

The Role of Citizen Journalism in The Rising of Public Awareness in The KRI

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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 in providing news stories, information and subjects of public interest in the Kurdistan Region Government-Iraq (KRI). This shifting aspect has offered more opportunities for ordinary people to engage with other individuals in 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, that 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 the '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 media students who interact with the blogs, posts and footage that are produced by citizen journalism. The research project targeted 963 media students in KRI universities and institutes. The total participation in the project reached a high level of response: 315 students. 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 distributed 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.



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The research project found that citizen journalism plays an essential role in increasing awareness of the Kurdish community, especially mainstream journalism, which 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 relating to public affairs.

Key words: Citizen journalism, public awareness, democracy, social media news