

## Challenges of Teaching Online Journalism Courses in Some Selected Nigerian Universities

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### **Abstract**

*The developments in information and communication technologies have affected every facet of public life be it social, economic, political or educational. These developments have necessitated the emergence of online journalism and the introduction and teaching of online journalism in Nigerian universities. The introduction and teaching of evolving course are usually not without challenges. This paper examines the challenges of teaching such courses in three federal universities in Nigeria: Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Bayero University, Kano and University of Maiduguri. The study intends to find out the online journalism introduced and taught, at what levels they are being taught; the challenges in teaching the courses; student enrollment and the staff strength specializing in the teaching of Online journalism courses. The theoretical framework used for the study is Diffusion of Innovation Theory. The three universities were purposively selected as all the three universities run mass communication courses. The result of the study indicates that University of Maiduguri runs more courses related to online journalism and has more students offering such courses. However, all the three universities face similar challenges in running the courses. The study concludes that there is need for the three universities to include the practical aspect of teaching online journalism and to strengthen the number of staff teaching such related courses as well as ensure adequate funds are made available for personnel capacity building.*

**Keywords:** Challenges, Education, Multimedia courses, Nigerian universities and Technology

## Introduction

Education is the provision of opportunity for a child to realize his or her potentials, goals and abilities in life (Udokang 2006). Education includes the acquisition of functional skills, moral identity and attribution to succeed in life and thereby improve the society. The yearnings, needs, aspirations as well as the cultural heritage and environment of any society determine, to a large extent the kind of knowledge and skills to be acquired (Adebosin, 2004).

Higher education, on the other hand, is regarded as an instrument of social, political and economic development. The products of higher education in any nation will determine to an extent the development of such nation. This is so because higher education contributes to national development through high level relevant manpower training; in order to acquire both physical and intellectual skills which enable individual to be self-reliant and useful members of the society, FRN (in Thomas and Omotoke, 2015). Thus, university is the highest level of education where the high-level manpower, intellectual and future leaders are developed. It is a place where students come together to pursue knowledge and it promotes the development of intellectual capacities of individuals to understand and appreciate their environments (Ajayi, 2003). Universities therefore educate future leaders and develop the high-level technical and professional capacities in all disciplines that underpin economic growth and development.

Apparently, formal mass communication education started in Nigeria with the establishment of the department of mass communication at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 1961 (Ashana, 2012). The University of Lagos followed in 1967 as a UNESCO-backed programme. Since then several tertiary institutions in Nigeria have established similar or the same programmes to teach journalism and impart the skills. Aside universities and polytechnics, training schools were also established. Daily Times established its training school in 1965 known as the Times Journalism Institute (TJI) while the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) training school commenced in 1959. The number of journalism schools in Nigeria had raised to 125 as of 2017 some of them accredited and several others not known to law. The following table shows the number of academic and tertiary institutions offering the mass communication or journalism programmes. The figures were compiled from the books of the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) in 2014 and Joint Admissions and Matriculations Board (JAMB) in 2017.

**Table 1: Tertiary Institutions Offering Mass Communication by Ownership in Nigeria**

<i>Ownership</i>	<i>Polytechnics</i>	<i>University</i>
<i>Federal</i>	19	13
<i>State</i>	19	15
<i>Private</i>	16	43
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>71</b>

Source: Oyewole and Olisa, (2017)

Table one shows that there are more universities offering mass communication programmes than polytechnics at the undergraduate levels. It also shows that there are currently more private universities offering mass communication than both the Federal and State institutions.

The developments in various disciplines as a result of technological advances often compels such disciplines to introduce courses to meet the contemporary demand. For example the field of mass communication in the last two decades has shifted attention to Internet platforms leading to introduction and teaching of online related courses, such as Online Journalism. Universities globally offer these courses and train professionals in this emerging field of journalism. As is the case with every emerging area, there are bound to be challenges. Nigerian universities like any other university in the world are not left out in the introduction and teaching of online journalism courses. Considering the essentiality of online journalism in modern journalism, it would be imperative to know the challenges departments face in the teaching of the course and related courses so as to drive policy and practice. Hence, this study examines the challenges universities in Nigeria face in the teaching of Online Journalism courses with specific focus on three universities in Nigeria: Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Bayero University, Kano and University of Maiduguri are purposively selected as all the universities run courses in online journalism and are 'peers' as they were all founded around the same time in the 70s.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study has the following objectives:

1. to identify the challenges of teaching online journalism courses in the three selected universities
2. to determine the online journalism related courses being taught in the three selected universities
3. to examine how adequate the staff strength of the department of mass communication in the three selected universities

### **Literature Review**

Literature review is important because it enables the researcher to ascertain how the research question might already have been addressed by previous researchers. According to Mouton (2001) the review of literature provides background as well as a synopsis of existing knowledge or related studies conducted on the research topic. This would enable the researcher to identify gaps, which have not been researched within the field of study, thus preventing a duplication of previous studies.

Oyewole and Olisa (2017) opined that, in spite the growth in numbers, mass communication discipline is confronted with challenges that affect the quality of teaching online journalism. The current curriculum in several institutions belong to the past as it is notadequate enough to equip students with modern skills needed in the journalism practice of the 21st century. Due to the dynamism in the practice as a result

of constant technological advancement, the fact is that mass communication curriculum also needs constant review. Oso (2012) argues that it is of concern that the current mass communication curriculum in Nigeria's institutions was inherited from the British colonialists. Since the advent of the study of mass communication in Nigeria, part of the concerns of journalism or mass communication educators have been how to ensure a blend of journalism curriculum with the changing needs of the media industry especially in the era of new media or online journalism (Odunlami, 2014).

Empirical evidence by Oyewole and Olisa (2017) show that, inadequate modern journalism facilities are among the daunting problems facing journalism or mass communication education in Nigeria. A number of mass communication departments use out-dated and faulty equipment which are irrelevant to what is obtainable in the modern day of teaching online journalism practice. It is quite unfortunate that many mass communication departments only struggle to update their practical studios with little equipment only when accreditation exercises are around the corner. Odunlami (2014) observes that the present decade is noted for the high adoption rate of technological innovations in journalism and mass communication practice often creates a feeling of inadequacy for media or journalism educators because as they grapple to incorporate technological phenomenon in the curricula, several others come in quick succession. This phenomenon illustrates how and why the newsroom appears to be constantly ahead of the classroom. This assertion is apt for the fact that lack of adequate modern journalism training facilities is a challenge for the teaching of online journalism in Nigerian universities.

Similarly, Oyewole and Olisa (2017) established that, part of the challenges can also be attributed to regulatory bodies, being incompetent in the discharge of their duties, which breeds poor accreditation exercises, have also been accused of collecting gratification in exchange for undeserved scorings. Corroborating, Odunlami (2014) is of the view that, this trend is still noticeable in Nigeria like other developing countries of Africa and adds that no sooner people in these countries, especially Africans, adjust to the realities of an emerging technological innovation than same are upgraded with the attendant challenge to catch up. This necessitated posers like are lecturers in mass communication doing the right thing? If they are not, what are the reasons? The doctorate syndrome which makes a PhD holder in journalism or mass communication an automatic lecturer in a university or polytechnic is bigproblem for students. In most cases, these doctors are not competent, for instance, for someone to be teaching students online courses, he or she needs to be computer literate and up-to-date on the new trends of online journalism. However, the absence of these raise the question about the quality of what is being imparted to students and makes fragile the epistemology in Akinfeleye's assertion (2009) that a low degree of literacy rate contributes to a low degree of journalism education and training while a high level of literacy tends to contribute to a higher degree of journalistic training and professional standards.

This study reckons that a good journalism degree plus contemporary knowledge of online journalism provides the platform to impart quality online journalism

education. As Ashana (2012) notes that the state of journalism education is now problematic owing to certain ailments that have besieged the profession. It can be inferred that the more rooted or grounded the lecturers are in the field of journalism, both professionally and academically, the more deep-rooted their students will be, as the quality of graduates produced can be linked to the quality of lecturers that taught those graduates. Lecturers teaching online journalism need to further equip themselves both theoretically and in the practical aspects so as to be able to teach and orientate their students toward solving societal problems in the era of technological dominated 21st century. Often times more attention is given the theoretical aspect of teaching online journalism to the detriment of practical or reality of what is obtainable. This trend must stop in order to keep up the pace with the best global practices. As some of the universities teaching online journalism course have no computer rooms for students to demonstrate what they have been thought in classes.

Oyewole and Olisa (2017) put forward that; poor lecturers' attitude to research is also worrisome. This concern is compounded by their lethargic participation in researching into the area of online journalism, as most lecturers' have inadequate knowledge of media and online research on one hand and the pressures of social life over academics on the other hand. Apparently, inadequate funding also undermines the teaching of online journalism education in Nigeria's institutions of higher learning and it wouldn't make any difference whether they are private or public. Heads of departments in most cases are not provided with such fund to establish computer rooms and facilities that will facilitate the teaching of online journalism courses. This could be the reason why Chibita (2009) posits that one common feature across African universities in the last decade is that resource constraints have forced many of them to get into the "numbers game". As entry point qualifications are lowered to accommodate more "clients", leading to the admission of weaker students from the outset, the future becomes bleak with regard to quality as students are not cut out for what they were admitted for. The implication is the production of half-baked graduates, which seriously undermines a knowledge production of journalism profession as most of these graduates end up being lecturers to handle online journalism courses.

Many institutions also admit more students than they can cater for in order to generate more funds. This in turn impacts negatively on teaching and learning of online journalism courses. Because part of these courses demand practical aspect and in a situation where a lecturer has more than a required number of students in a class, it will be difficult for him or her to assess the students in terms of the practical orientation. These and more often contributed to some of the challenges of teaching online journalism courses as articulated in the literature through which this study is conceived.

Another problem is a situation where academics that do not have any form of field experience are assigned to teach practical courses in the profession is not helpful. In South Africa, several conferences and colloquia have been held since 1979 to discuss journalism curricula. The first journalism conference to discuss curricula issues was held in 1979 (South African Conference on the Survival of the Press and Education for

Journalism, 1979). Two major questions were addressed at the conference, namely: What should journalism students be taught and by whom? Scholars and commentators, therefore, called for curriculum which would not only address the challenges posed by the rapidly changing media landscape but one that would be informed by epistemologies relevant to the teaching of online journalism to university students in the field of communication (Groepe, 2008).

A study carried out in 2010 at the University of Oregon, showed that journalism or mass communication in the university, as well as nationally, was in a “dismal” state (Oregon Report, 2010). The report strongly argued that journalism schools were “little more than industry-oriented trade schools” and contemptuously dismissed them as “handmaidens to industry” which simply followed industry and not lead it. The report further noted with concern that the industry model (vocational model) did not give students sufficient understanding of online journalism knowledge and the media as a whole. The latter knowledge, they claimed, was vital to the advancement of their careers later on. The model was also viewed as not appropriate for the post-industrial society (also known as the information society) where most of the workforce was concerned with the production of information and manipulation of symbols (Oregon Report, 2010). The report sadly noted that, because journalism schools were not poised to play a leadership role in the production of information, their role was now being taken over by other departments in the university, such as Speech Communication, Library Sciences and Business departments. Thus, journalism schools were perceived as stagnant and not innovative in the face of rapid change.

Medsger (2011) concluded that journalism skills were being undervalued in training institutions which focused more on communication theory than journalism skills; that there was too much preoccupation with academic degrees over professional experience as qualifications for teaching; that there was a heavy load of mass communication theory courses and training was more focused on training generic communicators rather than journalists. The study concluded, among other things, that the major goal of teaching online journalism should be to teach online journalistic skills and prepare students for their careers in industry. Thus, Medsger cautioned against a journalism programme which dwelt too much on communication theory instead of focusing on the relevant skills that journalists need to carry out their duties.

Oregon Report’s (2010) key recommendation was that there should be a strong liberal arts component in the journalism curriculum. Many scholars concurred with this argument because they believed that liberal arts would develop the students’ intellect and make them more critical about the world around them (Fourie, 2005 and Medsger, 2010). This is even more vital in the 21st century where the journalism landscape has become more complex because of the online journalism, multimedia approach and interactivity, the convergence of media platforms as well as the hyper-commercial environment within which the media have to operate. Fourie (2005) for example, argues that:

In such an overpowering and constantly changing and challenging environment in which the emphasis is too often on quantity to the detriment of quality, the need to think about journalists' thinking and to equip future journalists with thinking skills rather than with how-to-do-it skills, has become a prerequisite for future quality journalism (p. 155).

The contentious relationship between theory and practical skills was heightened in 2002 by Lee Bollinger, the President of Columbia University, who suspended the search for a dean of the Graduate School of Journalism on the grounds that the school needed to re-think its mission. Bollinger challenged the journalism faculty at Columbia University to think critically and creatively about what a graduate degree in journalism should entail (Glasser, 2002). He argued that "to teach craft of journalism is a worthy goal but it is clearly insufficient in this new world" (Glasser, 2002, p. 1). He added that whilst "there is a role at the University for Skills training but it should not be the dominant position". Bollinger, therefore, called for more intellectually based journalism schools. He believed strongly that leading journalists should have a functional knowledge of computer, statistics, economics, history and political theory and philosophy (Dube, 2013).

On the other hand, those who sympathised with Bollinger's way of thinking argued that his call did not mean abandoning the craft of journalism and substituting it for an education that has little or no relevance to journalism practitioners (Glasser, 2002). Instead, they viewed his call as "an enhancement or augmentation of the existing programmes. There was a general consensus that the craft of journalism was vital to the mission of journalists and that it should form a significant part of the curriculum. It was believed that the teaching of basic journalism skills ensures that journalism educators remain relevant to mass communication professions and that it also guarantees employment and career opportunities for journalism graduates (Shaver, 2005).

A study by Nordenstreng, Brown and Traber (2000) showed that western epistemologies still have a strong influence on the teaching of journalism courses which is another challenge of teaching online journalism courses in Nigerian universities. Under the auspices of the International Association for Mass Communication Research (IAMCR) revealed that Third World regions with Anglophone and Francophone orientation were dominated by literature from Europe and North America, foremost the USA. Out of 316 textbooks surveyed in Anglophone Africa, only 20% were regionally relevant. Francophone Africa was even worse in that of the 99 books surveyed only 8% were regionally relevant. The study thus showed a heavy dependence on Western literature and teaching materials, which has led to the entrenchment of the online journalism approach of these Western countries into the journalism curricula in Sub-Saharan Africa. Based on the literature reviewed, it is apparent that most of the studies done by other scholars or researchers in the area have direct bearing to this study as most of the challenges of teaching online journalism courses in Nigeria were validated in the previous studies.

As regards staff strength, evidence by Akinfeleye (2009) shows that, the proliferation of journalism institutions without the accompanying of human strength as prerequisites have negatively affected good and enduring professional standards of teaching journalism courses especially the online journalism. He argued that, journalism education in Nigeria, having existed for over fifty years, is still to a large extent anchored on the Western philosophy of journalism studies and methods. The peculiarities of Nigeria are not visible in her journalism education of today including staff strength to handle these courses. Chibita (2009) also raises some observations with regard to this gap. He is worried why the country's mass communication education does not reflect community problems and dynamics and why staff strength of teaching online journalism courses is low.

Oyewole and Olisa (2017) established in their study that, inadequate modern journalism facilities and lack of staff strength of teaching online journalism courses are most daunting problems facing journalism or mass communication education in Nigeria. The findings of their study revealed that, a number of mass communication departments use out-dated and faulty equipment which are irrelevant to what is obtainable in the modern-day journalism practice and the staff strength in teaching these courses is also low. The findings of Oyewole and Olisa (2017) are similar to Akinfeleye's assertion (2009) that a low degree of literacy rate will not contribute to adequate teaching of online journalism courses.

Odunlami (2014) findings show that the present decade is noted for the high adoption rate of technological innovations in journalism and mass communication practice often creates a feeling of inadequacy for media or journalism educators because as they grapple to incorporate the technological phenomenon of teaching the online journalism, the outcome seems to be unsuccessful for lack of staff, equipments and skills. Thus, based on the literature reviewed, it is apparent that most of the studies done by other scholars or researchers in the area have direct bearing to this study as most of the challenges of teaching online journalism courses in Nigeria were validated in the previous studies.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework used for this study is Diffusion of Innovation Theory developed by Rogers in 1962. Rogers relates dissemination to the process of social change, which consists of invention, diffusion (or communication) and consequences. Such change

according to him can occur internally from within a group or externally through contact without outside change agents. Contact may occur spontaneously or accidentally or it may result from planning on the part of outside agencies.

In the diffusion of innovations, many years may be required for an idea to spread. Rogers states that, one purpose of diffusion research is to discover the means to shorten this lag. Once established, an innovation will have consequences being it functional or dysfunctional, direct or indirect, manifest or latent. Change agents

normally expect impact to be functional, direct and manifest, although this positive result does not always occur. Apparently, the use of online journalism has been perhaps the fastest spreading innovation in the field of mass communication. With online journalism, people raise awareness of the innovation as they talk with one another about it. People share opinions, discuss experience with the innovation, sometimes advocates its use and sometimes resist it.

The rate of adoption is determined by perceptions of the innovation's relative advantage and its compatibility with existing values and experiences. The complexity of the innovation matters and potential adopters will more readily accept an innovation that people can experiment or try out, without making a huge commitment. They may also want to observe others adoption before taking the plunge like the case of teaching the online course in the universities. This is so because universities vary in their levels of resistance and the social support needed to adopt the new idea, practice or object. There are always instances where others will adopt an innovation early before most others consider doing so just like the case of Bayero University, Kano, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and University of Maiduguri. These early adopters will set the stage and usually have an influence on others. As more and more people adopt, a critical mass of adoption occurs that gives rise to a rapid increase in general adoption. A few people may be very slow to adopt and must see the innovation all around them before they will consider it. These are the late adopters. Of course, some may never adopt the new practice.

Rogers in Ogbe (2019) describes diffusion as a process whereby a product or service designed to bring innovation spread within a population, getting to several adopters. Al-Jabri and Sohail (2012) note that diffusion of innovation aims at providing explanations on how, why and what rate novel ideas and technology diffuse through cultures. The process starts

with the introduction of the innovation to the population and ends with its full adoption (Mapi, Dalvit and Terzoli, 2008). Rogers in Ogbe (2019) however notes that there are five stages of adoption process. They include awareness, interest, evaluation, trial and adoption stages. Mapi et al (2008) examined these stages thus:

Awareness: this stage is concerned with the introduction of innovation to a person who does not possess ample information; neither sees the need to get more information nor considers buying or using the product or service. Interest: One decides to seek more information about the innovation but does not really know how or if it can be useful in their own life. They explain that this is when the individual decides to get more information to guide his choice. Evaluation: This relates to the individual making decisions about the innovation. In this stage, they observe that the individual enquires about the use of the product and the difference it will make. If the innovation appears to be useful to their life, they will try it out. Trial stage: At this stage, the product or innovation is used to a limited extent. Adoption stage: Here, the decision to adopt a product or innovation is informed by the information gathered in the interest and evaluation stages as well as the outcome of the trial stage (p. 39).

Therefore, the nexus between the study and the theory is apparent given that diffusion of innovation develops predictive account of the diffusion phenomenon that supposedly helps technology implementer’s propagate diffusion of selected technologies regarding the challenges of online journalism. Apparently, a lot of innovations have evolved in the teaching of journalism courses which has led to the teaching of online journalism courses in Nigerian universities. It is on these premises that this theory is apt to the study.

**Method**

Data for this study was collected from three purposively sample of three universities i.e. Bayero University, Kano, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and University of Maiduguri because they all offer Online Journalism and online journalism courses. The population of the study is the academic staff of Mass communication departments in the three universities (see table four) from which staff who teach online journalism related courses were selected.

The method of data collection was interview while the instrument of data collection was interview schedule. The schedule covered title of courses being taught at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, number of students enrolled for such courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, the staff strength of the three departments as well as the challenges the three departments face in the teaching of such courses. The responses from the sampled universities were then tabulated and analysed.

**Findings**

**Table 1: Title of Courses Being Taught at Undergraduate Level**

<i>University</i>	<i>Title of Courses</i>
<i>Bayero University, Kano</i>	Online Journalism; Photojournalism; Editing and Graphics
<i>Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria</i>	Online Journalism 1 Online Journalism 11
<i>University of Maiduguri</i>	Introduction to Computer 1; Introduction to Computer 11; Online Journalism 1; Online Journalism 11; Graphics; Advertising; New Communication Technologies; Principles of News Editing (Non Linear Editing); Photojournalism

Source: Field work (2019)

Table one above shows the courses being taught at undergraduate level in the sampled universities. Based on the result, the data point that, University of Maiduguri is running nine related courses, Bayero University is running three of such courses and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria is running two. University of Maiduguri also has more

courses across the various levels of its undergraduate programme as the university has such courses running from levels one to four. This compares to what obtains at Bayero University where the courses are at levels one and three only while at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria the courses are being taught at levels two and three. This indicates that, University of Maiduguri has more courses taught at undergraduate level.

**Table 2: Title of Courses Being Taught at Postgraduate Level**

<i>University</i>	<i>Title of Courses</i>
<i>Bayero University, Kano</i>	Multimedia Communication
<i>Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria</i>	Nil
<i>University of Maiduguri</i>	Communication Technologies; Social Media and Society

Source: Field work (2019)

Table two shows the title of courses being taught at Postgraduate level in the selected universities. Going by the data, University of Maiduguri is running two postgraduate multimedia courses, Bayero University one and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria none. This means that University of Maiduguri has more courses being taught at Postgraduate level compare to Bayero University, Kano with one and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria with none.

**Table 3: Number of Students Enrolled for Such Courses at Undergraduate and Postgraduate Levels**

<i>University</i>	<i>No. of Students at Undergraduate Level</i>	<i>No. of Students at Postgraduate Level</i>
<i>Bayero University, Kano</i>	245	12
<i>Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria</i>	222	0
<i>University of Maiduguri</i>	325	10

Source: Field work (2019)

Table three shows the number of students enrolled for such courses at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. It is evident that, at the level of undergraduate, Bayero University has 245 students; Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria 222 and University of Maiduguri 325. At the level of Postgraduate, Bayero University, Kano enrolled 12 students and University of Maiduguri ten. This shows that Bayero University, Kano enrolled more students at the level of Postgraduate than University of Maiduguri within the period of the study.

**Table 4: Staff Strength of the Departments Vs Staff Specializing in the Teaching of Multimedia Courses**

<i>University</i>	<i>Department's Staff Strength</i>	<i>No. of Staff Specialising in Multimedia Courses</i>
<i>Bayero University, Kano</i>	27	6
<i>Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria</i>	22	6
<i>University of Maiduguri</i>	20	7

Source: Field work (2019)

Table four indicates staff strength of the departments and staff specializing in the teaching of multimedia courses in the three selected universities. Based on the data, Bayero University, Kano has 27 department's staff strength and six staff specializing in multimedia courses. Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria has ( ) department's staff strength and six staff specializing in multimedia courses. Apparently, University of Maiduguri has 20 department's staff strength and seven staff specializing in multimedia courses. The data shows that, Bayero University, Kano has the highest number of department's staff strength while University of Maiduguri has the highest number of staff specializing in multimedia courses.

**Table 5: Challenges of Teaching Multimedia Courses at the Universities**

<i>University</i>	<i>Challenges of Teaching Multimedia Courses</i>
<i>Bayero University, Kano</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Inadequate facilities</li> <li>2. Non availability of Internet service</li> </ol>
<i>Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Inadequate facilities</li> <li>2. Epileptic Internet connectivity</li> <li>3. Inadequate staff refresher courses</li> </ol>
<i>University of Maiduguri</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Inadequate facilities</li> <li>2. Inability to upgrade facilities when the need arises</li> <li>3. Epileptic Internet availability</li> <li>4. Inadequate funds for personal capacity building</li> </ol>

Source: Field work (2019)

Table five shows the challenges of teaching multimedia courses at the three selected universities. The data indicates that, Bayero University, Kano is facing the challenges of teaching multimedia courses in terms of inadequate facilities and non availability of internet services. Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria is having the challenges of inadequate facilities, epileptic internet connectivity and inadequate staff refresher courses. Similarly, University of Maiduguri is facing the challenges of inadequate facilities, inability to upgrade facilities when the need arises, epileptic internet availability and inadequate funds for personnel capacity building. This means that, all the universities under study are facing similar challenges in teaching multimedia courses.

### **Discussion of Major Findings**

The major finding of this study relate to the challenges the departments are facing regarding the teaching of the online journalism and related courses. As seen from table 5 of the study the major challenges have to do with inadequate facilities, non-availability of Internet service, epileptic power supply. This finding is supported by the work of Duru (2016), Odunlami (2014) and Oyewole and Olisa (2017)

On the courses being taught at the undergraduate level, University of Maiduguri appeared to have more online related courses than the other two universities as the university teaches nine of such courses as against three being taught at Bayero University, Kano and two at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Similarly, at the postgraduate level University of Maiduguri has more courses with two courses being taught while Bayero University has one and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria neal.

The staff strength of the three departments regarding the teaching of online journalism courses seemed adequate. For example Bayero university, Kano with just 150 students offering online journalism course has 6 staff capable of teaching that course while Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria with about 200 students also has 6 staff and University of Maiduguri with 300 students has 7 staff. This contrasts with the inadequate staff reported in such studies as Oyewole and Olisa (2017), Akinfeleye (2009) and Chibita (2009).

### **Conclusion**

This study examined the challenges of teaching online journalism courses in some selected Nigerian universities. The study established in the introductory part that, education is fundamental and instrumental to social, political and economic engagement of any country which is apparent to development. Within the context, it is on record that, in spite the growth in numbers, mass communication discipline is confronted with challenges that affect the quality of teaching online journalism. To locate the study within the context of theoretical framework, Diffusion of Innovation Theory was adopted to underscore the imperativeness of teaching online journalism in Nigerian universities. Drawing from the tenet of the theory, Diffusion of Innovation Theory relates to the process that occurs as people adopt a new idea, product or service.

The study concludes that the three universities offer online journalism course but there are obvious challenges that affect the teaching of the courses. These inadequacies are in the area of staffing and facilities.

### **Recommendations**

Consequently, based on the findings, this study recommends as follows:

1. The universities studied should ensure that there are adequate staff refresher courses and adequate funds for personnel capacity building
2. The three universities should make provision for internet facilities that will enhance the teaching of online journalism courses in mass communication departments.

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## Appendix

Interviewing Schedule for a Study on the Teaching of Multimedia Courses in Some Selected Nigerian Universities

1. Do you teach courses such as 'Online Journalism' or 'Multimedia' in your undergraduate program

1. Do you teach courses such as 'Online Journalism' or 'Multimedia' in your undergraduate programme?

2. What are the titles of the courses you teach?

3. Do you teach such courses at the postgraduate level?

4. What are the titles of such courses?

5. How many students at the undergraduate level are enrolled in such courses

6. Are such courses mandatory or optional at this level?

7. How many students at the postgraduate level are enrolled in such courses

8. Are such courses mandatory or optional at this level?

9. What is the staff strength of your department?
10. How many of your staff members specialize in the teaching of such courses or have research interest in such courses?
11. What are the challenges of teaching multimedia courses in your department?

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