

Contribution of Wikipedia clubs in building capacity in Media and Information Literacy among youth in West Africa: a Comparative Study between Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria

Abstract

In this research, we propose to study the contribution of Wikipedia clubs in the development of media and information literacy (MIL) skills among youth in West Africa. In the digital age, the problems of misinformation are of increasing concern. IME is presented as a panacea. In Nigeria and Ivory Coast, Wikimedia user associations have opted instead for the creation of Wikipedia clubs within schools. In these clubs, Wikipedia is the medium of learning. Through a qualitative and quantitative study, this study presents the MIL skills developed by members of Wikipedia clubs and makes a comparison between the experiences of Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire.

Introduction

In the digital age, the issues of misinformation are of increasing concern. While it is true that the growing use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) contributes "to the improvement of well-being, economic development, the consolidation of social ties, the enhancement of local cultures, and civic engagement" (Yanon & Barbey, 2018), the fact remains that the uses made of them are sometimes harmful (cybercrime, cyberstalking, disinformation, etc.). Faced with this ambivalent reality, many researchers and civil society organizations (CSOs) "raise the need to educate citizens, from a very young age, about the risks and benefits of digital environments" (J. Palfrey, 2008; J. Hartley, 2010). West African youth are an appropriate target in that "young people are very much into the internet and digital products

(social networks, wikis, etc.)" (Yanon, 2017). Moreover, they constitute the most predominant part of the African population. According to the UN World Population Prospects 2019 report, in 2050 the proportion of young people could still be 29% in Sub-Saharan Africa, 28% in West Africa. In Côte d'Ivoire, 75% of the population is under 35 years old (Census 2021). Faced with this reality, various initiatives are led by several organizations including UNESCO and Wikimedia user groups to educate young people about media and information. Our contribution is situated in the field of Media and Information Literacy (MIL). MIL refers to "a goal-oriented process in which children and youth - and adults as well - are taught and trained to develop their knowledge, cultural awareness, and skills related to media and media culture." (Carlsson, 2019) The pedagogical approach for its implementation within schools is usually the establishment of a school newspaper (Sarr, 2022). In Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire, Wikipedians' associations have opted for a different approach: that of putting the collaborative encyclopedia Wikipedia at the heart of learning. The objective of this study is therefore to identify the contribution of Wikipedia to the reinforcement of MIL skills among young people in these two West African countries.

- What activities are carried out in the Wikipedia Clubs?
- How are these activities related to MIL?
- What MIL-related skills do young people acquire by participating in Wikipedia Club activities?

- What are the differences and similarities between the Anglophone experience in Nigeria and the Francophone experience in Côte d'Ivoire?

- What lessons can be drawn from these different experiences for other West African countries?

To answer these questions, the study combines qualitative and quantitative methods. Interviews will be conducted with the leaders of each of the clubs. Focus groups will be conducted with club members. Finally, a questionnaire will be administered to each club member.

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Related work

More and more authors are acknowledging the importance of Wikipedia for students. From being discouraged (Konieczny, 2016), contributing to Wikipedia is encouraged in light of the benefits that users can gain (Jacobson, 2020; Commenges, 2023). These benefits revolve around media literacy skills as defined in the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education (ACRL, 2015). The Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education is organized into six frameworks, each composed of a central concept related to media literacy skills. These concepts are: Information Creation as a Process, Scholarship as Conversation, Information Has Value, Authority is Constructed and Contextual, Research as Inquiry, and Searching as Strategic Exploration. According to Jacobson (2020), the components of Wikipedia align with these concepts. The results of this work are in line with Ball (2019), Evenstein Sigalov & Nachmias (2017), and Konieczny (2014) who, found that teaching students to contribute to Wikipedia allows them to improve information/digital literacy skills, critical thinking, and motivation, and help build confidence. Nevertheless, Commenges (2021) notes that despite all that contributing to

Wikipedia can bring to students, "Wikipedia remains very poorly integrated into university teaching." This is why the experience of Wikipedia clubs in schools and universities in Africa is interesting. It is true that the teaching of Wikipedia is not formally integrated in the curricula, but since Wikipedia clubs target students and most of the activities take place in the student environment, it is of particular interest. Students can develop specific skills through their participation in Wikipedia clubs.

Methods

Study population:

The study population consists of members of Wikipedia clubs in Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria. Côte d'Ivoire has 8 clubs:

1. The Club of Institut des Sciences et Techniques de la Communication (ISTC) Polytechnique
2. The club of the l'Université Virtuelle de Côte d'Ivoire (UVCI)
3. The club of the Université de Korhogo
4. The club of the Université de Daloa
5. The club of the Université de Bouaké
6. The Club de Yamoussoukro
7. The wiki club RFI
8. The club Wikipedia club of the Madeleine Daniélou school. This club will not be taken into account in this study because it is essentially composed of teenagers between 10 and 15 years old.

In Nigeria, there are 6 clubs. They are located in the following universities:

1. University of Ibadan
2. Nigerian Institute of Journalism
3. Lagos State University
4. University of Ilorin
5. Ekiti State University

https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wikimedia_Fan_Club_in_Nigeria#Existing_Plan

Data collection:

Data collection will be primarily online using the following tools: desk study, semi-structured interview, focus group and questionnaire.

The desk study and semi-structured interview will be used to identify activities conducted by the clubs. The desk study will consist of reading and analyzing articles and publications on social networks related to the clubs' activities. The semi-structured interview will be conducted with each club leader. A total of 12 semi-structured interviews are planned.

Four (4) focus groups are planned, two in Nigeria and two in Côte d'Ivoire. In each focus group, there will be at least one member of a club. The objective of the focus groups is to identify the opinions and experiences of club members on the MIL skills they are developing in the clubs. Also, the focus group will provide input to help design the questionnaire.

The questionnaire will target the vast majority of club members in the study population. The idea is to obtain numerical data on the experiences and skills developed in the Wikipedia clubs.

Data analysis:

The data collected during the interviews and focus groups will be analyzed by means of content analysis. The data from the questionnaire will be analyzed statistically in the first instance. Secondly, a comparative analysis between the values of Nigeria and those of Côte d'Ivoire. The analysis grid will be based on the six categories of skills as developed by Landry and Letellier (2016):

1. Media technology use skills
2. Information skills
3. Expressive and artistic skills
4. Behavioral competencies
5. Critical and aesthetic judgment skills
6. Introspection skills

Expected output

- A report on Meta-Wiki: the primary audience is the community of Wikipedia. For us, it's a matter of accountability that Wikipedia users' community be aware of the outcomes of the study.
- 2 Scientific publications: the audience is made up of scientists to share the knowledge generated.
- A feedback conference: the policy makers, CSOs and media are the audience. We expect from them to get evidences to support the extension and the development of Wikipedia clubs or integrating Wikipedia in training curricula.

Risks

As the study will be carried out online, the risk is a weak internet connection for some participants. To anticipate, in the budget of our project, the unexpected costs will be used to support students who have difficulties with internet, to go to a right place and get an acceptable internet connection.

Community impact plan

We plan to share the results of our work at WikiConferences like the Francophone Wikiconvention, WikiIndaba and even Wikimania. These are indeed major events for African affiliates, who come together to share their experiences but especially to be inspired by good practices that work. We will also publish on Diff and the blog of Wikimedia Côte d'Ivoire the main results and case studies. The progress reports (questionnaire, focus group and interviews) and the overall report of the study will be published on Meta-Wiki after their validation.

Evaluation

The success of the project will be assessed regarding the expected outputs.

Budget

The information has been redacted.

Response to reviewers and meta-reviewers

The information has been redacted.

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