Assessment of Social Media Digital Image Usage by *Scannews* and *NewsRescue* during the 2015 Presidential Election and its Implication for Professional Practice in Nigeria

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Abstract
The introduction of digital imaging in journalism practice, especially, on social media has provided new opportunities for the integrity of journalism photographs to be questioned. Faked photos are becoming commonplace, and not all the pictures seen on social media platforms are true to their nature. It is against this backdrop that this study examined digital image usage by *Scannews* and *NewsRescue* during the 2015 presidential election campaign in Nigeria. The study focused on the volume of digital image usage, forms, context, intended purpose as well as the implications of displayed images for professional photojournalism in the Nigerian context. Content analysis and survey method were used as the research designs for the study. A sample of 57 published photographs of *Scannews* and *NewsRescue* and 372 journalists constitute the sample size. The study found the forms of digital image techniques used by *Scannews* and *NewsRescue* to include: toning, flatting, changing costumes, cloning and retouching. In addition, images displayed were found to be driven by security consciousness of the aspirants, health ground and corruption. Findings also show that the contexts of digital image usage by *Scannews* and *NewsResue* impede professional virtues of objectivity, accuracy, truthfulness, fairness and balance. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended among others that journalism as a profession should be anchored on five key principles of objectivity, accuracy, truthfulness, fairness and balance, which must be upheld in all published news photographs; and that news photographers should employ journalism canons as yardstick for ethical decisions regarding the use of photographs in their stories.

Keywords: Social Media, Digital Image, Image Usage, Professional Practice, Picture News, Nigerian Journalism

Introduction
The arrival of social media technology has exposed majority of the global population to different interactive platforms where information is exchanged. In the era of advanced technology, social media have continued to gain more popularity and expansion in scope as means of communication. Apart from providing information

about political affiliations, candidates and their party manifestoes, they also provide platforms through which voters relate and interact with one another on electioneering (Sunstein, 2001). This is, however, typical with the March 28th, 2015 Presidential Elections in Nigeria where social media platforms were widely used in the campaigns. The major concern, however, was not how social media platforms were used in the campaign, but, the way photographs were used by some media organisations (like *Scannews* and *NewsRescue*) to convey campaign messages. Photographs which were supposed to be a complete representation of real life situations were altered and manipulated to preconceived notions.

In their various studies, Halstead (2003), Quinn (2004) and Bersak (2006) found that it is not every image on newspaper, magazine pages or the internet that depicts reality. Consequently, digital images with accompanying manipulations have made it possible for images to be doctored without trace. The major cause for worry here is that the issues of integrity, credibility and professionalism in journalism may arise as a result of alterations.

Other researchers (like Berger, 1999; Cass, 1998; Harris, 1991 and Cooper, 1999) have also found that digital technology has changed the face of photography. The technology allows photographers and editors to change any aspect of the image at will without the knowledge of the reader. With tools like digital cameras and programs (such as Photoshop, Corel Paint Shop, Photoscape, PhotoPlus, GNU Image Manipulation Program - GIMP, Picasa and Pixelmator), photographs can be edited to include scenes or people that were not in the initial image, imperfections can be adjusted and people or objects can be removed from the photograph. As the scope and availability of such hardware and software increases, concern for the sanctity of the original image and the truth telling power of the image is being questioned (Cass 1998, Harris 1991 and Cooper 1999).

In the past, photographs were considered to be one of the most powerful and trustworthy media of expression. Photographs were accepted as proofs of evidence in varied fields such as journalism, forensic investigations, military intelligence, scientific research and publications, crime detection and legal proceedings, investigation of insurance claims and medical imaging.

However, in their study on the effect of photo manipulations in journalism, Media Culture (2010) found that the rapid spread of digital manipulation to still and moving images raises issues of truth, deception and journalism integrity. With professionals challenging the ethical boundaries of truth, it creates a potential loss of public trust in visual journalism (Media Culture, 2010). Similarly, Long (1999, p.1) in the National Press Photographers' Association publication states that "one of the major problems we face as photojournalists is the fact that the public is losing faith in us. Readers and viewers no longer believe everything they see, as all images are questioned because the computer has proved that images are malleable, changeable and fluid".

Today, digital images have completely replaced the conventional photographs from every sphere of life. Unfortunately, they seldom enjoy the credibility of their conventional counterparts, as a result of rapid advancements in the field of digital image processing (Mishra and Adhikary, 2013).

The major concern in this study, however, is on photographs usage that tends to communicate a biased message of the editors. Far from symbolic communication or cartoons, photographs that do not depict reality seem to be published on social media without regard for the subjects in the photograph or even minding the integrity and credibility of the journalism profession. This study, in the light of the foregoing, investigates social media digital image usage by *Scannews* and *NewsRescue* during the 2015 presidential election and its implication for professionalism.

Statement of the Problem

Journalism anywhere in the world is guided by professional virtues of truth, objectivity and integrity. These journalistic virtues are also applied to any form of journalism, whether in the print media, broadcast media and/or on the internet (that is online). However, with digitisation, images have been made to lie depicting the bias version of the story the editor wants the readers to see. Consequently, journalism profession is confronted with the problem of the people losing faith in the noble practice, especially, online journalism. The mirage accompanying digital imaging is the fact that readers and viewers no longer believe everything they see, as images are questioned because computer application software has proved that images are malleable, changeable and fluid.

Resulting from the above assertion, several researchers have found that it is not every image published in the newspapers or magazines and/or through internet platforms that depict reality (Fahmy, Fosdick and Johnson, 2005; Berger, 1999; Halstead, 2003; Quinn, 2004; and Bersak, 2006). Consequently, in the digital era where images are easily doctored and use for journalism purposes, researchers have also found that the integrity and credibility of journalism is questioned by the audience when photographs deeply manipulated are displayed for journalism purposes (Cass, 1998; Berger, 1999; Harris, 1999; Quinn, 2004 and Ensenberger, 2007).

Thus, with the presence of digital images in journalism, the disbelief or scepticism from the audience, and the credibility or integrity of journalism pictures which have been questioned in recent times, this study is an assessment of social media digital image usage by *Scannews* and *NewsRescue* during the 2015 Presidential election and its implication on professional practice in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

Generally, this study is an assessment of social media image usage by *Scannews* and *NewsRescue* during the 2015 Presidential election campaigns in Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

i.   find out the volume of digital image usage by *Scannews* and *NewsRescue* during the 2015 Presidential election campaigns in Nigeria;

ii. ascertain the forms of digital image usage during the 2015 Presidential election campaigns in Nigeria;

iii. determine the context of digital image usage during the 2015 Presidential election and the implication to professional journalism practice;

iv. establish the intended purpose of digital image usage during the 2015 presidential election and the implication to professional journalism practice; and

v.   determine journalists' posit ions on what constitute professional usage of digital images.

Conceptual Clarification and Literature Review

Social Media

The term social media was popularised by Chris Shipley in 2004 to describe a new wave of internet innovation that enables users to publish and exchange content online. Social media are Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010).

Obar and Wildman (2015) explained the concept as computer-mediated technologies that allow individuals, companies, NGOs, governments, and other organisations to view, create and share information, ideas, and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks. In the same thinking, Ekeanyanwu and Kalyango (2013, p. 150) argue that "social media could be classified as the ninth Wonder of the world because such media platforms are becoming increasingly connected, interactive, participatory, integrative, community based, ubiquitous, and digital!"

In the context of this study, social media are online platforms (like *Scannews* and *NewsRescue*) where photographs and information are published for public consumption; and social interaction sites (such as Facebook, twitter, WhatsApp, Messenger, 2go, IMO etc.) where messages are developed by the users and also shared by those users.

Wigmore (2015) made a clearer conceptualisation of social media. According to her, social media are the collective of online communications channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. Websites and applications dedicated to forums, microblogging, social networking, social

bookmarking, social curation, and wikis are among the different types of social media. The author further brings out some prominent examples of social media as follows:

i. *Facebook* is a popular free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues.

ii. *Twitter* is a free microblogging service that allows registered members to broadcast short posts called tweets. Twitter members can broadcast tweets and follow other users' tweets by using multiple platforms and devices.

iii. *Google+* (pronounced Google plus) is Google's social networking project, designed to replicate the way people interact offline more closely than is the case in other social networking services. The project's slogan is "Real-life sharing rethought for the web."

iv. *Wikipedia* is a free, open content online encyclopedia created through the collaborative effort of a community of users known as Wikipedians. Anyone registered on the site can create an article for publication; registration is not required to edit articles. Wikipedia was founded in January of 2001.

v. *LinkedIn* is a social networking site designed specifically for the business community. The goal of the site is to allow registered members to establish and document networks of people they know and trust professionally.

vi. *Reddit* is a social news website and forum where stories are socially curated and promoted by site members. The site is composed of hundreds of sub-communities, known as „subreddits'. Each subreddit has a specific topic such as technology, politics or music. Reddit site members, also known as, „redditors', submit content which is then voted upon by other members. The goal is to send well-regarded stories to the top of the site's main thread page.

vii. *Pinterest* is a social curation website for sharing and categorizing images found online. Pinterest requires brief descriptions but the main focus of the site is visual.

Digital Image Manipulation

To begin with, Peterson (2003) defines digital imaging as the art of making digital images using photographs, printed texts or artwork, through the use of digital camera or image machine, or by scanning them as a document. The Cornell University Library Research Department (2003) defines digital photography as electronic snapshots taken of a scene or scanned from documents, such as photographs, manuscripts, printed texts and artwork. On the whole, digital image and digital photography are used interchangeably in this study to mean electronic snapshots taken of a scene or scanned from documents such as photographs, manuscripts, printed texts and artwork.

On the other hand, Digital Image Manipulation (DIM) and Image Alteration are used interchangeably to mean changes or modification done on images using computer programme and software (like Photoshop, Picasa, GIMP, etc.) to produce a contrived

image, often generating new meaning. It is the application of image editing technique to photographs in order to create an illusion or deception in contrast to more enhancement or correction.

Lim (2016) defines photo alteration as an art where ordinary photos are transformed into something alluring, unexpected and totally out of the original context. Hoagland and Bara (2007) assert that, image manipulation is the art of transforming an image to convey what you want, rather than what the original image may have shown. This can be done for artistic reasons, but because of the power of the photograph to show true depictions of reality (and the high regard that people can hold for a picture as evidence), this can also be done for reasons of deceit. The process is sometimes known as airbrushing, after the tools that can be used to achieve the result, or Photo-shopping, after Adobe Photoshop, the most common tool used in the digital age. On the whole, Digital Image Manipulation is simply the art of transforming an image to convey what you want, rather than what the original image may have shown.

Digital Photo Alteration and Pictures of Journalism

Pictures of journalism are unaltered photographs, which give vivid report of what make news for journalism purposes. They are images of people or object which are captured by the press photographer, stringer, and freelance photographer or even downloaded from any technological device (and duly attributed), to give vivid account of an event or serving as complement to the main story (Ogah, 2014). Journalism photographs represent visual storytelling mechanism that a press photographer uses to narrate a story.

Far from journalism, pictures and subject alteration have become trends surrounding photography with the invention of digital technology and/or Photoshop computer software. Digital manipulations of images are relatively easy to accomplish and hard to detect, thus, checking the authenticity of the picture is almost impossible. Over the years, pictures have been looked upon as proof of reality, which means that pictures do not lie. However, Kombol (2008, p. 46) posits that "these days, it is possible that pictures are made to lie." He further maintains that, pictures can be manipulated and twisted to present phenomena that do not exist or events that have never happened.

Corroborating this position, Media Culture (2010) adds that computers are now used as controlling devices, and for digitising and managing visual information. Photos are able to be modified or retouched by computer graphics in software such as Adobe Photoshop to produce a result that is so high in quality that it is almost impossible to tell if the photo has been manipulated. Thus, Media Culture (2010) in their research found that the two prime perpetrators of image manipulation are newspaper photography editors and television news editors. Both forms of media experience the pressure to succumb to entertainment and popularity values, and digital manipulation assists in creating this desired outcome.

The tolerance of enhancement and alteration lies in the integrity of journalists and their dedication to reporting and presenting truth, as well as being accountable for their immediate actions. By exploiting the use of digital manipulation tools, journalists are abusing their power as ambassadors of truth. The problem with digital manipulation is that, it has become so ingeniously smooth that viewers may not even notice that what they are watching has changed. Therefore, it becomes up to the integrity of the programme maker to use virtual imaging in a way that is both responsible and accurate.

The problem here is not with the manipulation for „art‟ photography, but manipulating or tempering with news photos. Apart from accidental changes, which deal with the extraction of useless details so as to enhance but not to alter the photograph. „Once the shutter has been tripped by the photojournalist, and that news moment captured, the photojournalist or the editor has no right to change the content of the photograph in any way, for news, whether good or bad, the public are interested in knowing the truth, since whatever they read, see or hear affect them (Vandivier, 1999, p. 4).

Agreeing with this assertion, Coats and Ramsey (2000) assert that digital manipulation directly affects society in that pictures are ever present phenomena in the world. A lot of communication takes place via pictures; people need to see pictures in order to believe and pictures make the discourse more interesting. Kombol (2008) added that when these pictures are manipulated, it is obvious that people are led in the wrong direction and when the audience is presented with unadulterated truth, they are in a better position to decide. Faulty decisions result from half-truths. Like deception, manipulation of pictures beclouds the reasoning of the audience if they had been told the truth; they might see and think differently.

Consequent on the above, there is growing scepticism about the authenticity of picture. Notwithstanding, as the Parliamentary Committee on Science and Technology (1998) had rightly pointed out, changing the contrast or colour balance of a computer monitor may be considered visual enhancement and is not different from what might be done to an analogue image. However, any alterations which affect the image data, no matter how innocuous, should be treated with caution. Furthermore, the committee maintained that, sharpening the outline of an object is a standard option on image-processing software which usually involves changing the contrast at the edge of the image (e.g. black pixels against grey pixel may become black against white). After sharpening, the object is easier to see, but the image data have been changed. Additionally, cleaning-up unwanted signals that arise from outside interference might also be acceptable, although it would be better to ensure that the imaging system is immune from such signals in the first place.

In essence, apart from mere enhancement of photographs such as; brightness or contrast adjustments, burning and dodging, colour correction, crops due to insufficient layout space and retouching of possible dust and scratches, adding, moving or

removing objects from the original picture is not accepted. Colour change, cropping to alter meaning, change in original orientation and mirroring the image, while not allowed, are fine lines to cross (Webster University Journal, 2000 in Fletcher, 2005).

Writing further on other common practices that pose ethical challenges in photojournalism, Quinn (2014) asserts that the photojournalistic practices that cause most ethical problems in terms of digital manipulation include: colour balancing, cropping, and the dodge-and-burn techniques. Colour balancing requires rendering a match (or the closest thing to a match) in colours in an image to that of the scene that was photographed. Colour balance commonly involves consistently correcting technical flaws (acceptable) and making aesthetic improvements (theoretically unacceptable). Cropping involves reducing an image from its outer edges inward to increase the impact of a prominent item or subject close to the centre of the image.

Finally, the dodge-and-burn technique involves using digital computing tools, such as Adobe Photoshop software, to brighten or darken selected parts of a photograph. Each of the aforementioned practices has ethical implications when the process damages an image‟s truth telling faculty, when it reduces integrity, when it causes or facilitates injustice, and/or when it damages the photojournalist‟s publications, or profession‟s credibility.

Over the past decade, people have periodically expressed concerns about the credibility of news images. The crux, however, has been on the nature of manipulations which make the public to question the integrity of most news photographs, especially on social media. In a situation where the public are sceptical and tend not to believe all they see, it means public trust in the profession is gradually waning. Corroborating, Quinn (2015) asserts that public trust in journalism is waning with each day that passes, but the press‟ role as watchdog is ever more necessary for a thriving democracy. One contribution to this decline in public trust is confusion about photographic integrity. Often for good reason, many people do not believe that the images they see in print news are accurate and honest reflections of news events.

The implication of the above position, however, is that technological advancements tend to have made it much easier for photographers to manipulate digital images for editorial purposes. The issue, however, is that the public may accept and even expect a certain amount of image manipulation as standard practice in advertising and commercial photography because ads may not pretend to depict reality. And images manipulated for artistic purposes pose no ethical problems, either. But this same practice is different with photographs that make news in the society. The major task of photography lies in its relationship with the world, especially when we think of it as a reflection of the world. As such, the three key words people may hold onto when a photograph is seen is „truth‟, „objectivity‟ and „reality‟ (Quinn, 2015).

This may also be a key reason why the public look at journalists as „ambassadors of the truth'.

Writing further on the consequence of image manipulation on photojournalism, Munhoz (2014, p. 210) asserts that "image alteration opens up a range of discursive perspectives for photography. They turn subjectivity and image construction into the main virtues of visual language. However, the indiscriminate use of these alterations, especially by photography professionals, can undermine certainties, forcing us to be cautious and vigilant in relation to the images that surround us".

Substantiating this position, Campbell (2016) posits that the status of the photographic image as a source of information has been questioned since the invention of photography. In response, the credibility of news and documentary photography is conventionally justified in terms of objectivity, where the faithful recording of events and people in front of the lens is said to secure truth. This questioning of photography's status accelerated with the advent of digital technology. From the first days of the digital image revolution, analysts and practitioners have been concerned with challenges to the integrity of the image.

A Welsh photojournalist known for his coverage of the Vietnam War, Griffiths (1999) observed that:

> We are probably the last generation that will accept the integrity of the photograph. Yet the fact that we now live in a world where more than 1.8 billion images are uploaded to social media sites every day suggest people see images as having great value, while at the same time also posing more challenges with regard to the credibility of images (Griffiths, 1999 in Campbell, 2016, p. 2).

Thus, concerns about the credibility of news and documentary images have erupted in debates about manipulation and post-processing of digitally produced photographs. In 2009, the World Press Photo revised its rules to make clear that photographs in the contest could not be altered except in accordance with accepted industry standards. Accordingly, Campbell (2016) posits that it is difficult to comprehensively assess if and how pictures might have been manipulated, but we can have processes that guard against manipulation in two ways. Firstly, a code of ethics can set out best practice for photographers, and it can be backed by the requirement to provide detailed captions that will be reviewed by the fact-checking process. Secondly, digital manipulation which adds, rearranges, reverses, distorts or removes people or objects from within the frame can be prohibited, and that can be backed by the forensic comparison of original camera files with contest or published images. This is the thinking behind the revised World Press Photo Contest rules and procedures and specifically what constitutes unacceptable manipulation.

This study is anchored on the principles of Photojournalism Realism Ethical Model (PREM), developed by Ogah (2014) to assist the photojournalists when confronted with ethical dilemmas. The six components and propositions of the model which every journalism picture must undergo for credible publication are explained as follows:

i. **Photo-Truth:** This is the natural news moment captured by the camera, as the camera shutter allows light into the camera for image(s) to be deposited. The actual event as captured by the camera and the replication of a natural event or scene by the camera into a visible print is what is known as „Photo-Truth'.

ii. **Defining Objective:** This is the purpose or motivation for which a photograph is captured for use. The objective or motive behind the photograph must be clearly determined by the photojournalists and editors. There is need for a clear distinction between the photograph that will be used for „news' from those that will be used for „art' (or profit making). Hence, it is anti-journalism to manipulate or doctored pictures meant for journalism.

iii. **Integrity Placement:** On the third scale of the ethical model, three levels of integrity must be maintained when handling the news images; the photojournalists and editors must maintain the integrity of their subjects (that is the personality (ies) in the photograph), the integrity of the photojournalist himself (not to misguide the public but maintain the truth) and finally, the integrity of photojournalism discipline, bearing in mind what the profession stands for and the standards to which the discipline stand to uphold.

iv. **Credible-Editing:** The fourth ladders of the model set before the photojournalists and editors two types of editing techniques. The accidental editing and the essential editing. The accidental editing conforms to professional standards of making the photographs more readable just like the photograph's text counterparts. Thus, techniques such as cropping of strenuous outer edges, dodging, burning, contrast control and the likes constitute credible and/or accidental editing. On the other hand, essential alteration changes the original meaning of the photograph and should not be engaged by photojournalists. Examples include: addition, subtraction, re-arrangement and other unprofessional manipulation. The photojournalist must only stick to credible editing.

v. **Searching Conscience:** Having captured the photograph which is a news moment, the objective and integrity defined in line with the editing made, it is still pertinent to weigh the captured photographs on the scale of the societal moral standards and that of photojournalism professional standards. Thus, consult your conscience and note that once the shutter is tripped and a news moment captured, that moment must not be violated by any means. Every lie is a lie whether big or small.

vi. **Objective Publication:** This is the last phase of the ethical model. It specifies that, when all the above five steps are followed, it will result in a balance, accurate and objective publication, which is indeed the hallmark of photojournalism. Thus, the basis of photojournalism is to give accurate and comprehensive report without twisting the truth. Below is the Photojournalism Realism Ethical Model:

Figure 1: Photojournalism Realism Ethical Model (PREM)
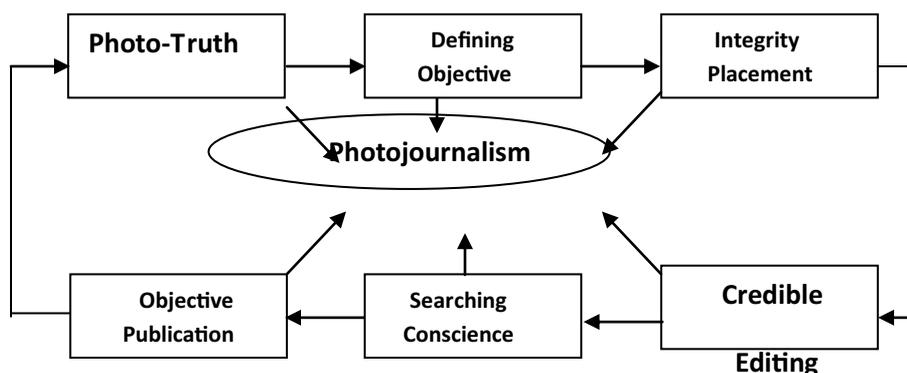
Source: Ogah, I.A. (2014). Reconsidering Ethics of Photojournalism Practice in the Era of Digital Manipulation of Photographs: The Need for Caution in Pictorial Representation by Photojournalists. *Kwararafa Journal of Contemporary Research:* 1(2), 104-114

Population of the Study

This study comprised two categories of population – the non-human and human population, represented in content analysis and survey method respectively. All the 57 photographs published on the walls of *Sannews* (28 images) and *NewsRescue* (29 images) constitute the non-human population and their accompanied text (where applicable). The survey population comprised selected registered journalists across the six (6) geo-political zones in Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory, FCT.

Research Method

In this study, content analysis and the survey research design were adopted. The content analysis aspect of this study involved counting and classifying types of photographs published by *Scannews* and *NewsRescue* from January 2015 when campaigns began in earnest, shortly after party primaries until March 28, 2015 when elections were actually conducted (for the office of President) and April 11, 2015 (for the Governors). In addition, the research design captured the captions and body texts of the digital images used. It thus, spelled out the sampling plan and procedure, the coding procedure; inter-coder reliability as well as the method of data analysis and validity.

Basic categories for the analysis include the volume of usage, form of image handling technique used, triggers, context of usage, use of colour, denotation and connotation among others. In addition, various candidates captured in the pictures positively or negatively were taken into consideration. The unit of analysis according to the form of manipulation defines the exact type of manipulation or technique used in handling the original picture, which could be in form of:

a) *Toning* – using the colour balance, levels and hue adjustment layers on the original picture.
b) *Flattening* - adjusting colour temperature or exposure to make an image look pretty boring and ugly.
c) *Cloning* - twisting the picture into an animal by inserting some parts of the person or other parts from the original picture on the animal or a different body.
d) *Blurring* - dimming the original features of the picture to make it look ugly or show a sad mood different from the original.
e) *Changing costume* - digitally dressing up a person in different regalia from the original.
f) *Panaroma* - stitching several different pictures together as if they were a single picture.
g) *Retouching* - to make a picture unnatural by correcting or restoring an original version.

In the Survey research design adopted, the researcher designed questionnaire which elicited general information about the fifth study objective from journalists in Nigeria. The choice of using the questionnaire by the researcher was based on the effectiveness of the instrument to obtain diverse opinions and feelings from the sampled respondents. A sample size of 372 respondents was statistically determined using Taro Yamane 's formula for a finite population as follows:

$$n = \frac{n}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

In analysing the data collected for the survey, descriptive statistics (like frequency distribution and simple percentages) were used to meet the study objectives.

Data Presentation According to Stated Objectives

Table 1: The Number of Digital Images Displayed by *Scannews* and *NewsRescue*

S/N	Media Platform	PDP	APC	Goodluck Jonathan	Muhammadu Buhari	Total	(%)
1.	*NewsRescue*	1	1	17	10	29	51%
2.	*Scannews*	1	0	17	10	28	49%
	Total	**2**	**1**	**34**	**20**	**57**	**100%**

Result on the volume of digital image usage on Table 1 shows that 57 images were published by *Scannews* and *NewsRescue* in all. More than half (29 images, 51%) of the total images were displayed by *NewsRescue* while *Scannews* used about half (49%) of the images (28 images, 49%). This result also shows that *Scannews* and *NewsRescue* were more concerned with the candidates than the political parties. Thus,

34 of the images were on Goodluck Jonathan while 20 images were on Muhammadu Buhari. Meanwhile, People's Democratic Party (PDP) had two and All Progressive Congress (APC) had one image displayed on the party rather than candidate.

Table 2: Forms of Digital Images Usage by *Scannews* and *NewsRescue*

S/N	Media Platform	Toning	Flattening	Changing Costume	Cloning	Retouching	Total	(%)
1.	*NewsRescue*	2	0	10	12	5	29	51%
2.	*Scannews*	1	2	10	12	3	28	49%
	Total	**3 (5%)**	**2 (4%)**	**20 (35%)**	24 (42%)	**8 (14%)**	**57**	**100%**

In Table 2, cases of digital image manipulations were categorized among the 57 displayed images. These cases are classified into five forms of toning, flattering, changing costumes, cloning and retouching. The table shows that *NewsRescue* had 51% of the cases while *Scannews* have 49% of the cases. The least form of manipulation is flattening (with two images, 4%), followed by toning (with three images, 5%). They were eight cases of retouching (14%). The most dominant form of manipulations is cloning with 24 cases (42%) and changing costume with 20 cases (35%). In some instances, the candidates were cloned as animals like pig or chimpanzee or as religious people, women etc. (see Appendix).

Table 3: Reasons for Digital Image Usage by *Scannews* and *NewsRescue*

S/N	Motives	*NewsRescue*	*Scannews*	Total	(%)
1.	Corruption	5	4	9	16%
2.	Security	10	11	21	37%
3.	Health	10	10	20	35%
4.	Experience	01	2	3	5%
5.	Competence	3	1	4	7%
	Total	**29 (51%)**	**28 (49%)**	**57**	**100%**

Motivations for digital image manipulations on social media during the 2015 presidential election campaign were ascertained in Table 3. The table shows that 9 (16%) of the digital images were triggered by corruption, 21 images (37%) were driven by security and 20 images (35%) were on health related matters. Result also shows that three (3) images (5%) were motivated be experience of the candidate, while the remaining 4 images (7%) were inspired by competence of the candidate.

The result thus shows that, both *NewsRescue* and *Scannews* were more concerned about security, health and corruption drives of the candidates. Other reasons for the image usage relate to that of experience and competence of the candidates. The result indicates that security was top most in the mind of the manipulators, followed by health challenge of the candidates, then, corruption. Experience and competence were least in the techniques used (see Appendix).

Table 4: Implied Meanings of Displayed Images by *Scannews* and *NewsRescue*

S/N	Connotations	*NewsRescue*	*Scannews*	Total	(%)
1.	Saint	9	5	14	24.5%
2.	Capability	4	2	6	10.5%
3.	Experienced	1	2	3	5%
4.	Competence	3	1	4	7%
5.	Dangerous/Evil	8	12	20	35%
6.	Dependable	4	6	10	17.5%
	Total	**29 (51%)**	**28 (49%)**	**57**	**100%**

Result in Table 4 shows the implied meanings of displayed images by *Scannews* and *NewsRescue*. Accordingly, out of the 57 altered pictures, ¼ of the pictures (14 images, 24.5%) inferred that the candidate is a saint. Most often, the pictures carried religious emblems signifying honesty and trust. Muhammadu Buhari was most presented in this format. Next to saint are images depicting capability of the candidates (6 images, 10.5%) and experience had three (3) images, 5%. Images that demonstrate competence or incompetence of the aspirant are four (4), 7%. Portraying a candidate smoking cigar in a ridiculous manner means the person is irresponsible and incompetent. Majority of the images depicts that a candidate is evil or dangerous (20 images, 35%). Muhammadu Buhari was most shown this way as a terrorist and war monger. Out of the 57 pictures sampled, dependability was another meaning derived from the pictures (10 images – 17.5%). These pictures depict candidate in boxing ring and wrestling contest with their heads cloned into heavy muscled men.

On the whole, as candidates were depicted as hooligan, nigger, woman, animal etc., the implied meaning shows that a candidate is either competence or incompetence, capable or incapable, dependable or undependable, trust worthy and not trust worthy respectively.

To further determine image handling techniques that conform to journalistic standards, journalists were used. The image handling techniques which a journalist must stick to and the ones he or she must never contemplate are presented in Table 5 as follows:

Table 5: Digital Image Handling Techniques for Journalism Use and those not to Use

S/n	Item	Responses					
		SA	A	SD	D	U	Total
1.	Cropping – removal of the edges of an image from accidents, usually used to frame it within a newspaper page.	273 (73%)	99 (27%)	00	00	00	372 (100%)
2.	Brightening – adjustment of tones or the brilliance of an image.	105 (28%)	251 (68%)	00	00	16 (4%)	372 (100%)
3.	Contrast – adjustment of the range between the light and dark tones in the image.	128 (34%)	244 (66%)	00	00	00	372 (100%)
4.	Dodging – brightening of an area in the image.	273 (73%)	99 (27%)	00	00	00	372 (100%)
5.	Burning – darkening of an area in the image.	87 (23%)	196 (53%)	14 (4%)	37 (10%)	38 (10%)	372 (100%)
6.	Cloning – to copy certain areas of the photo and put them in another part of the image or eliminate undesired content.	00	00	289 (78%)	83 (22%)	00	372 (100%)
7.	Removing/adding – the addition or removal of elements to a photograph after it was registered, either by cloning or through another technique.	00	00	372 (100%)	00	00	372 (100%)
8.	Sharpening – increasing the sharpness/focus of an image.	92 (25%)	216 (58%)	00	30 (8%)	34 (9%)	372 (100%)
9.	Black and white (B & W) – a photograph that has only shades of gray, black and white. This effect can be programmed into the camera or achieved via software.	90 (24%)	282 (76%)	00	00	00	372 (100%)
10.	Colour setting – this term refers to the natural adjustment of colour, taking into account the colour range in which the picture was produced and the adequacy of the white balance.	55 (15%)	187 (50%)	45 (12%)	72 (19%)	13 (4%)	372 (100%)
11.	Toning – using the colour balance, levels and hue adjustment layers on the original picture.	00	14 (4%)	215 (58%)	139 (37%)	4 (1%)	372 (100%)
12.	Double/multiple exposure – the exposure of the same photograph two or more times. This term can also refer to a series of pictures based on a fixed framing.	00	00	372 (100.0)	00	00	372 (100%)
13.	Flattening - adjusting colour temperature or exposure to make an image look pretty boring and ugly.	00	00	222 (60%)	150 (40%)	00	372 (100%)
14.	Retouching - to make a picture unnatural by correcting or restoring an original version.	00	00	256 (69%)	116 (31%)	00	372 (100%)
15.	RAW file – a file with all of the original image information as captured by the camera sensor, before any processing.	291 (78%)	81 (22%)	00	00	00	372 (100.0)

Data in Table 5 show journalists' positions on professional and unprofessional forms of digital image handling techniques. Towards this end, the summary of the result is presented as follows:

Image Handling Techniques that Conform to Journalism Ethical Standa rds:
1. Cropping as ascertained by (100%).
2. Brightening (96%).
3. Contrast (100%).
4. Dodging (100%).

5. Burning (76%).
6. Sharpening (83%).
7. Black and white photographs (100%).
8. Colour setting (65%).
9. Publishing raw file was strongly agreed upon by (100%)

Image Handling Techniques that does not conform to Journalism Ethical Standards:
1. Cloning as refuted by (100%)
2. Removal and addition disproved by (100%)
3. Toning was rebutted by (95%)
4. Double or multiple exposure was countered by (100%)
5. Flattening was opposed by (100%)
6. Retouching was kicked against by (100%)

Discussion of Findings

This section is hinged on the discussion of findings generated for this study. The discussion correlates the content analysis aspect with the findings on the administered questionnaire and relates them with the review of literature. Foremost, on the volume of digital images displayed by *Scannews* and *NewsRescue*, the study found a relative usage of digital images (*NewsRescue,* 29 images - 51%; exceeded that of *Scannews* by one, 28 images, 49%). The study also found that *Scannews* and *NewsRescue* were more concerned with the candidates than the political parties. Thus, 34 of the images were on Goodluck Jonathan while 20 images were on Muhammadu Buhari. Meanwhile, People's Democratic Party (PDP) ha d two images and All Progressive Congress (APC) had one image displayed on the party rather than candidate.

The study also found that the dominant forms of digital image techniques used by *Scannews* and *NewsRescue* are cloning, changing costumes and retouching. Imaging handling technique used least are toning and flatting. Findings also show that *NewsRescue* had 51% of the forms of manipulation techniques used, while *Scannews* have 49% of the cases. The least form of manipulation is flattening (with two cases), followed by toning (with three cases). They were eight cases of retouching – making the picture unnatural. The dominant techniques used are cloning with 24 cases and changing costume with 20 cases. In most instances, candidates were cloned as animals like pig, chimpanzee or as religious people, women etc. These findings equally, agreed with those of Kombol (2008) who asserts that, with the technological advancement of these days, it is possible that pictures are made to lie. He further maintains that, pictures can be manipulated and twisted to present phenomena that do not exist or events that have never happened.

One possible explanation for these forms of manipulations, however, is that media professionals might see the subtle manipulations they routinely perform as

purely a technical matter that would be of little concern to the reader (Gladney and Ehrlich, 1996). It might also be that what counts as standard practice and what counts as manipulation depends on the presentational context.

Reaves (1995) explains that visual editors assess photographs in categories of soft news and spot news. In other words, it is possible that the use of photographs in different types of magazines (such as news magazines and fashion magazines) dictate not only the degree of photo-alteration professionals are willing to perform, but the degree to which they feel their readers need to be informed about those alterations. The implication of the above is that images are associated with meaning. They are supposed to tell a story. The meaning aspect of photographs is captured in Barthes' ‚Rhetoric of the Image' theory which is anchored on the nature of relationship between images and meaning.

The motivations or what prompted the display of such manipulated images by *Scannews* and *NewsRescue* were found to be driven by corruption and security consciousness of the aspirants and health matters. Others were driven by experience of the candidate, while others were inspired by competence of the candidate. The result thus shows that, *NewsRescue* was more concerned about corruption and competence of the candidates. *Scannews* however took the issue of corruption paramount but also considered security, health, experience and competence of the candidates. The result indicates that corruption was top most in the mind of the manipulators, followed by competence of the candidates, experience and others. In the manipulated images, one candidate was shown to have might and the will to fight corruption while the other candidate was not.

In the light of these findings, the Quinn (2015) stated that public trust in journalism is waning with each day that passes, but the press' role as watchdog is ever more necessary for a thriving democracy. This is one of the key reasons why Davis (2016) asserts that the laboratory scientist is akin to the photojournalist, representing findings from gels and blots as they are, not stylized illustrations and yet, there is a real temptation to beautify the data. Only, some of these manipulations are considered to distort the original data and may be classified as scientific misconduct. As such, the PREM theory used in anchoring this study suffice here since the audience are entitled to truth, which is the hallmark of journalism practice anywhere in the world.

The last phase of the study established various ethical image handling techniques that conform to professional standards. These include:

i. Cropping.
ii. Brightening.
iii. Contrast.
iv. Dodging.
v. Burning.
vi. Sharpening.
vii. Black and white photographs.

viii. Colour setting.

ix.   Raw file

On the contrary, the study further established unethical image handling techniques that must not be used for journalism. These include:

1.   Cloning;
2.   Removal;
3.   Toning;
4.   Double or multiple exposure;
5.   Flattening; and
6.   Retouching.

Conclusion

Based on the data collected and analysed in this study, it is pertinent to conclude that journalism is a profession that dwell strictly on ethical and professional guidelines as the modus operandi. Altering or doctoring photographs is therefore a clear indication that journalists are crossing professional, ethical and moral lines. Lying with a photo and manipulating its content is a sin against the profession and any unethical image handling affect professionalism negatively. Therefore, as journalists (practicing online or conventional), it is believed that the guiding principles of journalism hinge on accuracy, objectivity, truthfulness, fairness and balance. As a result, it will be wrong to alter the content of a photograph in any way that deceives the public.

Consequently, it is not advisable to allow image manipulation techniques known with art photography to find their way into journalism. The dangers of unethical manipulations could amount to lack of credible publication, lack of responsibility to the society and loss of integrity. The fact is that, credibility and integrity are irreversible if the public start to mistrust news photographs in Nigeria. Journalists therefore ought to keep to the cannons and values of practice (both cardinal and epistemic). As trustees of truth, responsible practice therefore means strict adherence to professional standards.

Recommendations

Based on findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

First, the use of image handling techniques (such as cloning, toning, flattening, changing costumes etc.) found in this study are clear indication of deviation from journalism principles. As such, journalists should adopt strict compliance with ethical and professional guidelines as modus operandi and never to cross their professional, ethical and moral lines.

Second, since journalists serve as trustees of truth in the society, they should (with the inroad of digitisation) be enlightened on the effect of lying or manipulating the content of a news photo. Thus, any manipulation is a sin against the profession and any unethical image handling technique apply affects professionalism negatively.

Third, this study has established that it is wrong to alter the content of a photograph in any way that deceives the public, it is therefore advisable not to allow image manipulation techniques known with art photography to find their way into journalism. The dangers of unethical manipulations could amount to lack of credible publication, lack of responsibility to the society and loss of integrity.

Fourth, this study has averred that the use of essential manipulation techniques (like toning, cloning, flattening, retouching, etc.) to journalism practice is alien to the discipline. Accordingly, only techniques that do not lower standards (like cropping, brightening, dodging, burning, contrast, etc.) should be applied on journalism pictures. In addition, journalists handling news photos should use the „Photojournalism Realism Ethical Model' and other professional mod els as the yard stick to measuring credible publication.

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Appendix
Selected Samples of Pictures Published by Scannews and NewsRescue