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From the Classroom to the African Newsroom: How Journalism Education Can Bridge the Gap between the Classroom and the Shrinking Newsroom

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ABSTRACT

Throughout the development of journalism, several groups have made efforts to gain access to voice and advance specific agendas. The current evolutionary phase of journalism has witnessed the democratization of the origination and distribution of journalistic content and has propelled unparalleled content diversity and interactivity and a transition from communality of audience membership to individuality. This unprecedented phase has also brought on certain challenges to journalism as a practice and business, some of which are revenue loss to digital giants, misinformation, dwindling trust in mainstream media, shifting eyeballs to digital platforms and the withering of size and influence of mainstream news outlets. Consequently, journalism graduates now enter a job market that is largely low paying, is increasingly mediated by technology, is rapidly converging, and is experiencing a change in work cultures. In the midst of the rapid evolutions, one of the major concerns is how journalism and media studies schools can respond to this rapidly transforming environment for journalism practice. Through the autoethnography method of enquiry, this paper, thus, reflects on some of the current trends and makes proposals as to how journalism training schools can respond to current realities.

KEYWORDS
journalism; journalism education; shrinking newsrooms; media sustainability; media studies; pedagogy; media industry collaborations

Introduction

The historical eras of media can be divided into four: newspaper and place; magazine and class; broadcast and mass; and Internet and space (Shaw, Hamm, and Knott 2010). During each epoch, diverse groups have fought to be heard and advance certain agendas, whereas technical advancement in the field of media has moved away from widespread distribution to a focus on individual consumption (Shaw, Hamm, and Knott 2010). When it comes to educational developments in journalism, the situation has been similar (Shaw, Bradley, and Knott 2010). According to Marquez's seminal article from 1997, journalism was generally practiced by people who learned the tricks of the trade by unconventional ways, like apprenticeship in the print shops, local cafes, and Friday-night hangouts. Journalism schools did not exist when people first developed an interest in practicing the profession.

During that time, competition was close to non-existent among journalists, and journalists developed strong friendships through shared passion and hangouts (Marquez 1997).

A profession, by definition, calls for the acquisition of specialized conceptual knowledge that is not often available to the public, distinguishing a professional from other individuals who attempt to engage in the activity or trade (Abbott 2014, 1988). So, a requirement for professionalism is the specialized knowledge taught in higher education. Hence, as journalism developed (into a profession), journalists started to exhibit characteristics that would suggest a rising professional conscience, such as learning shorthand skills, adhering to impartiality in a professional capacity, and interviewing abilities (Foley 2016), which were acquired through educational settings. It was also the advent and development of journalism education that journalists begun to assert their authority as professionals (Krüger 2022).

Grounded in the notion that journalism education should be professionalized and provided at a university, Walter William established the first journalism school in the United States at the University of Missouri in 1908 (Dunn 2018). The Journalist's creed that became the core of the training offered in the University of Missouri was a clear statement of standards and principles that journalists must abide by, including responsibility and public-mindedness, accuracy, fairness and independence, which are fundamental to good journalism and all of which result in public trust in the media and the journalist.

In Africa, the first institution to launch a program in journalism and media studies was the American University in Cairo, which began journalism training almost three decades later (1935). The Cairo University launched its own curriculum four years later. UNESCO adopted their model when it hosted its first journalism training sessions in Africa at the University of Dakar, Senegal in 1961.

Schools of media, journalism and communication are now widespread in Africa (Krüger 2022). In 2010, Nigeria had 66 centers of journalism education (Amenaghawon 2010). By now, the number is likely to have gone up. Thirteen institutions were listed in a 2017 South African survey (Garman and van der Merwe 2017). According to a preliminary survey conducted in 2020, there were at least 127 centers, principally universities, colleges, and institutes, that provided journalism training across 19 sub-Saharan African nations. There were 19 public universities offering journalism education in Ethiopia (Finlay 2020).

Many of the centers surveyed had plans or were putting them into action to grow and explore new areas. For instance, the Wits University's School of Journalism and Media Studies had plans to establish a journalism center, while Rhodes University's School of Journalism and Media studies had introduced a fully online accredited program, one of the first in the region. The School of Journalism and Communications of the University of Addis Ababa was moving to occupy a five-story building in a larger premises (Finlay 2020). The Ghana Institute of Journalism has also moved to a larger location, indicating a likely increase in enrolment.

On February 21, 2023, through an email to his colleagues, Simon Pamphilon, a Lecturer in the Department, referencing the first curriculum and organizational structure of Rhodes University's School of Journalism and Media Studies, as it appeared in the university calendars of 1972 and 1973, provides useful data on journalism teaching in 1972/1973 in South Africa. The study of presses, press law, and other technical equipment, shorthand (60 words-per-minute), typing, and comparative analysis of printed and electronic media of

communication were among the topics covered in year one's journalism courses. News gathering and processing were also covered, as well as the organization of news media, including administration and financial management. Journalism III required students to take courses in Press, Radio and Television, which covered advanced newspaper writing, radio and television news writing, television news film techniques, the television documentary, broad news coverage, editorials, feature writing, critical writing, advertising copy, propaganda, book reviews, and radio news. Courses in Journalism III also covered articles and reviews. Although television news and documentaries were among the third-year electives during this period (1972/1973), television broadcasting in South Africa did not begin until 1976, indicating the Department's future-oriented thinking.

Problem

Diverse factors continue to influence and affect how journalism is practiced as well as what might be included in journalism education curricula as social, political, economic, and technological evolutions take place. The current stage of journalism's evolution has seen the democratization of the creation and dissemination of journalistic information. It has also sparked more subtly diverse and interactive content and a shift in audience membership from being communal to being individual (Shaw, Bradley, and Knott 2010). This unprecedented phase has also presented challenges to journalism as a profession and a business, including the loss of revenue to digital behemoths, false information, eroding public confidence in traditional media, a shift in audience attention to digital platforms, and the shrinking stature and influence of traditional news organizations. As a result, graduates holding journalism certificates today enter a job market that pays poorly, is increasingly mediated by technology, is rapidly convergent, and is going through a shift in work cultures.

It has long been held that the practical or professional goals of journalism education and graduates' practical or professional skills are (at least potentially) at conflict with their theoretical or academic abilities (Örnebring 2019). This has been ascribed to the large number of students enrolled in journalism programs and the lack of suitable production facilities that may offer chances for hands-on learning opportunities in the field (Media Initiatives 2016). The rapid transformations happening within the media landscape have further complicated things. Consequently, one of the primary worries in the haze of the quick evolutions is how journalism schools in Africa can adapt to the fast-changing environment for journalism practice. In this piece, I examine current patterns and give suggestions for how journalism training programs may adapt to the times.

Guiding questions

To help to explore how journalism training programs can respond to current challenges facing journalism practice, the following questions guided the study:

1. What shifts in education delivery require a response from journalism and media studies education delivery?
2. How should journalism education adapt to or respond to the evolving work cultures in the journalism and media studies field?

3. How can journalism programs address the significant challenges facing the media today?

Literature review

Regardless of the sector an institution serves, supporting change initiatives with evidence is crucial to enable demand-driven service delivery. Such evidence could be gathered in the education sector through reflexivity and other empirical techniques that evaluate the skills being offered for the field, the precise skills needed in the field, what competitors or similar institutions are offering, why they are offering it, as well as changes occurring in the field, and develop strategies to meet current needs. This is demonstrated by arguments for how, for instance, the current rapid technological advancements will affect how people learn and work in the future (AAMC 2009) and how the Fourth Industrial Revolution would necessitate an accelerated workforce reskilling (Abate 2015) through education and training delivery. Consequently, when Ayele argued that "the development of new knowledge or insights that have the potential to influence behaviour is the most important success factor for effective sustainable development" (Ayele 2020, 22), he made a fleeting allusion to the higher educational context.

In accounting education, for instance, arguments have been made for changes to reflect the increasingly complex needs of the business environment and broader society (Ellington 2017; Tempone et al. 2012). The same arguments have been made for journalism education, with scholars advocating a closer link to industry demands. According to Josephi (2019), a crucial aspect of journalism education is that it is considered as setting the groundwork for the future journalists' knowledge, abilities, and attitudes, with academic literature on journalism education adequately reflecting the efforts to integrate theory and practice. The necessity for journalism schools to address the shifting work landscape and choose the courses that will be most beneficial for their students' futures is also tied to Beate's argument. So, pushed by demands for change, in 2002, China's Journalism Education under Social Transition, for example, saw increasingly intimate ties between pedagogical strategies and market demands; however, it was also found that some of the impediments to change included journalism schools' continued yield to political pressure for conformity to the orthodox party line (Xu, Chu, and Zhongshi 2002).

The COVID-19 pandemic taught educational institutions that change could also be necessitated by health emergencies that do not allow learners to be taught face-to-face. During the pandemic, educational institutions were forced to redesign curricula rethink curricula delivery in the context of remote learning environments. This had implications on pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), bearing in mind the need to offer better learning experiences, creating distinctive learning environments, with the help of digital technologies, designing learning activities with certain characteristics, combining three types of presence (social, cognitive and facilitatory) and adapting assessment to the new learning requirements (Rapanta et al. 2020), etc. which have continued to impact post-pandemic pedagogy. The launch of a completely online accredited curriculum by Rhodes University's School of Journalism and Media Studies (Finlay 2020) is one of the responses to these new demands.

Whatever the demands for change are, there is evidence to suggest that higher education institutions and their curricula, and by extension journalism education curricula, are dynamic and flexible and continue to evolve to meet various demands.

Theoretical framework: Institutional change theory

Institutional change theory was developed by Meyer and Rowan (1978) to explain how institutions endeavor to adhere to the general laws and norms of the institutional environment in a consistent manner (Huerta and Zuckerman 2009). According to Scott (2003), institutional theory emphasizes how the cultural environment of an organization affects organizational structure and behavior and aims to comprehend how cultural norms from the environment influence or limit organizational action. In an educational context, the foundation of institutional change theory is the interaction between schools and their cultural contexts, where societal cultural norms of established institutions influence schools seeking legitimacy (Huerta and Zuckerman 2009). The quest for legitimacy may be born out of the need to offer relevant training modules that will make graduates fit well in industry.

Kezar (2018) provides six institutional change perspectives which could potentially be useful resource for educational change agents. Differing in conceptualizations about why change occurs, how it occurs, the outcomes of change and the focal context of change, the six perspectives are scientific management, evolutionary, social cognition, cultural, political and institutional. The evolutionary change perspective, which according to Kezar (2018) places a strong emphasis on how the external environment affects organizational transformation, was determined to be fundamental to this study. This perspective views change as unintended, unplanned, and the result of a complex system reacting to changing conditions and external factors (Bowles et al. 2021).

The value of developing curricula to improve teaching and learning is increasing as global change quickens. Because the world is changing, so must the way students are trained to assume their roles and responsibilities (William & Mary School of Education 2030). According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, "the concept of 'curriculum' should be developed from 'predetermined and static' to 'adaptable and dynamic". Schools and teachers should be able to update and align the curriculum to reflect evolving societal requirements as well as individual learning needs" (OECD 2018, 7). Hence, in the context of journalism education, educational institutions and their scholars must be responsive to the changes and evolutions happening in industry as well as the societal requirements and tailor curricula to meet the demands of industry. This article reflects on the societal requirements for journalism education, through the lenses of the evolving work culture and the challenges confronting newsrooms in Africa, and makes a bold attempt at offering solutions to how journalism education can adapt to or respond to them.

Methods

The study adopts autoethnography as a method of enquiry. Autoethnography is a branch of ethnographic research that links individual experiences to broader cultural, political, and societal meanings and understandings (Leavy 2020). The theoretical underpinning

of autoethnography is the self-reflective, subjective kinds of inquiry associated with post-modernism and the autoethnographer "combines characteristics of autobiography and ethnography" (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner 2011, 275). Adams, Jones, and Ellis (2017, 1) also claim that autoethnography acknowledges and values that "personal experience is infused with political/cultural norms and expectations" and can be unearthed through an in-depth and careful self-reflection, also known as "reflexivity". The process of reflexivity allows for the identification and careful analysis of the interconnections between oneself and society, the specific and the universal, the private and the political. Thus, auto-ethnographies show "people in the process of figuring out what to do, how to live, and the meaning of their struggles" (Bochner and Ellis 2006, 111).

Autoethnography indicates the writing derived by prolonged immersion, observation, experience or participation (Tomaselli 2021, 5). In this instance, the phenomenon that I provide a personal and autoethnographic account by reflectively exploring the current challenges journalism is experiencing and what journalism education can offer to buck the trend. I consider the experiences acquired through observations and my interactions with media organizations as well as my position as an academic as useful in providing some insights about how educational institutions can respond to equip students to thrive in the journalism field when they leave the classroom.

Richardson (2000) intimates that the substantive contribution of the autoethnographic work—evidence of reflexivity, expression of a reality and the intellectual impact of the autoethnographic work—are some of the bases on which an autoethnographic work is measured. Similarly, it has been argued that the first goal of autoethnography is a con-scious effort to "extend existing knowledge and research while recognizing that knowl-edge is both situated and contested" (Adams, Jones, and Ellis 2017, 103). This autoethnography-based paper makes the case that curriculum development can help find potential answers by closely studying the causes of shrinking newsrooms and other dangers to journalism in the age of rapid digital technological advancements. Thus, this work is based on the idea that as the journalism industry undergoes significant change and the underlying causes are identified, it is also necessary to consider what jour-nalism education might have to offer to bridge any gaps between newsrooms and class-rooms and, ultimately, make learning applicable to practice. The contribution that lies in this exercise is around curriculum development, particularly when it comes to journalism education in Africa, as the perspectives I present in this paper are based on what African journalism is experiencing. However, some of the issues raised may be relevant in other contexts.

The method breaks the rules of traditional research practice, draws on insider knowl-edge, navigates doubt and uncertainty, asserts voice in "writing to right", and makes the subject approachable in order to enable fresh and expressively fruitful ideas (Jones, Adams, and Ellis 2013, 32–37). So, instead of posing as an objective, all-seeing fly on the wall as is the case in standard science, the researcher in autoethnography is more like a fly in the soup (Tomaselli 2021, 5).

Motivated by Krüger's (2022) argument that journalism programs must be adaptable and have a solid understanding of society's fundamental and ongoing demand for trust-worthy information if they are to remain relevant, and making connections between industry and the classroom by critically analyzing how journalism education can reinvent itself as new challenges and opportunities arise, I draw on my personal knowledge as a

researcher and practitioner in the field with a total of 18 years of experience, 11 of which have been spent researching and interacting with practitioners on various platforms. The results of this process are presented narratively.

This project' importance comes from its consideration of solutions rather than just cataloguing the problems that journalism, and by extension journalism education, is now facing.

Results

Reflections on some significant shifts that have implications on journalism education

Shifts in education delivery: COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant new modes of learning

The COVID-19 pandemic caught many individuals and institutions off-guard and disrupted the routines, customs, and practices that had been a part of our social and economic foundations. This was especially true for Africa, where many past outbreaks had come and gone with little to no impact on the entire continent. Thus, many underestimated how quickly and adversely COVID-19 would affect the continent (Voices of Youth 2020; Mwananyanda et al. 2020; Wamai et al. 2021), suspending all significant norms many were accustomed to.

Because educational institutions do not exist in isolation as their cultural environment impacts them (Scott 2003), media studies and journalism education in Africa also experienced the profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic, as posited by the institutional change theory, became an unforeseen, unplanned, and complex external element (Kezar 2018; Bowles et al. 2021) that sparked an evolution to which educational institutions had to transformatively respond by shifting to remote learning. The shift to blended learning, remote learning, and online learning presented significant challenges. Even though I had had prior experience teaching online in a non-mandatory, blended learning environment, the increased use of Information Communications Technologies (ICTs), virtual classrooms, online platforms, and digital tools for learning exposed a digital divide in both ownership and accessibility that I had never experienced called for increased inventiveness to scale the overall transition. Adjin-Tettey (2020) identified connectivity challenges, such as fluctuating network signals, restricted network access, and erratic or no electricity, as preventing productive time with digital technologies and further perpetuating the disparities in access to education that are already present. These challenges were on top of the additional financial burden placed on my students to purchase or rent equipment or pay for Internet connectivity to participate in online classes.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic brought on the need to rethink curricula and curricula delivery in the context of institutional change, concerns have also been voiced regarding the effectiveness and quality of journalism and media studies education because of the shift to online learning (Grabelnikov et al. 2020; Nyarko and Serwornoo 2022), which I also believe fails to give students the same level of engagement and practical experience as in-person training. Notably also, the pandemic denied many students access to the necessary learning and production facilities. My argument is supported by

the fact that for some of my students, physically being present in school was the only way they could access production facilities to learn the craft of journalism. However, despite the challenges, the COVID-19 pandemic also presented an opportunity for journalism and media studies education in Africa to embrace new modes of learning and to explore the development of new pedagogical approaches.

Open artificial intelligence and journalism education

In the era of open artificial intelligence, there are many benefits technological advancements could bring to journalism education and practice. The capacity for journalists to utilize artificial intelligence (AI) to complete stories, enhance video and audio editing, and make writing and transcription easier are ways that many huge language models, like Chat Generative Pre-Trained Transformer (ChatGPT) and enhanced editing suites have the potential to disrupt newsrooms (Sterne 2023). Accordingly, Sterne (2023) argues that AI tools could allow journalists to spend more time speaking with sources and gathering information and less time transcribing interviews and completing deadline-driven daily stories.

In my limited experience, I've seen students create essays and class presentations using AI, but the presentations they produced lacked adequate context, authenticity, and depth. When students had to present on the same subject, for instance, their presentations were too identical and lacked creativity, giving them away. The correct inputs, in my opinion, might help AI write accurate news stories more quickly and simply. However, while AI is not always constrained by ethical standards like human journalists are, the dependence on AI also implies a probable abandonment of journalistic ethics. Reports of AI fabricating statements, misattributing quotes, attributing quotes to non-existent people, and using photographs without permission have already been made, raising new concerns about journalistic ethics that range from plagiarism to fabricating news reports to spreading of disinformation (Schmidt 2023). Thus, students who are only looking for the simple solution in AI tools will unlikely be conscious to be authentic and ethically minded when they become professionals.

Educators must be aware that they cannot completely forbid students from using AI tools. To prevent institutions from graduating students who lack the writing and analytical thinking skills necessary to make an informed judgment about stories and what their sources are telling them and to effectively communicate those stories to target audiences, there is now a new burden on how AI can be used to improve students' writing rather than replacing it, while being ethically minded.

Reflections on some challenges facing the media industry and their implications on journalism education

Evolving work cultures in the journalism field

Undoubtedly, technology has always been a transformative force in the practice of journalism (Pavlik 2000) as well as a major force behind journalism. The transformations have been accompanied by anxieties and fresh opportunities. For instance, despite concerns about revenue shifting to digital platforms, new opportunities for revenue generation have emerged because of Internet-driven digital platforms. This suggests the evolving work culture of journalism has affected organizational behavior (Scott 2003) and that

media organizations have endeavored to adhere to the norms of the institutional environment as the institutional change theory suggests (Huerta and Zuckerman 2009; Meyer and Rowan 1978).

Largely, the impact of new technologies can be felt in how they have restructured work processes and reshaped journalistic outputs (Lewis and Zamith 2017; Tandoc Jr 2019), opening new possibilities (Kotenidis and Veglis 2021) for audience engagement. Four major fields of application within journalism have emerged as a result of automation and algorithmic technology: automated content production, data mining, news dissemination, and content optimization (Kotenidis and Veglis 2021). Besides, the advent of information communications and big data technologies allow the generation of large data volumes and their efficient processing at an astonishing speed, paving the way for data-driven journalism practice.

The rapid technological evolutions have also had significant impact on work cultures of journalists and news organizations. The goal of journalism has always been to present news in an impartial, fact-based manner (Lee 2019). However, with democratization of media and infiltration of citizen journalist and content creators (i.e. bloggers and vloggers) in the media space, journalists must work twice as fast to race against content disseminated by these actors in real time. Thus, journalists are racing to strike a balance between timely and in-depth reporting, as news cycles move faster, propelled by the digital age. In a haste to match up with competition, the result is the compromise of journalistic values and ethics.

The COVID-19 pandemic also compelled newsrooms to shift from some of their routines and practices. Whereas physical restrictions did not allow guests for radio and television programs to commute to studios to be part of panel discussions and interviews, most journalists had to work remotely due to the restrictions brought on by the pandemic. Some journalists, aided by home studios and equipped with basic gadgets, hosted their shows from home. Relying on video conferencing, telephone and other communications technologies, some print media journalists equally did stories and remotely filed them to their editors for publication.

The new routines are unlikely to depart the media environment. Some have argued that the ability to work remotely does not necessarily compromise quality or productivity (Hickman and Robison 2020; Ozimek 2020) if the requisite gatekeeping and backgrounding are in place. Educational institutions must play a part. The institutional change theory alludes that educational institutions inexorably engage with their surroundings as they prepare students to work in various economic sectors and as businesses look to them for value (Huerta and Zuckerman 2009). As a result, they are impacted or constrained by societal cultural standards as they strive for social acceptance. For them to take advantage of the opportunities and to still uphold high journalistic standards, trainee journalists require some level of exposure, insights and expertise to do depth reporting and to thrive in the media space amidst the evolving work cultures.

The dwindling newsrooms and some factors accounting for it

There are several factors that have combined to create a difficult environment for traditional news organizations, and many are struggling to find sustainable business models that will allow them to continue to produce quality journalism. But the general state of the economy is one of the most significant variables influencing media

landscapes in Africa, as I found in recent studies that I have been involved in (e.g. Schiffrin, Clifford, and Adjin-Tettey 2022). Even before the COVID-19 outbreak, the commercial media paradigm was less developed in African nations than it was in the Global North.

Historically, the state and foreign donors have disproportionately contributed to the support of the media in Africa (Krüger 2022). It has been estimated that about $650 million is allocated to media development in developing nations each year (Myers 2014). With the rise of digital platforms and their increasing popularity, leading to a shift in consumer behavior in favor of online sources, another funding stream of media organizations—advertising—has also nearly dried out. A new trend that I have also observed is that corporate and commercial organizations who allocate some of their budgets to advertising now prefer to invest more in digital and influencer marketing and advertising. This is because most influencers target certain audiences, and as consumers choose to follow influencers with similar demographic with their chosen influencers (Campbell and Farrell 2020), social media influencers are more likely to reach their target audience (Taylor 2009). Hence, media organizations also now have major competition to contend with outside of their domain, as individual content creators are now in competition with media organizations for advertising money. The larger consequence is that the traditional business models of journalism are failing, partly resulting from a major digital disruption.

However, because quality journalism comes at a cost, a decline in revenue affects not only the bottom line of news organizations but also their ability to do in-depth reporting and compelling programming that has social impact. As it stands now, struggling media organizations must produce more quality journalism with fewer resources for a fragmenting audience. The financial instability of news organizations has equally led to declines in staff intake, reducing poor work conditions, lay-offs and closures as newsrooms struggle to make ends meet.

Traditional news outlets must work to uphold their credibility and provide accurate and unbiased reporting on complex problems. This is because a decrease in trust in the news media is correlated with perceptions of misinformation and disinformation (Hameleers, Brosius, and de Vreese 2022), which media organizations must also contend with. Public perceptions of declining levels of trust in journalism have emerged from multiple sources, including Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2020; the Afrobarometer surveys; the Edelman Trust Barometer and the Gallup Confidence in Institutions surveys. An increasing number of academic quantitative studies into audience perceptions of trust in news have also identified similar trends (Newman et al. 2019; Hanitzsch, Van Dalen, and Steindl 2018; Fletcher and Park 2017; Newman and Fletcher 2017). Unfortunately for news organizations, online misinformation (even if it is not propagated by mainstream media) could potentially lead to lower trust in mainstream media (Ognyanova et al. 2020).

Industry and practitioners have argued that increasing trust is good for the financial sustainability of the news media. Thus, trust is an economic imperative as much as a journalistic goal, as individuals who place more value on variables connected to trust are more interested in news, more inclined to pay for it, more likely to download news apps, and more likely to share and promote news with their peers. Teaching students to conduct extensive fact-checking on assignments is one method to ensure trust and reliability. In

the past few years, I have instructed undergraduate students in a compulsory Media and Information Literacy course, and I have observed students (even those who were not studying journalism) develop fact-checking awareness and ethical information usage. If they choose to pursue a career in journalism, this will undoubtedly have a beneficial impact on the practice.

Recommendations

How journalism education can respond to the demands of the changing times

Journalism programs have responsibilities beyond just training the next generation of journalists. Training institutions must contribute to maintaining and enhancing the health of the information systems around them in a much broader context. Students will perform better on the job market and fulfil journalism's democratic role if they are given the necessary tools to be responsive to emerging trends (Örnebring 2019), particularly at such a time when global sustainability itself is precarious. The obligation is especially pressing in African nations because there may be fewer organizations capable of fulfilling this duty. To help with the answers being sought to make journalism responsive to the current shifts within the media landscape and to ensure a healthy and relevant media, I suggest various interventions that could result from curriculum creation, training, participation in open discourse on media-related issues and research in journalism.

Dealing with revenue loss to digital giants through education

My first recommendation is for students to be introduced to recent research on journalism sustainability and financing strategies so they can fairly assess the viability condition of media organizations. Based on that knowledge, they must then be engaged in exploring other potential viable media financing models. This could be in the form of seminar-type sessions that give the opportunity for them to brainstorm the issues. Worthy ideas could then be proposed to and experimented by media organizations with the involvement of faculty and students.

In addition, with the support of empirical data, journalism education can help to develop strategies for legacy media to effectively use technology to reach audiences and ultimately attract revenue. Student- and faculty-led practical and empirical initiatives may help in innovatively devising viable revenue streams for media organizations. With empirical data at hand, it may be possible to determine which kind of content are most likely to garner financial support from viewers, as well as what sorts of news and information consumers prefer and how this may be reflected in obtaining financing. Academic institutions can team up with industry to conduct relevant research in these areas to support the work of media organizations.

Given that digital is a key driver of revenue for media in contemporary times, strong digital storytelling capabilities, audience engagement, research and the flexibility to innovate are skills education and training cannot ignore. Curriculum must thus give room for the exploration of the role of technology in the media industry. Students must be given the chance to embrace digital skills and innovation. They must also be exposed to strong digital storytelling skills for telling complex data-driven stories in formats that are accessible to consumers of digital content. They must also be exposed to the nuances of

audience engagement. One way I achieved this for the last Media Management course I taught was to invite a digital media strategist to take students through digital content creation, management and how to foster audience engagement. This gave insights that I could not have provided as an academic and whipped up students' interest to take advantage of the opportunities the digital present.

Where journalism schools are constrained, students must still be exposed to these new trends in journalism and the idea of the converged newsroom, which require collaborations and flexibility to thrive. Journalism students must be encouraged to think critically and creatively about new approaches to journalism in the converged newsroom that require extensive audience engagement and the ability to tell complex stories in simple forms on digital platforms. Thus, students must be trained to not only write for mainstream media but in a converged media space, where there is also the potential to derive revenue from.

Incorporation of regular field projects into course offerings will afford students the opportunity to turn their knowledge into innovations that media organizations could directly benefit from. Admittedly, many journalism programs have a mandatory requirement for internships with media organizations over a period. However, internships may have to be looked at from another perspective. If there is the opportunity, students must be attached to actual journalists who work in converged newsrooms as mentees and not just to news organizations. Then, as a means of putting whatever ideas and innovations they may have come up with to the test, they must be required to creatively contribute to the work of the journalists. The work students do with their mentors should be able to earn them some credits as a source of motivation. This might be useful in cases where news organizations do not have formal spaces to accommodate interns. Academics must also create room for a period they can spend in media organizations to, through "faculty internships", explore applicability of their research recommendations in media organizations and to, also importantly, get abreast with new trends in media organizations and to explore ways they could reflect the new trends in their teaching and practical tasks assigned to students. This could take the form of sabbatical or paid for (compulsory) periodic attachments with media organizations.

Dealing with infodemic and dwindling trust in mainstream media through education.
Whereas the traditional ideal of journalism calls for journalists to serve as independent sources and deliver the news in a factual, objective manner, the democratization of communications technologies has resulted in a proliferation of citizen and activist journalists as well as those who, armed with all kinds of ulterior motives, openly and/or purposefully disinform media and attempt to promote that perspective through propaganda disguised as news, leading to the proliferation of citizen and activist journalists. Additionally, there are media consumers that spread false information to others by sharing news and information they receive while being deceived by the hidden agendas of content producers.

With the current state of disorder in the information ecosystem, credible news organizations now must compete with "illegitimate" actors within the information ecology. But given the required training and skills, journalism graduates have an opportunity to turn this around. Educational institutions must therefore include media and information literacy modules into their course offerings to allow students to begin to think critically and evaluate the credibility and accuracy of information. With these abilities, students

and graduates will be able to launch independent fact-checking businesses. While this creates employment for them, it also helps contribute to sanitizing the information space, allowing credible journalism to thrive. Additionally, graduates who work for news organizations can use their knowledge to support their organizations, boosting the reputation of the news organizations in the process.

Even as efforts are made to include new information and abilities, journalism education must not lose sight of the importance of underlining the profession's ethics. Therefore, it is advised that media law training and ethics courses be kept apart, contrary to the case in many journalism programs. This will assist institutions in giving ethical issues in journalism the necessary attention.

Dealing with evolving work cultures in the journalism through education

It has been observed that a lopsided emphasis is placed on journalism modules that enable trainees to assume journalistic duties rather than management roles. But I believe that by incorporating entrepreneurship into media management courses, for example, journalism education can play a part in resolving legacy media's income loss to digital giants and foster an understanding of and critical analysis of the business models and revenue streams of digital media. An advantage of incorporating entrepreneurship into journalism curriculum is that in this age of digital content creation, graduates can initiate viable digital only media start-ups rather than wait for employment from formal media organizations. The understanding of management and the business side of the media will afford them the knowledge they need to make the best out of the content they share with their audiences and to keep their businesses running.

Additionally, not all students benefit from the media management modules that are currently offered to them because such courses are typically offered as elective courses. However, because the success of media businesses heavily depends on the actions of numerous stakeholders of the media as an institution (Adjin-Tettey et al. 2021; Yeboah-Banin and Adjin-Tettey 2023), it is essential that journalists not only be trained to take up journalistic roles but also be trained to function as entrepreneurial managers in a precarious media ecosystem. This will enable them to contribute to sound management practices and drive innovations that will guarantee growth and development, resulting in viable media businesses.

Besides, students must also be trained in administrative duties, such as memo writing and proposal and grant writing. By honing their grant writing skills, for instance, graduates (on behalf of media organizations) can respond to requests for financing for specific types of stories and programming that address the needs of the communities and audiences they serve.

Responding to Open AI through education

The emergence of Open AI and other advanced technologies is fast changing the face of journalism, creating new opportunities and challenges for journalism institutions. While they present opportunities to innovate and improve the journalism industry, it also important for institutions to be mindful of the ethical and social implications of their use.

Journalism institutions have an obligation to stay up-to-date with the latest developments in Open AI and related technologies. They must know that their students are utilizing AI technologies and may attempt to use the technologies to save time and effort,

affecting their creativity and ingenuity in the long run. Once educators acquaint them-selves with the terrain, they will be able to anticipate the impact of these technologies on the industry and adapt their strategies accordingly. This demands that institutions invest in training of faculty on how to use the tools.

It has been found that AI tools are beneficial to journalism in several ways. They are helpful in carrying out repetitive tasks, such as data analysis and fact-checking. Journalism institutions can ethically experiment with such tools as it could help free up students to focus on more complex and high-value tasks, such as reporting, editing, and storytelling. Even when restrictions are in place, there must be strategies to reduce students' reliance on AI technologies because there is no guarantee that they will still not break the rules. As a result, educators must pose questions that encourage autonomous thought as well as practical and in-class assignments like writing to prevent the use of AI technology for tasks. Implementing writing that is focused on reflections, emphasizing the drafting process, and encouraging personalized work is a good strategy that could be adopted. But, perhaps, most importantly, institutions must have policies and ethical guidelines in place that stipulates what is allowed and what is not when it comes to open artificial intel-ligence and learning. Such policies must be included in each curriculum.

As a way of directly contributing to industry, journalism institutions could leverage the institutional structures they have and form partnerships with technology companies to develop new tools and approaches that can tackle emerging challenges in the industry. Potentially, solutions could be found for problematic areas such as misinformation, fake news, monetization of content, audience data collection and analysis as well as (big) data storytelling to contribute to investigative journalism.

Effectively responding to the new modes of learning

Online and blended learning in a limited-resource environment could be harnessed through peer-to-peer learning, which will then reduce the burden on educators and create a more inclusive learning environment. Training institutions can also develop learn-ing content that is optimized for low-data usage, such as text-based materials and audio recordings. This will help ensure that students can access learning material even if they have limited Internet connectivity. Institutions may also consider using open-source soft-ware for the learning platform and other tools, which can be more affordable and adapt-able to limited resource environments. Academic institutions can also collaborate among themselves and create shared digital resources that have the potential to address current trends in the media. Academics can consider establishing a collaborative learning environment to discuss how they are responding to current developments. Such plat-forms provide co-learning opportunities.

Action-oriented research

It is important to understand what skill and expertise media employers and managers require. Regular industry research to ascertain what skills media managers want for various roles in the media could help in that regard. Beyond that, academic institutions must work closely with media organizations to tailor their content to meet the needs of industry. Faculty could familiarize themselves with the trends and skills requirements of industry by also taking up internship positions when they have the opportunity to do so. Because those in industry may also need to obtain knowledge from academic

institutions, it is crucial for academic institutions to provide flexible short courses that relate to industry needs and cover industry gaps in order to ensure a sanitized media environment. To help guide decisions on course offerings, detailed research on the relationship between media outlets and journalism schools is also required.

Training institutions' community engagement activities must include engaging social justice fieldwork approaches and post-research engagements. Creating spaces for discourse about studies conducted on the media as part of the research and community engagement agenda of journalism departments is one way to achieve this. Another is to produce action-centered, easy-to-read policy briefs to promote the adoption of recommendations pertinent to the media sector.

Conclusion

Grounded in the institutional change theory, this paper examined the rapidly changing environment for journalism practice and education using the autoethnography method of inquiry and made recommendations for how journalism training schools could respond to them. The recommendations outlined above may seem simplistic but there is evidence to suggest that there are gaps that need to be filled. For example, not all journalism training institutions have institutionalized post-research engagements, which are tied to their community engagement initiatives. Besides, although it may seem that modules have been reimagined to include relevant topics that speak to contemporary times, such responses are not adequate to meet the demands of the times. Therefore, it is anticipated that adapting the aforementioned as modules rather than topics in modules will produce better outcomes than what is currently being observed.

It is hoped that the recommendations would be tested through qualitative and quantitative empirical research and then evaluated to determine how responsive journalism schools have been.

Disclosure statement

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