

Digital Safety of Journalists in Lagos State

**Idris Mohammed¹, Omolara Oluwabusayo Akin-Odukoya², Omotola Ogunbola³,
Adebayo Aisha Omoronike⁴, Muhammad Ridwan⁵**

¹Department of Mass Communication, Usmanu Danfodio University, Sokoto-Nigeria

^{2,3,4}Department of Mass Communication, Caleb University, Imota, Lagos, Nigeria

⁵Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

Abstract

Digital safety for journalists in Lagos state is a complex and pressing issue that requires urgent attention. With technological advancements, Lagos state journalists have embraced digital tools to disseminate information to their audience. However, this has also exposed them to digital threats, such as cyber-attacks, online harassment, and surveillance. The study aims to examine the magnitude of online attacks on journalists in Lagos State, explore the online threats to journalists in Lagos State, and determine the consequences of online attacks on journalists in Lagos State. The study employed the Protection Motivation Theory (PMT). A positivist approach to research design was adopted, which informed the choice of survey method to generate data. A stratified sampling technique was adopted, which deals with dividing the population of a study into groups called strata or stratum. Thus, this study stratified the population into television, radio, and newspapers from journalists in the media organizations selected for the study. This study's data collection instrument is a questionnaire; frequency and percentage were used to present the data. The study concludes that Nigeria lacks adequate development, which is not farfetched as it is seen in our society; the carious impediment to this development, both politically and in all spheres, is caused by corruption manifested in different forms at different levels as identified in the course of the study: bribery, nepotism, embezzlement and misappropriation of funds. This has led to a lack of political participation and public trust in the government and weakened democratic institutions.

Keywords

Cyber attacks; Digital safety;
Digital threats; Journalism and
Online harassment



I. Introduction

The period between 2000 and 2012 was marked by significant changes in the media landscape in Nigeria, including Lagos state. This period saw the emergence of digital tools and platforms that enabled journalists to reach a wider audience and report on previously inaccessible issues. However, it also exposed journalists to new digital threats, including cyber-attacks and online surveillance. One of the main challenges facing journalists in Lagos state during this period was the need for more awareness about digital safety. Many journalists were unaware of the risks of using digital tools, making them vulnerable to online attacks. According to a report by the Media Rights Agenda, many journalists need to gain knowledge about digital security and take adequate measures to protect themselves (Abba et al., 2021). This lack of awareness was particularly prevalent in Lagos state, where many journalists worked in small media organizations with limited resources and access to training opportunities.

Another challenge faced by journalists in Lagos during this period was the government's use of digital surveillance to monitor journalists' activities. The Nigerian government was known to use digital surveillance to monitor the activities of journalists and other activists during this period (Aliyu et al., 2023). This created a culture of fear and self-censorship among journalists, who feared being targeted by the government for their reporting. The impact of digital threats on journalists' work during this period was significant. When journalists were targeted with cyber-attacks or online harassment, they were less likely to report on sensitive issues or investigate corruption in government and other powerful institutions. This had a chilling effect on free speech and undermined the role of journalism as a watchdog of society (Andover & Pate, 2021).

Several measures were taken to address the issue of digital safety for journalists in Lagos during this period. First, media organizations provided training and resources to journalists on how to use digital tools securely. This included training on password management, encryption, and other security measures. Second, journalists were encouraged to use secure communication tools such as PGP and TOR to protect their communications from surveillance. Third, civil society groups and media organizations advocated for the government to respect the right to freedom of expression and to stop using digital surveillance to monitor journalists. The period from 2013 till date has seen an increase in the use of digital tools by journalists in Lagos state, which has led to an increase in the risks they face online. Journalists in Lagos state have reported experiencing various forms of digital threats, including cyber attacks, online harassment, and surveillance (Andover, 2019). This essay will discuss digital safety for journalists in Lagos state from 2013 till date by examining the challenges they face, the impact of digital threats on their work, and the measures that can be taken to address the problem.

One of the main challenges facing journalists in Lagos state during this period is the increase in cyber-attacks and online harassment. According to the International Press Centre, cyber attacks against journalists in Nigeria increased by 56% between 2016 and 2017 (Andover et al., 2023). This increase in cyber attacks has been attributed to journalists' growing use of digital tools and the lack of awareness about digital safety. The impact of digital threats on journalists' work during this period has been significant. Cyber attacks and online harassment have led to self-censorship among journalists, afraid of being targeted for their reporting. This has undermined the role of journalism as a watchdog of society and has had a chilling effect on free speech.

Several measures can be taken to address the digital safety issue for journalists in Lagos during this period. First, media organizations should provide journalists with training and resources on using digital tools securely (Andover, 2018). This can include training on password management, encryption, and other security measures. Second, journalists should be encouraged to use secure communication tools such as Signal and ProtonMail to protect their communications from surveillance. Third, civil society groups and media organizations should continue to advocate for the government to respect the right to freedom of expression and to stop using digital surveillance to monitor journalists. In conclusion, to date, there has been an increase in the risks faced by journalists in Lagos state due to the growing use of digital tools. Cyber attacks, online harassment, and surveillance have made it difficult for journalists to carry out their work freely and without fear.

1.1 Problem Statement

Digital safety for journalists in Lagos state is a complex and pressing issue that requires urgent attention. With technological advancements, Lagos state journalists have embraced digital tools to disseminate information to their audience. However, this has also exposed them to digital threats, such as cyber-attacks, online harassment, and surveillance. One of the main challenges facing journalists in Lagos state is the need for more awareness about digital safety. Many journalists are unaware of the risks associated with using digital tools, making them vulnerable to online attacks. According to a report by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), many African journalists need to gain awareness of digital safety and be trained to use digital tools securely (Andover et al., 2022). This lack of awareness is particularly prevalent in Lagos state, where many journalists work in small media organizations with limited resources and access to training opportunities.

Another challenge facing journalists in Lagos state is the government's increasing use of digital surveillance to monitor journalists' activities. The Nigerian government has been known to use digital surveillance to monitor the activities of journalists and other activists (Garba & Msughter, 2024a). This has created a culture of fear and self-censorship among journalists, who fear being targeted by the government for their reporting. The impact of digital threats on journalists' work cannot be overstated. When journalists are targeted with cyber-attacks or online harassment, they are less likely to report on sensitive issues or investigate corruption in government and other powerful institutions. This has a chilling effect on free speech and undermines the role of journalism as a watchdog of society. According to a survey by the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ), 73% of journalists in sub-Saharan Africa have experienced digital threats while on the job, and 85% say these threats have impacted their work (Garba & Msughter, 2024b).

Several measures can be taken to address the issue of digital safety for journalists in Lagos state. First, media organizations should provide training and resources to journalists on how to use digital tools securely. This can include training on password management, encryption, and other security measures. Second, journalists should be encouraged to use secure communication tools such as Signal and ProtonMail to protect their communications from surveillance. Third, the government should be held accountable for using digital surveillance. As a result, this study is interested in looking at digital safety and its effectiveness in Lagos state. The study's objectives are to examine the magnitude of online attacks on journalists in Lagos State, explore the online threats to journalists in Lagos State, and find out the consequences of the online attacks on journalists in Lagos State.

1.2 Understanding Digital Safety

Digital safety is a multifaceted concept that encompasses various aspects of safeguarding individuals and organizations from online threats, risks, and harm in the digital realm. Protecting personal and sensitive information, ensuring cybersecurity, and promoting responsible digital behavior. Digital safety is increasingly important in our interconnected world, where individuals and organizations rely on digital technologies for communication, business, and personal activities. Cybersecurity is a fundamental aspect of digital safety, encompassing measures and practices to protect computer systems, networks, and data from unauthorized access, breaches, and cyber-attacks. This involves employing technologies, policies, and best practices to safeguard digital assets (Hile et al., 2023).

Digital safety also relates to the protection of personal and sensitive information. It ensures that data is collected, processed, and stored in compliance with relevant data protection regulations (Idris & Msughter, 2023). Educating individuals about responsible online behavior, including recognizing and avoiding online threats such as phishing, cyberbullying, and scams, is crucial to digital safety (Kurfi et al., 2021). Digital safety is intertwined with digital literacy, as individuals need to understand how to navigate and make informed choices in the digital world. Digital literacy empowers users to critically assess the credibility of online information and understand the consequences of their digital actions.

Digital safety is vital for protecting individuals from identity theft, online harassment, and privacy invasions. It ensures users can interact online without fearing safety (Livingstone et al. in Maikaba & Msughter, 2019). Organizations must prioritize digital safety to protect data, maintain customers' trust, and ensure business continuity. Cybersecurity breaches can have severe financial and reputational consequences (Maradun et al., 2021). Adhering to legal and ethical principles is an integral part of digital safety. Failure to do so can result in legal repercussions, as seen in data breach cases (Mojaye & Msughter, 2022).

Digital safety has broader societal implications, including the potential for shaping online discourse, public opinion, and political events. Ensuring digital safety can contribute to a healthier and more secure digital society (Msughter, 2022). In summary, digital safety is a multifaceted concept that encompasses cybersecurity, data privacy, responsible online behavior, and digital literacy. It has far-reaching implications for individuals and organizations, legal and ethical considerations, and the overall societal impact of the digital realm.

1.3 Journalism in Lagos

Journalism in Lagos State, Nigeria, represents a dynamic and vital part of the media landscape in the region. Lagos, as the economic and cultural hub of Nigeria, plays a significant role in shaping the country's media industry. This conceptual discussion will explore the critical aspects of journalism in Lagos State, including its historical development, challenges, and role in Nigerian society. Journalism in Lagos State has a rich historical background. Nigeria's first newspaper, the "Iwe Irohin," was established in Lagos in 1859, during the colonial period. Since then, Lagos has been a hub for media activities, with numerous newspapers, radio stations, and television channels operating in the state (Msughter, 2023).

The media landscape in Lagos State is diverse, with a mix of print, broadcast, and online media outlets. Prominent newspapers like "The Punch," "The Guardian," and "Vanguard" have their headquarters in Lagos. Additionally, Lagos is home to many television and radio stations, such as Channels TV and Radio Lagos. Ensuring ethical journalism is a challenge due to pressures from political and business interests. Maintaining independence and objectivity can be difficult in this environment.

Many media outlets face financial constraints, impacting their ability to invest in quality journalism. Advertisers sometimes wield undue influence, affecting editorial decisions. Journalists in Lagos State may encounter safety concerns, especially when reporting on sensitive issues or corruption. Threats and harassment are not uncommon. Nigeria has regulations that can limit press freedom. The Nigerian Press Council and the National Broadcasting Commission have oversight roles, which can raise concerns about freedom of the press.

Journalism in Lagos State plays a crucial role in Nigerian society. It serves as Nigerians' primary news source and information, contributing to informed public discourse. Journalists in Lagos State act as watchdogs, holding government officials and institutions accountable for their actions and decisions. Journalism often highlights issues marginalized communities face in Lagos, helping raise awareness and advocate for change. Lagos media provides a platform for public debate and discussion on various topics, from politics and economics to culture and entertainment. Journalism in Lagos State, Nigeria, has a rich history, a diverse media landscape, and a crucial role in informing and engaging society. However, it also faces ethical, economic, and regulatory challenges.

1.4 Digital Safety and Journalist in Lagos

Given the region's prominence and vibrant media landscape, digital safety is paramount for journalists in Lagos, Nigeria. Digital safety refers to the measures and practices that protect individuals, especially journalists, from online threats, surveillance, and risks when using digital technologies. In Lagos, a city known for its diverse media and cultural scene, digital safety ensures that journalists can carry out their work effectively and safely.

Journalists in Lagos should be well-versed in cybersecurity practices to protect themselves and their sources from cyber-attacks and data breaches. This includes using secure communication channels and encryption technologies (Msughter, 2023). Ensuring digital safety also entails safeguarding personal privacy. Journalists should be cautious about sharing personal information online, as privacy invasions can lead to harassment or threats.

Journalists must securely handle sensitive data and protect their sources. This includes practices such as secure file storage and secure data transmission. Discerning and reporting on disinformation and fake news is essential for journalists in Lagos. They should have the digital literacy to identify and address online falsehoods (Msughter, 2024). Like the rest of Nigeria, Lagos has regulatory constraints that can limit digital freedom. Journalists may face legal challenges, such as defamation or spreading fake news.

There are concerns about digital surveillance in Lagos, especially regarding the surveillance of journalists by state or non-state actors (Ugwu in Abba et al., 2021). Journalists in Lagos often face online harassment, including threats, cyberbullying, and defamation. Digital safety measures must address these challenges. Many media outlets in Lagos, especially smaller ones, may not have the necessary resources to invest in robust digital safety measures, leaving journalists vulnerable. Digital safety is a critical consideration for journalists operating in Lagos, Nigeria. While digital technologies offer numerous advantages for journalism, they also present challenges related to cybersecurity, privacy, and online harassment. Journalists must be well-equipped with the knowledge and tools to navigate these challenges while ensuring digital safety.

1.5 Cause of digital safety for journalist in Lagos

Digital safety concerns for journalists in Lagos, Nigeria, stem from local and global factors. As a central media hub in Africa, Lagos experiences unique challenges that impact the digital safety of journalists.

1. Online harassment and threats: Online harassment, including trolling, cyberbullying, and threats, is a significant cause of digital safety concerns for journalists in Lagos. Journalists often face intimidation and harassment on social media platforms, which can have a chilling effect on their work.

2. Political pressure: Journalists in Lagos frequently encounter political pressures, including censorship, government surveillance, and legal actions. Reporting on sensitive political topics can result in backlash, making digital safety paramount.
3. Inadequate Digital Literacy: Lack of digital literacy and awareness of cybersecurity best practices can leave journalists vulnerable to cyber threats. Journalists may need to be equipped to recognize or respond to digital safety risks effectively.
4. Resource restraint: Many media organizations in Lagos, particularly smaller ones, may need more financial resources to invest in robust digital safety measures. This can leave journalists without the necessary tools and training to protect themselves online.
5. Ethical dilemmas

Balancing digital safety with ethical responsibilities can be challenging. Journalists may need to protect their sources while ensuring the public's right to information, leading to ethical dilemmas regarding data security.

1.6 Efficiency of Digital Safety for Journalists in Lagos

Efficiency in digital safety measures is of paramount importance for journalists in Lagos. A well-implemented and efficient digital safety framework enables journalists to carry out their work effectively and securely in an increasingly digital and interconnected world. Efficient cybersecurity measures are essential for protecting journalists in Lagos from digital threats (Ajaegbu & Agboola, 2019). When cybersecurity is efficient, security protocols, encryption, and access controls are correctly implemented to safeguard journalists' digital assets and communications. This efficiency ensures the confidentiality and integrity of their data.

Digital safety efficiency involves promptly detecting and responding to threats (Pfanner, 2018). Timely detection can help mitigate the impact of cyber attacks or online harassment, and efficient responses can prevent further harm. This efficiency minimizes disruptions to journalists' work. Efficiency in digital safety also involves providing journalists with the necessary training and digital literacy (Akinfeleye, 2016). Well-trained journalists are more adept at recognizing and mitigating digital threats. Digital literacy ensures that journalists can navigate the digital landscape effectively and securely.

Efficiency is also reflected in the collaboration among journalists, media organizations, and relevant stakeholders (Adegoke, 2018). Sharing information about emerging threats and best practices for digital safety can enhance the overall safety of journalists in Lagos. Collaboration can lead to efficient responses to digital safety challenges. Efficiency in digital safety includes allocating financial and technical resources to ensure that journalists have the necessary tools and technology to protect themselves (Oloyede & Usifoh, 2017). Adequate resources allow journalists to implement efficient digital safety measures, reducing vulnerabilities.

Efficiency in digital safety also involves ethical considerations, such as balancing the need for digital safety with the public's right to information (Orimolade, 2020). An efficient approach ensures that ethical dilemmas are addressed effectively, protecting both journalists and the public's interests. In summary, the efficiency of digital safety measures is critical in safeguarding journalists in Lagos. It encompasses effective cybersecurity, timely threat detection and response, training and digital literacy, collaboration, resource allocation, and ethical considerations. An efficient digital safety framework is essential for journalists to work securely and fulfill their role in a democratic society.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

The study employed the Protection Motivation Theory (PMT), a psychological theory developed to understand and explain how people assess threats and decide on protective behaviors. It was initially proposed by Ronald W. Rogers in 1975 and has since been extended and adapted by various researchers. PMT posits that individuals' motivation to adopt protective measures is influenced by their perceptions of a threat and their belief in the effectiveness of those protective measures. The Protection Motivation Theory has been applied to various health-related contexts, such as understanding individuals' responses to health threats, risk communication, and promoting health behaviors. It provides valuable insights into the psychological processes that underlie decision-making related to protective behaviors and has been influential in the development of health communication campaigns and interventions aimed at motivating individuals to adopt healthier lifestyles or take preventive actions. The theory includes several key components, including threat appraisal and coping appraisal.

Threat Appraisal: This aspect of PMT focuses on how individuals perceive a threat's severity and Susceptibility. It consists of two main factors: **Perceived Severity:** This refers to an individual's perception of how serious the consequences of a threat or risk could be. The more severe the perceived consequences, the more motivated someone is to take protective actions. **Perceived Susceptibility** involves an individual's belief about their vulnerability to the threat. If someone believes they are highly susceptible to a threat, they are more likely to engage in protective behaviors (Onyejelem & Andover, 2024a).

Coping Appraisal: Coping appraisal in PMT addresses how individuals assess the effectiveness and feasibility of their protective behaviors or coping strategies. This appraisal includes two key factors: **Perceived Response Efficacy:** This relates to an individual's belief that a particular protective action or behavior will effectively reduce the threat. If someone believes a specific action successfully mitigates the threat, they are likelier to adopt that behavior. **Perceived Self-Efficacy:** This involves an individual's belief in their ability to perform the recommended protective behaviors. A high level of self-efficacy increases the likelihood that someone will engage in protective actions.

Applying the Protection Motivation Theory (PMT) to the context of digital safety in journalism in Lagos, Nigeria, can help us understand how journalists and media organizations assess threats and decide on protective measures in the digital age. Journalists in Lagos recognize the severity of digital threats to their profession. This includes the potential consequences of cyber attacks, data breaches, online harassment, and misinformation. These threats can damage their credibility, compromise their sources, and pose physical risks. Journalists acknowledge their Susceptibility to digital threats. They know that their online presence, communication, and reporting activities make them potential targets for cyber attacks, hacking attempts, and misinformation campaigns, especially when covering sensitive topics like politics or corruption. Journalists and media organizations in Lagos assess the effectiveness of various protective measures. This includes investing in cybersecurity infrastructure, using encryption tools, conducting digital hygiene training for staff, and fact-checking procedures. When they believe these measures can effectively mitigate digital threats, they are more likely to implement them. Journalists' belief in their ability to implement digital safety measures is crucial. If journalists in Lagos feel confident in their skills to use secure communication tools, recognize phishing attempts, and safeguard their digital assets, they are more likely to adopt protective behaviors (Onyejelem & Andover, 2024b).

Exposure to actual or potential digital threats, such as cyber-attacks on media organizations or online harassment of journalists, can generate fear and motivate protective actions. Fear can prompt journalists to take digital security seriously and seek solutions to mitigate risks. Journalists and media organizations in Lagos respond to protection motivation by implementing various measures to enhance digital safety. These measures include securing their websites, using virtual private networks (VPNs), secure messaging platforms, and conducting regular cybersecurity assessments. Over time, as journalists in Lagos become more informed and experienced in digital safety practices, they adapt their behaviors to protect themselves and their organizations better. This may involve staying updated on emerging threats and continuously improving digital security protocols.

In the context of journalism in Lagos, applying the PMT framework highlights the importance of recognizing digital threats, evaluating the effectiveness of protective measures, and building confidence in digital safety skills. Media organizations and journalists should invest in digital security infrastructure, provide training and resources for their staff, and stay vigilant in the face of evolving digital threats. By doing so, they can enhance their ability to report news accurately and securely in the digital age while safeguarding their professional integrity and the public's right to access reliable information.

Protection Motivation Theory (PMT) has been influential in understanding how individuals assess threats and decide on protective behaviors; it is not without its critics. Some of the criticisms and limitations of PMT include Simplistic Assumptions: Critics argue that PMT's model oversimplifies the decision-making process related to protective behaviors. It assumes that individuals rationally weigh the perceived severity and Susceptibility of a threat against the perceived efficacy of protective actions and their self-efficacy. Decision-making can be more complex and influenced by various cognitive, emotional, and social factors. Neglect of Emotional Factors: PMT primarily focuses on cognitive factors and often neglects the emotional aspects of threat appraisal. Emotions such as fear, anxiety, or anger can play a significant role in motivating protective behaviors but are not fully addressed in theory. Limited Predictive Power: Some critics argue that PMT has limited predictive power and is not consistently supported by empirical research. The theory's ability to accurately predict and explain behavior in real-world contexts has been questioned, with studies yielding mixed results.

Lack of Temporal Consideration: PMT needs to consider the temporal aspect of decision-making explicitly. It assumes that individuals engage in protective behaviors immediately after threat appraisal. In reality, individuals may delay or procrastinate protective actions for various reasons, such as perceived barriers or competing priorities.

II. Research Method

Based on the positivist research design approach, the study used the survey method to generate data. The choice of survey was to get the opinion of the journalistic practice. A census of journalists working in Lagos State was considered for this study. A stratified sampling technique was adopted, which deals with dividing the population of a study into groups called strata or stratum. Thus, this study stratified the population into television, radio, and newspapers from journalists in the media organizations selected for the study. This study's data collection instrument is a questionnaire; frequency and percentage were used to present the data.

III. Results and Discussion

Table 1. Physical attacks are part of the magnitude of online attacks on journalists in Lagos State.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	56	28%	28%	28%
Strongly Agree	144	72%	72%	72%
Disagree	0	0%	0%	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	0%	0%
Undecided	0	0%	0%	0%
Total	200	100%	100%	100%

Source: (Field Survey, 2024).

Table 1 shows that 28% of the respondents agree with the statement, while 72% strongly agree with the statement, 0% of the respondents disagree with the statement, 0% of the respondents strongly disagree with the statement, and 0% of the respondents are undecided about the statement.

Table 2. Cyberbullying is a part of the online threats to journalists in Lagos State

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	70	35%	35%	35%
Strongly Agree	115	57.5%	57.5%	57.5%
Disagree	0	0%	0%	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	0%	0%
Undecided	15	7.5%	7.5%	7.5%
Total	200	100%	100%	100%

Source: (Field Survey, 2024).

Table 2 shows that 35% of the respondents agree with the statement, while 57.5% strongly % disagree, 0% strongly disagree, and 7.5% are undecided.

Table 3. Harassment is a part of the online with eats to journal, lists in Lagos State

	Frequency	Percent	Vaboutid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	50	25%	25%	25%
Strongly Agree	150	75%	75%	75%
Disagree	0	0%	0%	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	0%	0%
Undecided	0	0%	0%	0%
Total	200	100%	100%	100%

Source: (Field Survey, 2024).

Table 3 shows that 25% of the respondents agree with the statement, 75% strongly agree with it, 0% disagree with it, 0% strongly disagree with it, and 0% are undecided.

Table 4. Doxxing is a part of the online threats to journalists in Lagos State

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	47	23.5%	23.5%	23.5%
Strongly Agree	143	71.5%	71.5%	71.5%
Disagree	0	0%	0%	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	0%	0%
Undecided	10	5%	5%	5%
Total	200	100%	100%	100%

Source: (Field Survey, 2024).

Table 4 shows that 23.5% of the respondents agree with the statement, 71.5% strongly agree with it, 0% disagree with it, 0% strongly disagree with it, and 5% are undecided.

Table 5. Hacking is a part of the online threats to journalists in Lagos State

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	66	33%	33%	33%
Strongly Agree	134	67%	67%	67%
Disagree	0	0%	0%	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	0%	0%
Undecided	0	0%	0%	0%
Total	200	100%	100%	100%

Source: (Field Survey, 2024).

Table 5 shows that 33% of the respondents agree with the statement, while 67% strongly agree with it, 0% disagree with it, 0% strongly disagree with it, and 0% are undecided.

Table 6. Online Surveillance is a part of the online threats to journalists in Lagos State

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	47	23.5%	23.5%	23.5%
Strongly Agree	153	76.5%	76.5%	76.5%
Disagree	0	0%	0%	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	0%	0%
Undecided	0	0%	0%	0%
Total	200	100%	100%	100%

Source: (Field Survey, 2024).

Table 6 shows that 23.5% of the respondents agree with the statement, 76.5% strongly agree with it, 0% disagree with it, 0% strongly disagree with it, and 0% are undecided.

Table 7. Intimidation and Self-censorship are consequences of the online attacks on journalists in Lagos State

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	53	26.5%	26.5%	26.5%
Strongly Agree	147	73.5%	73.5%	73.5%
Disagree	0	0%	0%	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	0%	0%
Undecided	0	0%	0%	0%
Total	200	100%	100%	100%

Source: (Field Survey, 2024).

Table 7 shows that 26.5% of the respondents agree with the statement, 73.5% strongly agree with it, 0% disagree with it, 0% strongly disagree with it, and 0% are undecided.

Discussion

The research used questionnaires as an instrument to carry out findings and get data from respondents, which are included in the study data obtained from respondents using the questionnaire are discussed below using the research questions as follows:

What is the magnitude of online attacks on journalists in Lagos State?

Cyberbullying is a part of the online threats to journalists in Lagos State; the data shows that 35% of the respondents agree with the statement, 57.5% strongly agree with the statement, 0% of the respondents disagree with the statement, 0% of the respondents strongly disagree to the statement, and 7.5% of the respondents are undecided to the statement. On the contrary, harassment is a part of the online threats to journalists in Lagos State, as shown in the data, and 25% of the respondents agree with the statement. In comparison, 75% strongly agree with the statement, 0% of the respondents disagree with the statement, 0% strongly disagree disagree with the statement, and 0% are undecided about the statement. Journalists' belief in their ability to implement digital safety measures is crucial. If journalists in Lagos feel confident in their skills to use secure communication tools, recognize phishing attempts, and safeguard their digital assets, they are more likely to adopt protective behaviors (Andover & Pate, 2021).

What are the online threats to journalists in Lagos State?

Doxxing has been a part of the online threats to journalists in Lagos State; the result shows that 23.5% of the respondents agree with the statement, while 71.5% strongly agree with the statement, 0% of the respondents disagree with the statement, 0% of the respondents strongly disagree to the statement, and 5% of the respondents are undecided to the statement. Phishing is a part of the online threats to journalists in Lagos State. Table 4.3.10 shows that

27.5% of the respondents agree with the statement, while 72.5% strongly agree with the statement, 0% of the respondents disagree with the statement, 0% of the respondents strongly disagree with the statement, and 0% of the respondents are undecided about the statement.

What are the consequences of the online attacks on journalists in Lagos State?

Professional implications are consequences of the online attacks on journalists in Lagos State, as most attacks are because of their job title and role. The data shows that 27% of the respondents agree with the statement, 73% strongly agree with the statement, 0% disagree with the statement, 0% strongly disagree with the statement, and 0% undecided about the statement. Timely detection can help mitigate the impact of cyber attacks or online harassment, and efficient responses can prevent further harm. This efficiency minimizes disruptions to journalists' work. Efficiency in digital safety also involves providing journalists with the necessary training and digital literacy (Akinfeleye, 2016).

V. Conclusion

This study examined the digital safety of journalists in Lagos State. Based on the data obtained from the fieldwork, the study concludes that Nigeria lacks adequate development, which is not farfetched as it is seen in our society; the curious impediment to this development, both politically and in all spheres, are caused by corruption manifested in a different form at different levels as identified in the course of the study: bribery, nepotism, embezzlement and misappropriation of funds. This has led to a lack of political participation and public trust in the government and weakened democratic institutions.

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