

The Role of Citizen Journalism on the Rising of Public Awareness in the Kurdistan Region Government-Iraq

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Abstract : The development of new technology in recent years has offered ordinary people various online digital platform tools and internet access to provide news stories, information, and subjects of public interest in the Kurdistan Region Government-Iraq (KRI). This shifting aspect has offered more chances for ordinary people to engage with other individuals on many issues in order to discuss and argue matters relating to their everyday lives. The key purpose of this research project will examine the role of citizen journalism in the increase of public awareness in the Kurdish community in the KRI; particularly, citizen journalism provides a new opportunity for ordinary people to raise their voices about problems and public matters in the KRI. The sample of this research project encompasses ordinary people who use social media platforms as sources of information and news concerning the KRI government policy. In the research project, the focus is on the ordinary people who are interacting with the blogs, posts, and footage that are produced by citizen journalism. The questionnaire was sent to more than 1,000 participants in the Kurdish community; this aspect produces statistically acceptable numbers to obtain a significant result for this research project. The sampling process is mainly based on the survey method in this study. The online questionnaire form includes many sections, which are divided into four key sections. The first section contains socio-demographic questions, including gender, age, and level of education. The research project applied the survey method in order to gather data and information surrounding the role of citizen journalism in increasing awareness of individuals in the Kurdish community. For this purpose, the researcher designed a questionnaire as the primary tool for the data collection process from ordinary people who use social media as a source of news and information. During the research project, online questionnaires were mailed in two ways - via Facebook and email - to participants in the Kurdish community, and this questionnaire looked for answers to questions from ordinary people, such as to what extent citizen journalism helps users to obtain information and news about public affairs and government policy. The research project found that citizen journalism has an essential role in increasing awareness of the Kurdish community, especially mainstream journalism has helped ordinary people to raise their voices in the KRI. Furthermore, citizen journalism carries more advantages as digital sources of news, footage, and information related to public affairs. This study provides useful tools to fore the news stories that are unreachable to professional journalists in the KRI.

Keywords : citizen journalism, public awareness, demonstration and democracy, social media news

Conference Title : ICDMPICIMC 2022 : International Conference on Digital Media Processing for Immersive Communications and Immersive Media Compression

Conference Location : London, United Kingdom

Conference Dates : September 22-23, 2022