method, where the researchers selected some newspaper journalists working in South Korean and Nigerian newspapers organisations (both print and online) for interview. The interview questions administered to them had both quantitative and qualitative design (MM), and were designed to capture the testing criteria that would address the research problem being tackled in the study. This

approach was necessary because the problem the research is addressing is limited to the newspaper media industry and also is limited to a specific issue—digital competence. The list of interviewees – who have minimum of 5 and maximum of 36 years working experience – is presented under the K and N codes. The K codes are the population from Korea, and N codes are the population from Nigeria (Table 1).

In all, twenty journalists (N=20) were interviewed, ten (10) in each country. The interviews with the ten Korean journalists’ were conducted across 3 cities; Seoul, Sejong City and Busan. The newspapers they represent are Print: Korea Times, Korea Herald, JoongAng Ilbo, Hankyoreh, Dong-A Ilbo and Hankook Ilbo—and online: Oh my news, 건설경제 (CNews), 아시아경제 (Asia Economy) and Seoul Times. Also, the ten Nigerian interviews were conducted across four main cities; Abuja, Ilorin Lagos and Awka. The newspapers represented are, Print: The Herald, The Nation, Tell, Thisday, Daily Trust and Time Nigeria, and online: Security Monitor, Kwara Arise and NAN. All the interviews were conducted between January and October, 2016.

Because the research population comprise two groups in two different countries being compared, the researcher adopts comparative analysis method. As Azarian [11] states, “comparison broadens our sight, widens our horizon and helps us to see things in perspective...by taking into consideration social actions and events belonging to other contexts comparison enables us to see better the implicit and often taken-for-granted basis of our own practices and phenomena.”

After the data were obtained, qualitative coding was applied to the qualitative data using grounded theory [12,13], which helps to organize the opinion of the interviewees under thematic categories and made convenient for analysis. The software used for the coding is Dedoose, qualitative statistical software developed by a team of researchers from the University of California, which was designed for making sense of variety of opinions expressed during interviews through digital code occurrence binaries, and that makes it appropriate for this work. The

software for the quantitative data is SPSS. In the end, analysis was done and conclusions reached both with the aid of statistical results from the survey and the coding of the qualitative data. Also, explanations and direct quotations from the interviews and illustrative designs were used where necessary.

Data analysis and findings

Changes in the newspaper newsroom: The interviewed journalists acknowledge the effects of digital innovation in the newspaper industry in their countries. They state that the digital era of journalism has presented a much different experience for the newspaper journalists, pointing out different ways in which journalism has changed since digital was first deployed in the newsroom. These changes are seen in the changing tools, medium, skill/competence, newsroom culture, news content and business approach of the newspapers (Table 2).

Looking at the qualitative code frequency of the responses of the journalists, about 201 times (Korean 75 and Nigerians 129) in the course of the interviews there were mentions about the changing of the newspaper medium to ‘digital’ or ‘online’. These are presented in the table below (Table 3).

Below are some of the interviewees’ themed comments on the changes in the newspaper media in Korea and Nigeria.

“Previously before the digitalization there was concrete deadline and reporters were obliged to get their news in before that deadline... in the digital era there are no deadlines anymore because there are lots of news outlets competing with each other, hundreds of reporters are competing with each other to write stories, update and send it (out) to the portal and have them online.” –K1, Digital Editor, Korea Times on changing newsroom culture.

“You discover that out of fear of losing their readers some of the traditional newspaper have begun taking stories from unethical

South Korea				Nigeria			
S. No	Names	Editorial positions	Career years	S. No	Names	Editorial positions	Career years
1	K1	Editor, digital news	10	1	N1	Sunday Editor	36
2	K2	Reporter	7	2	N2	Managing Editor,	27
3	K3	Reporter	13	3	N3	Online Editor	31
4	K4	Managing Editor	28	4	N4	Managing Editor	9
5	K5	Bureau Correspondent	11	5	N5	Editorial Director	33
6	K6	Bureau Correspondent	5	6	N6	Reporter	5
7	K7	Bureau Correspondent	5	7	N7	Bureau Chief	14
8	K8	Bureau Correspondent	7	8	N8	Acting Editor	10
9	K9	Bureau Correspondent	15	9	N9	Saturday Editor	12
10	K10	Bureau Correspondent	8	10	N10	Editor	13
	Average		8.6		Average		19

Table 1: Research population and their positions in their various media organizations.

Changing newspaper media	Conventional media environment	New/digital media environment
Medium	Newspaper (print)	Online web, online blogs, SNS
Tools	Analog: Pen, paper, tape recorders, camera, etc.	Digital: Computer, digital recorders, translators, digital camera, software programmes and applications, etc.
Skill/competence	Interview skill, writing skill, analysis skill, etc.	Digital skills, internet and SNS ability, etc.
Newsroom culture	Press deadlines, top/down organizational set up, one-way communication, newsroom experience, less competition, emphasis on ethics, etc.	No more press deadlines, one man/small team media, two-way interactive communication with audience, convergence media, social media sharing, increasing competition, less emphasis on ethics, etc.
Content	Mostly serious, Light content/gossip published in soft magazines	Mixed, both serious and soft content published simultaneously online
Business	Circulation/sales, adverts on print	Online adverts, pay-per-click, forums/events,.

Table 2: Presentation of the key changes the interviewees observe taking place in the new media era.

sources...In view of this; you see a kind of dilution of the content of the Nigerian media.” –N5, Publisher/Managing Editor, Kwara Arise, on the changing of media content.

Feeling the effects of the changes in the newspaper newsroom:

The changes in the newspaper media environment in the digital era in Korea and Nigeria have some far reaching effects on the industry and journalists who work there. From the interviews, it is understood how the journalists perceive the effects of these changes. While they consider some hurtful to the practise of the profession, they think others are positive and actually help the journalists in the practice of their profession. For instance, the increased use of convenient digital tools is believed by all of them to help speed up the work of the journalists and make content presentation faster, simpler and more beautiful. The use of the Internet and social media makes it possible for news content to have wider distribution through the sharing of the HTML links, and also the se of convergence media makes content more widely available since it can be shared across different platforms, etc., (Table 4).

However, on the other hand, there are marked negative effects also the explosion of media organizations, many of which latched on the lowering of the threshold for establishing media online, unnecessary competition in the media industry, a lot of unethical behaviours, increase in diluted and soft content like gossips, rumours, celebrity news, sometimes explicit sexual content or outright blackmail etc.

Journalists’ adjustment to the changes in Korea and Nigeria

Despite the general effects of the digital innovation products to the newspaper industry in the two countries, the analysis of the interview reveals a slight difference in how the newspaper journalists in each country is adjust to this. From the interview, we infer that how they adjust depends on their perception of the change itself. The Nigerian interviewees perceive the industry as still undergoing ‘adverse’ and turbulent ‘change’ while their Korean counterparts perceive the industry as more ‘steady’ and ‘conservative’ now. From the graph of

the code occurrence of the expressions themed ‘conservative’, and ‘change’, this difference can be observed clearer. The Koreans used words/phrase/sentences related to ‘conservative/steady’ for a combined 46 times, while the Nigerians used such words just 10 times, which shows that the Koreans feel more about this than the Nigerians. On the other hand, the Koreans used expressions related to ‘change’ about 18 times while the Nigerians used such expressions about 50 times, which shows Nigerians feel the newspaper industry less conservative than their Korean counterparts (Figure 1).

The conclusion made here is better understood from the words of the interviewees about severe falling advertising and sharp increase in digital media and competition with foreign media, all which leads to the local newspapers experiencing hardship, sometimes going into insolvency. The interviewees, meanwhile, expect this situation to continue. They believe the newspaper circulation and advert revenue continue to decline. To make up for the short fall, the newspapers have preference for journalists who not only possess writing skills but are also quite capable of taking some digital/online responsibilities. Hence, in Nigeria, journalists are expected to promote their published news items on the social media to generate (advert) traffic for their company. Also, the media companies which now, also, operate convergence media expect their reporters to be able to record video, and where necessary, be able to edit and upload them online, and then share the links on social media. So, many of the Nigerian interviewees strive to acquire skills to be able to do these things. Hence the journalists who have more of the required skills or digital competence have greater chance of being retained in the industry

The situation above is not exactly the case with Korean newspapers where, despite the falling circulation, newspapers still claw on a sustainable share of the advert market. The South Korean interviewees say often the newspaper industry is conservative, and even though there are some changes that come with digital, still a lot of the newspaper media culture has remained unchanged despite the digital.

Nationality	Medium	Tools	Skill	Newsroom culture	Content	Business
Korea	75	5	9	27	16	32
Nigeria	129	19	13	40	13	29
Total	201	24	22	67	29	61

Source: Researcher’s data

Table 3: Code occurrence of expressions related to the change in newspaper in Korea and Nigeria.

Positive effects of the changes	Negative effects of the changes
1. Enhanced design and presentation of content	1. Explosion of online media organisations and bloggers
2. Wider reach of online news content	2. Waning influence of the newspaper
3. Online complimenting the print newspaper	3. Declining circulation and advert revenue of newspaper
4. F aster access and sharing new of news online	4. Poor welfare for journalists due to drop in circulation and revenue
5. Faster online research opportunity	5. Diminishing quality of content: Gossip, rumour, blackmail, soft contents being more popular online
6. Convergence simplifies the media	6. Newspaper loss of gatekeeping role
7. Convenience of online journalism	7. Local media competition with foreign media
8. Lower threshold for establishing media (online)	8. Declining ethics and plagiarism of news online
9. Social media makes interaction with audience faster and easier	9. Abuse of journalism rules in news reporting
	10. Cost of purchasing and training in new media
	11. Lack of new income source from online
	12. Pressure on journalists since there is no longer clear newsroom deadline
	Particular to Korea
	13. Blackmail
	Particular to Nigeria
	14. Insolvency of newspaper companies

Table 4: Feelings of interviews on the effects of the changes in both countries.

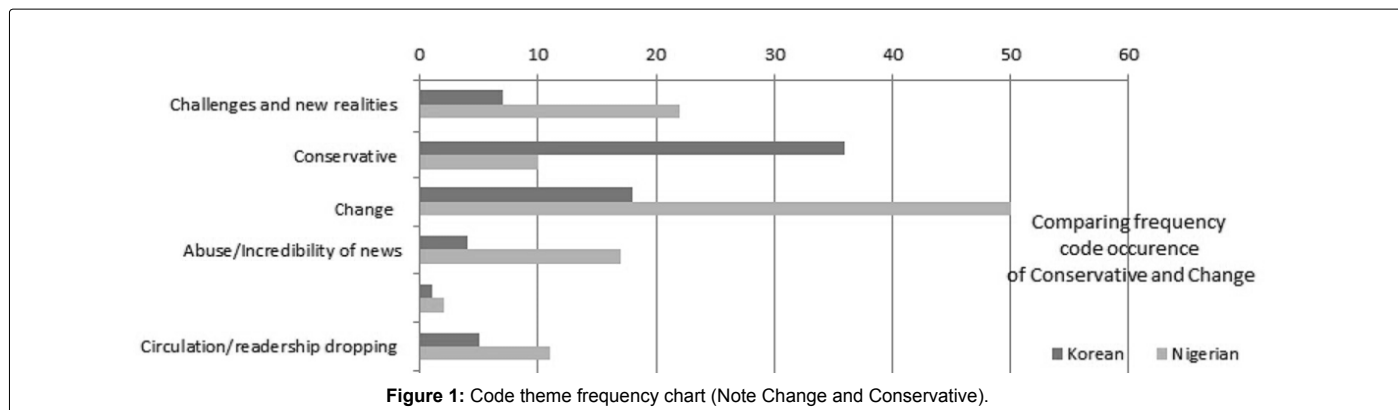


Figure 1: Code theme frequency chart (Note Change and Conservative).

	South Korea	Nigeria
1.	Newspaper media change is slow	Newspaper media change is volatile
2.	Newsroom duty is strictly divided: Journalists are expected to just cover their beat and write stories	Newsroom duty is converging: journalists are expected to do some graphic work
3.	Newspaper owns the copyright of the journalists work, and can share it online, only on their site or SNS page.	Journalist own some copyright over their work, and can share them online, on their SNS page
4.	Online media is mainly for South Korea consumers, and Korea speaking Diaspora, so not much sense of global competition	Online media competes globally, every journalists has to compete
5.	Competence on the beat and writing skill is more important	Digital capacity enhances prospects in the industry
6.	Less pressure to retain job without digital skill	Much pressure to find or retain job without digital skill

Table 5: Summarizing the journalists' key opinions on 'conservatism' and 'change' of the media.

	Count	Interviewees' nationality		Total
		Korea	Nigeria	
		Extent of the software use by the interviewees	All	
	Three or four	2	6	8
	Two or three	4	0	4
	None	4	1	5
Total		10	10	20

Table 6: Cross tabulation of the extent the interviewees use the software against their nationalities.

	Count	Interviewees' nationality		Total
		Korea	Nigeria	
		Extent of the software use by the interviewees	All	
	Three or four	1	4	5
	Two or three	3	1	4
	None	6	1	7
Total		10	10	20

Table 7: Cross tabulation of the extent of interviewees use of SNS against their nationalities.

They believe and say that even though the circulation of the newspaper may continue to dwindle for some more time, they do not expect the newspaper to cease to print. Also in the Korean newspaper, the existing newsroom structure and working organogram do not easily change. For example, there is still strict distinction between the editorial section and the digital and graphic design section, which means that the focus of the newspaper journalists in the newsroom is just to gather and report news. The graphics and uploading of news online are the core responsibility of the digital and design section. Below is the table showing the differences observed between the two groups (Table 5).

Comparing digital skill of the interviewed journalists

In trying to compare the digital skill of the journalists the researcher selected some popular software and social media (SNS) applications used for journalism. These software are: Graphic design programmes, Infographics, Video editing/graphics and Photoshop; while the SNS include: Facebook, Twitter, Google+, YouTube. From the analysis, it is seen that in South Korea where the perception of changing media industry is more 'conservative', the journalists acquire less of digital skill and use less of the SNS, while in Nigeria where the feeling of change is volatile, they acquire more digital skill and use more SNS. This assumption is seen more clearly in the cross tabulation of their responses as seen below (Tables 6 and 7).

However, it should be noted that all the journalists interviewed for this study have basic capacity to use digital facilities like personal computer and digital camera. They all could write do their work using popular, basic 'text' programmes especially 'Word'; either Microsoft or Hanword. The tested criteria, therefore, is a little more advanced software programmes. However, these are digital tools in use elsewhere in the world by journalists. And the analysis shows that the Nigerian journalists have a more positive acquisition and use of these digital tools and social media in their journalism practice than their Korean counterparts. This strengthens the notion of the Korean journalists that the advanced digital skill is not a necessity for newspaper journalism. As more of them believe that the primary skill a journalist requires is writing skill, and if the journalist possesses an excellent writing skill together with basic computer skill, it should be alright for the practice of newspaper journalism.

Some opinions that explain the pattern of the journalists' digital skill in both countries are presented below.

"Digital innovation has undermined the business model of newspaper and traditional media outlets... (But) I do not think that newspapers will go out of the market completely." K1 Desk, Korea Times

“I know in Korea, if someone cannot use digital technology, he is not put under pressure...the digital tools, if you work in broadcasting or newspaper in Korea, you may not have need to use them because the duties are divided. There are departments which work with those, the responsibility of the journalists is to cover the beat.”—K3, Reporter, JBTC/JoongAng Ilbo.

“I see fellow journalists who lost their jobs and could not get it back because they don’t have new competence....Two journalists came here today to look for job. I asked them, ‘Do you have a Twitter account?’ They said they didn’t have. ‘Do you have Facebook account?’ One said he had. I asked, ‘What do you on that Facebook account? How is your traffic?’ He couldn’t explain. But you know we are in an era where everybody must share their stories on the social media. So how do I give you a job when you don’t have a functional social media?”—N3, Managing Editor Online, The Nation.

“If care is not taken, very soon the conventional journalism [14] will fizzle out, because if I can, with 50 naira*, read all the news online, then why do I have to buy newspapers.” N1, Sunday Editor, the Herald *Naira is Nigeria’s currency.

Summary and Conclusion

From the analysis—and against expectations based on understanding of digital technology diffusion and other factors like digital divide—the Nigerian journalists more than their Korean counterparts, have a more positive attitude and actually possess more digital and social media skills required of journalists in this era. These reasons for this observation include, among other things; the notion of general ‘conservativeness’ or ‘volatile change’ the practitioners hold about the industry in their country and how they expect this situation to affect the profession. In the volatile Nigerian industry, there are the prospects of securing a good job and career mobility which are enhanced if one has digital capacity. Also, there is the advantage of retaining one’s job; at a time when many news media companies are downsizing because of the decreasing revenue. Having digital skills therefore gives a newspaper reporter a greater chance of keeping his job. Also, with less people working in the newsroom, the journalists are expected to do more than just write news. Added to this is the feeling that possessing digital skill is increasingly becoming a requirement for entry into the industry. Finally, Nigeria is an English speaking country, and there is an increasing feeling by the journalists that their work online is more visible and read across the world, hence they want to be more digitally skilled to be able to perform well in the online environment. Some of them also pointed out the fact that foreign English media is dominating the local market and competing with the local media for advert revenue. So, learning advanced digital skill is one way of being able to challenge foreign media domination of the local media market.

On the other hand, the reasons for the Korean’s conservative approach to acquisition and use of the digital facilities on the job include the fact that the industry has some measure of stability and the journalists experience less pressure to retain their job in Korea. Secondly, there is still a strong advert market that supports the newspaper, and the newspaper companies can still maintain a pretty large newsroom. Thirdly, there is a clear delegation of responsibility in the Korean newspaper newsroom. Many of the interviewees stated

that the job of the editorial team in Korea is primarily to gather, write and analyse news. They do not need to interfere with the work of the design and IT team or the social media team. So, even when they have acquired the digital skills they often do not have the need to use them, because it will take them beyond their own delegated duty. Also, most Korean newspapers publish exclusively in Hangeul, and in this respect do not feel much pressure of foreign media competing with them for the local market. In essence, for the journalists in Korea, acquiring advanced digital skills is not an important factor in competing in the international digital media environment. These factors, expressed by the journalists in the course of the interviews are responsible for the observed differences.

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