INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE ON NEWS CONSUMPTION AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN ILORIN

BABATUNDE, VICTOR OLUSEGUN
DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION, KWARA STATE UNIVERSITY MALETE, NIGERIA
babatundev@gmail.com

AYANWALE, OLUWAJUWONLO EMMANUEL
DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION, KWARA STATE UNIVERSITY MALETE, NIGERIA
ayanwaleoluwajuwonlo@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT
This study exploresthe influence of social media on news consumption patterns among undergraduates in Kwara State University, Malete, and the University of Ilorin. Employing a descriptive survey methodology, the study addressed issues regarding the extent of social media usage for news consumption, motivations for using social media for news, and factors influencing news consumption through these platforms. Existing studies have focused mainly on social media usage and its impact on political participation, socialization, and academic performance. Consequently, a gap is observed in the existing literature concerning the magnitude of social media utilization and its impact on the news consumption patterns of undergraduates in Ilorin. This research is framed within the foundational principles of the Uses and Gratifications Theory. The results elucidate the noteworthy influence of social media on the news consumption behaviors of undergraduates in the designated universities. WhatsApp and Instagram emerged as the most frequently used platforms for news consumption. Motives for using social media for news ranged from seeking relevant information to social interaction and staying updated on news. Students displayed a considerable dedication of time, with over half of respondents spending five hours or more on social media for news consumption. Factors influencing news consumption on social media encompassed digital literacy, demographics, and news credibility. This study underscores the need for media literacy programmes within educational institutions to empower students to critically evaluate news content on social media. It also suggests the importance of raising awareness about responsible social media usage. Diversification of news sources and promotion of credible news outlets can contribute to a well-rounded news consumption experience for students.

Introduction

Before the advent of social media, individuals, organizations, households, etc., depended on traditional media for news updates, breaking news, follow-up stories, etc. Hence, news consumption was basically via the traditional media (radio, television, magazine, and newspaper). According to Tayo, Adebola,&Yahya (2019), social media has also facilitated communication and connection among people in various social and educational contexts. It has created an open and global platform for interaction and collaboration. Social media has influenced undergraduates, instructors, and other academic stakeholders to engage in knowledge creation and sharing in higher education.

However, since the saturation of the world with modern technologies of communication, the channels of news dissemination and consequently, consumption have become diversified. It became more diversified with the evolution of myriads of social media platforms incorporated into those technologies. Therefore, news consumption habits of individuals, corporate organizations, and society at large drifted drastically toward the accessibility and feasibility of social media. In recent times, almost, if not all, traditional news outlets, broadcast and print inclusive, have integrated news dissemination via social media into their daily reportage. This affirms that social media influences news generation, dissemination, and consumption of both the source and receiver.

The landscape of news and information consumption has undergone a significant metamorphosis due to the influence of social media. It provides a diverse range of news sources, enables real-time updates and perspectives, and fosters social interactions and participation. Social media has become a vital part of news consumption, especially for young people who are avid users of these platforms. To this end, Urban and Bodoky (2013) submit that social media, particularly Facebook, has reshaped media consumption habits.

Therefore, it is crucial to investigate the impact of social media on the news consumption patterns and preferences of users, with a particular focus on young adults who predominantly depend on these platforms for accessing news content. Hence, the study explored how social media usage influences news consumption habits, such as the frequency, duration, sources, topics, and formats of news they consume. It also investigated their attitudes and perceptions towards news consumption on social media platforms, such as their trust, satisfaction, engagement, and critical thinking.

Statement of problem

Social media has become a ubiquitous aspect of modern communication, with profound implications for news consumption among young adults. This is very applicable to undergraduates of higher institutions in Ilorin. Nevertheless, there is a lack of comprehensive investigation into the impact of social media usage on news consumption among undergraduates in Ilorin. Previous research has predominantly focused on exploring the effects of social media usage on political participation, socialization, and academic performance. Consequently, there exists an unexplored gap in scholarly literature regarding the extent of social media utilization for news consumption and its subsequent implications among undergraduate students in Ilorin.

The focal issue investigated in this research pertains to comprehending the impact of social media utilization on the news consumption habits of undergraduates in Ilorin. This problem gains significance as underscored by Rithika and Sara (2013), given that news consumption significantly contributes to shaping public opinion and influencing decision-making, particularly among young adults. Consequently, it is crucial to scrutinize the influence of social media usage on news consumption among undergraduates in Ilorin. This examination becomes imperative for the development of strategies aimed at enhancing media literacy education and ensuring the dissemination of credible news. The core objective of this study is to delve deeper into the patterns of news consumption among undergraduates in Nigerian universities on the internet, with a predominant focus on students from Kwara State University, Malete, and the University of Ilorin

Objectives of the study

This study is grounded in the pursuit of the following research

i. To determine the degree of social media engagement among undergraduates at

KWASU and UNILORIN for news consumption.

ii. To investigate undergraduates' reasons for using social media to consume news

iii. To determine the factors influencing news consumption habits among undergraduates

iv. To examine the connection between news consumption among undergraduatesand social media.

Literature review

Conceptualizing social media

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2013), social media is a collection of web-based tools that enable the production and sharing of user-generated content while building on the theoretical and technological underpinnings of Web 2.0. This demonstrates how social media is interactive and participatory, allowing users to create and consume content simultaneously. It highlights even more how social media is user-centric and has revolutionized how people interact with one another and with information.

In a similar vein, social media was described by Boyd and Ellison (2007) as a networked communication platform where users share and access user-generated content. This emphasizes the networked communication structure of social media, which enables participants to create, share, and consume content that is generated by users. Kaplan and Haenlein's definition highlights the participatory and collaborative nature of social media platforms, where users play an active role in shaping the available content. Additionally, the definition suggests that social media platforms facilitate real-time connections and communication among users, creating a sense of community that is often absent in traditional media formats.

Moreover, social media was defined by Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, and Silvestre (2011) as a collection of web-based tools that facilitate the production and sharing of user-generated content. In this instance, Kietzmann et al. emphasize the value of the Internet as a tool for information sharing and the development of online communities. Qualman (2013) defines social media as a collection of online tools and platforms that people use to share media, viewpoints, experiences, insights, and other types of content. Mobile devices and software enable this exchange.

Thus, it appears from all these definitions that social media are web-based services that let people work together, connect, engage, and create communities by letting them easily access, create, co-create, modify, share, and interact with user-generated content. Furthermore, social media is a platform that depends on internet usage to generate, consume, and distribute various types of content among its users.

Conceptualizing news consumption

News consumption is conceptualized as the process by which individuals actively seek out and receive news and information through various channels. According to McCombs and Shaw (2013), it is the process by which people choose which news items to view and understand depending on their needs, interests, and preexisting beliefs. Adding credence to their submission, Lippmann (2005) suggests that news consumption is a means by which individuals construct their understanding of the world around them. In their study, Flanagin and Metzger (2000) further conceptualized news consumption as the process by which individuals acquire, attend to, and comprehend news content. Similarly, Delli & Keeter (1996) describe news consumption as a complex process that involves not only exposure to news content but also attention, comprehension, and retention.

According to Verstraete, Derek & Jane (2017), the act of disseminating news on social media has become a standard practice, embraced not only by users and readers but also by various journalistic organizations aiming to drive traffic to their websites through content sharing on platforms such as Facebook or Twitter. In sum, news consumption could be said to mean listening, reading, or watching the news or attending to news media.

To this end, Urban and Bodoky (2013) submit that social media, particularly Facebook, has reshaped media consumption habits.

Classification of social media news platforms

Categorization of news on social media platforms refers to categorizing different social

media platforms based on their features, functionality, and content. Scholars, such as McCombs, Lewis, and Molyneux (2018). Nielsen and Ganter (2018). Shahbaznez, Dolan &Rashidirad (2021), andDijck&Poell (2013) have developed various classification schemes to understand the different types of social media platforms that provide news content.

For instance, Nielsen &Ganter (2018) proposed a typology of four types of news distribution on social media; vis-à-vis: *direct*, where users access news content directly on the platform; *side-door*, where users access news content through links or referrals from other users or sources; *bridge*, where users access news content through third-party aggregators or curators; and *incidental*, where users encounter news content unintentionally or without seeking it.

Similarly, Lewis &Molyneux (2018) suggested a classification of three types of social media platforms based on their primary functions: Social Networking Sites (SNSs), such as Facebook and Twitter, that facilitate social interactions and information sharing among users; content communities, such as YouTube and Instagram, that enable users to upload and view multimedia content; and collaborative projects, such as Wikipedia and Reddit, that allow users to create and edit collective knowledge.

Additionally, Dijck & Poell (2013) developed a framework of five types of social media platforms based on their main mechanisms: connectivity platforms, such as Facebook and LinkedIn, which foster online social networks and relationships; curation platforms, like Twitter and Pinterest, let users choose and arrange content; creation platforms, such as YouTube and Flickr, that enable users to produce and distribute content; collaboration platforms, such as Wikipedia and Quora, that support collective knowledge production and problem-solving; and circulation platforms, such as Reddit and Digg, that facilitate the distribution and ranking of content.

Hence, these classifications are important for researchers, journalists, and media organizations to understand the unique characteristics and potential uses of each platform for news dissemination. Some common classifications of social media news platforms comprise social media sites like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter, and other microblogging platforms; also include social networking sites like Facebook. Each platform has its strengths and weaknesses in terms of user engagement, reach, and content types, which makes it important for media organizations to tailor their social media strategies accordingly (Kümpel et al., 2015).

More specifically, there are several scholarly classifications of social media news platforms, some of which are:

i. **Traditional social networks** (Facebook, Twitter, etc.): According to Tandoc, Lim, and Ling (2018), traditional social networks are Internet-based platforms that enable users to connect with other users and share content. These platforms have been used by news organizations to distribute news and engage with audiences.

ii. **News aggregators** (Google News, Yahoo News, etc.): According to Johnson and Kaye (2014), news aggregators are web-based services that compile and present news content from a variety of sources. These platforms allow users to access news from multiple sources in one place.

iii. **Microblogs** (Twitter, Tumblr, etc.): According to Gruzd, Jacobson & Dubois (2017, p. 29), microblogs are social media platforms that enable users to post short messages, often with links or multimedia content, these platforms have been used by journalists to report breaking news and provide real-time updates.

iv. **Online communities** (Reddit, Digg, etc.): According to Tandoc et al. (2018), online communities are web-based platforms where users can discuss and share content on specific topics. These platforms have been used by news organizations to source stories and engage with niche audiences. Live Streaming Platforms (Periscope, Facebook Live, etc.): According to Hermida et al. (2017, p. 388), live streaming platforms are social media platforms that allow users to broadcast live video content. These platforms have been used by news organizations to provide live coverage of events and engage with audiences in real time.

Theoretical framework

This study's theoretical foundation is the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT). According to the UGT, people actively select and use media to satisfy their needs and desires. The theory holds that people actively choose and use media to fulfill particular needs rather than being passive recipients of media messages (Walgrave & Van Aelst, 2006).It was in their 1974 book "Uses and Gratifications Research" that Elihu Katz, Jay G. Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch first put forth this theory. According to the authors, audiences actively seek out media to fulfill particular needs and desires and are goal-directed in their media consumption.A communication theory called the Uses and Gratifications Theory describes how audiences actively select and use media to satisfy their needs and desires. The UGT shows that people use media to satisfy their psychological, social, and cultural needs, according to Katz et al. (1974, p. 20). Information seeking, entertainment, social interaction, personal identity, and surveillance are a few examples of these needs.

To investigate why undergraduates in Ilorin use social media to obtain news and information, this study used the UGT. In particular, the study looked into the satisfaction undergraduates sought from using social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to get news. According to Papacharissi and Rubin (2000), these gratifications could include surveillance, social interaction, entertainment, and information seeking.

The Uses and Gratifications Theory suggests that undergraduates in Ilorin are using social media as a source of news because it satisfies their information needs, which is relevant to the impact of social media on news consumption among students. Undergraduates can quickly and easily access news and information on social media, which helps them stay informed about current events. Undergraduates can interact with news content in a way that fulfills their needs for social interaction and personal identity because social media offers a degree of interactivity and social connection that traditional news sources might not be able to match.

Empirical review

i. Social media usage

The study "The Effects of News Consumption ViaSocial Media and News Information Overload on Perceptions of Journalistic Norms and Practices" by Nardis, Patsiaouras&Terzis (2020), investigated how people's perceptions of journalistic norms and practices are affected by social media consumption of news and news information overload. 404 Greek citizens between the ages of 18 and 60 were given an online survey as part of the research's quantitative research design, which collected data.

The study's conclusions showed that consuming news on social media has a negative impact on individuals' perceptions of journalistic norms and practices. Specifically, social media users were found to be less likely to trust journalists and to perceive their reporting as accurate and unbiased, compared to non-social media users. Additionally, the study found that news information overload, which is the excessive exposure to news content, further exacerbates negative perceptions of journalistic norms and practices among social media news consumers.

Another study by Nannim, Njoku, Onuoha, Orji, &Njoku on"Undergraduates' use of social media in school: A need for regulatory policies in Nigerian universities" sought to explore the usage of social media by undergraduate students in Nigerian universities, to draw attention to the necessity of regulatory guidelines governing social media use in these establishments. 400 undergraduate students from three Nigerian universities each received a self-administered questionnaire as part of the study, which used a quantitative research design. The study's conclusions demonstrated the popularity of social media among college students, with Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp being the most widely used platforms. Given that most respondents admitted to spending more time on social media than on their studies, the study also discovered a significant negative correlation between social media usage and academic performance. The study also showed that rather than using social media for academic purposes, the majority of undergraduates used it for socializing and non-academic activities.

News consumption

Olasinde& Emmanuel (2014) examined the effects of social media use on undergraduate students in Nigeria. Through focus groups and surveys, the study used both quantitative and

qualitative methods. The findings of the study revealed that young individuals in Nigeria often gravitate towards widely accessed social media platforms, akin to their global counterparts, utilizing these platforms for the dissemination of news, sharing opinions, fostering business growth, and contributing to cultural production.The research findings indicated that Nigerian youths' choice of social media platforms aligns with global trends, revealing no notable distinctions. These platforms play pivotal roles as conduits for sharing information, expressing opinions, entertainment, fostering business growth, and contributing to cultural productions

Similar to this, Adekannbi&Agbolabori (2018) carried out a study to look at how undergraduate students in Nigerian public universities consume news. They focused on the frequency and pattern of news consumption on the Internet, as well as the role of the Internet in news consumption. The study adopted a survey research design, obtaining data from a sample of 500 undergraduates across four public universities in Nigeria. Findings indicated that 85.6% of the participants utilized the Internet for news consumption, with social media platforms emerging as the leading sources (63.4%), followed by news websites (57.4%) and blogs (52.8%). The study further revealed that factors such as ease of access, timeliness, and relevance of news content influenced the choice of news sources among the respondents, and the majority of them (58.6%) preferred to consume local news.

ii. Influence of social media usage

The objective of the study "Undergraduates' use of social media in school: A need for regulatory policies in Nigerian universities" by Nannim, Njoku, Onuoha, Orji, and Njoku (2023) was to examine how undergraduates in Nigerian universities use social media and to draw attention to the need for regulations to govern this use. The research employed a quantitative research design, utilizing a self-administered questionnaire distributed to 400 undergraduates across three universities in Nigeria to collect data. The results indicated the widespread popularity of social media platforms among the participants, with Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram emerging as the most frequently utilized platforms. The study also found that social media use had a significant negative impact on academic performance, as a majority of the respondents reported spending more time on social media than on their studies. The study also showed that rather than using social media for academic purposes, the majority of undergraduates used it for socializing and non-academic activities.

From the foregoing, it is hypothesized that a correlation exists between the use of social media and news consumption among undergraduate students

Research methodology

The descriptive survey method was used to conduct the research. Glasgow (2005) states that the survey method is used to describe what exists, in its quantity and context, as well as to find answers to questions, solve problems that have been noticed, evaluate needs and set goals, ascertain whether or not specific objectives have been met, set precedent for future comparisons, and analyze trends. Undergraduates are the study's primary focus because they represent a distinct demographic with particular traits and habits regarding the use of social media and news consumption. Therefore, the population of this study was undergraduates at Kwara State University and the University of Ilorin, regardless of their gender, age, department, or faculty. The study gathered information from a representative sample of the population to make inferences about the larger population of undergraduates in Ilorin.

The study focused on students at Kwara State University with over 25,000 population comprising 20,000 undergraduates and 2,500 postgraduates (www.KWASU.edu.ng), while the University of Ilorin has over 53,000 students, comprising 48,000 undergraduates and 5,000 postgraduates across 15 faculties (www.timeshighereducation.com).

A research project's sample size must be determined to guarantee that the study is representative of the broader population. As a result, 382 participants were selected through purposive sampling from the total population using the sample size determination calculations provided by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). For example, UNILORIN has 48,000 undergraduates spread across 15 faculties, whereas KWASU has eight faculties and 20,000 undergraduates. The sample size determination suggested by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) was used for this investigation. Because of this, the sample size was 382 and consisted of 270 respondents from the University of Ilorin and 112 respondents from KWASU. However, the sample size was

increased to 400 (275 respondents from the University of Ilorin and 125 respondents from KWASU) to obtain trustworthy data.

A structured questionnaire was the data collection tool utilized in this investigation. The purpose of the survey was to learn more about how Ilorin undergraduates' news consumption habits are influenced by their usage of social media. There were two sections on the questionnaire. While section B concentrated on the research questions to comprehend the impact of social media on news consumption among undergraduates at KWASU and UNILORIN, section A collected demographic data from the respondents.

To determine the validity and reliability of the instrument, the questionnaire was pretested on a sample of 40 (10% of the entire population) students from the KwaraState Polytechnic, Ilorin, who are not part of the main study population. In light of the pretest findings, modifications were implemented to the questionnaire to enhance its clarity and validity.

Data Presentation, Analysis, And Discussion

The statistical package for social sciences, or SPSS, was used for the analysis, and the results are shown below.

Table 1: Demographic distribution of respondents

		F	%
Gender	Male	211	52.75
	Female	188	47
	Total	**399**	**99.75**
Age range	16-20	72	18.0
	21-25	72	18.0
	26-30	164	41
	31 – above	91	22.75
	Total	**399**	**99.75**
Institution	KWASU	124	31
	UNILORIN	275	68.75
	Total	**399**	**99.75**

Fieldwork, 2023

Table 1 insight into the respondents' demographic distribution. Notably, 52.75% of respondents were men and 47% were women. Males made up the majority of respondents. In terms of age, the data reveals that a significant proportion, 41%, falls within the age range of 26-30. Additionally, 68.75% of respondents were from the University of Ilorin, with the remaining 31% from Kwara State University.

Table 2: Responses on the motive for using social media for news consumption

Motives	Level of Agreement							
	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD	Overall %
Relevant information	6.0	0	10.0	32.0	51.9	4.00	.88	80
Social interaction	1.0	2.0	10.0	40.1	46.9	4.08	.69	81.6
News on politics	3.0	7.0	34.0	28.0	27.8	3.73	1.09	74.6
Education	3.0	3.0	13.0	38.1	42.9	3.85	.74	77
Entertainment	3.0	1.0	19.0	37.1	39.8	4.40	.74	88
TOTAL						**4.00**	**.83**	**80**

*Scale:strongly disagree (1-20%), 2 disagree (21-40%), 3 is neutral (41-60%), 4 is agree (61-80%), and 5 is strongly agree (81-100%).

From Table 2, the respondents strongly agreed (80.0%) that they use social media for different reasons. Specifically, the respondents agreed to use social media to seek relevant information (80%), they strongly agreed to use social media for social interaction (81.6%), and for entertainment (88%). However, 74.6% of the respondents said they use social media for political news, and 77% said they use it for education.

Results from Table 2 imply that social media is a veritable tool for seeking relevant information among undergraduates. This explains the gratifications sought by students according to the Use and Gratification Theory. These gratifications, according to Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) may include entertainment, social interaction, information seeking, and surveillance.

Table 3: Responses for time spent on social media for news consumption

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	less than an hour	16	4.0
	1-2hrs	32	8.0
	3-4hrs	145	36.25
	5 and above	206	51.5
	Total	**399**	**99.75**

Fieldwork, 2023

Table 3 illustrates that the majority of respondents (51.5%) spent five hours or more on social media for news consumption, emphasizing a considerable interest in obtaining news through these platforms. This aligns with the conclusions drawn by Nannim, Njoku, Onuoha & Njoku (2023), indicating that undergraduates allocate a greater amount of time to social media activities compared to their academic studies.

Table 4: Factors affecting social media usage for news consumption

Factors affecting social media usage for news	Level of Agreement							
	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD	Overall %
Demography (age, gender, education, and income)	1.0	4.0	14.0	44.1	36.8	3.90	.98	78
Digital literacy	0	2.0	12.0	39.8	46.1	3.83	.75	76.6
News credibility	3.0	4.0	16.8	42.1	32.0	4.00	.72	80
Localization of news	32.0	37.0	19.7	11.0	0	4.03	73	80.6
TOTAL						**3.15**	**3.18**	**63**

*Scale:strongly disagree (1-20%), 2 disagree (21-40%), 3 is neutral (41-60%), 4 is agree (61-80%), and 5 is strongly agree (81-100%).

Generally, inTable 4, the respondents strongly agreed (80.0%) that different factors influence social media usage for news consumption among undergraduates. Particularly, the respondents agreed that both demography (age, gender, education, and income) (78%) and digital literacy (76.6%) affect social media usage for news consumption. They likewise agreed that both news credibility (80%), and localization of news (80.6%) are also factors influencing news consumption on social media.

This synchronizes with the findings of a study by Adekannbi&Agbolabori (2018)which highlight the need for news organizations to prioritize the relevance, timeliness, credibility, and ease of access of their online news content to attract

and retain the attention of undergraduates as a key audience demographic.

Table 5: Hypothesis (social media * news consumption crosstabulation)

			News consumption		Total	Df.	Cal. X^2 Value	Cal. Sig. (two-sided)	Remark
			AVERAGE	HIGH					
Social media	LOW	Count	9	30	39	1	.298	.585	Accepted
		Expected	8.8	30.2	39.0				
	HIGH	Count	0	1	1				
		Expected	.2	.8	1.0				
Total		**Count**	**9**	**31**	**40**				
		Expected	9.0	31.0	40.0				

Critical level of sig. = 0.05

Table 5 revealed that the calculated X^2- value is .298 with a calculated significance of .585 calculated at a critical alpha significance level at 0.05 level. Given that the computed significance (.585) exceeds the critical alpha threshold of significance (0.05), the hypothesis is deemed to be accepted, indicating a noteworthy correlation between social media usage and news consumption.

Discussion of findings

Findings from this study offer valuable insights into the news consumption habits of undergraduates at Kwara State University, Malete, and the University of Ilorin. It is guided by the objectives of the study. The high response rate demonstrates the willingness of students to engage with the survey, underscoring the relevance of the study's subject matter.

In response to the first objective, it is clear that the respondents exhibit a moderate preference for social media as a platform for consuming news.WhatsApp emerged as the most popular platform for news consumption, suggesting that it is the primary choice for undergraduates when seeking news. The implication of this is that undergraduates often consume news items on social media and this aligns with the findings of Fadip et al (2013) which showed that social media platforms are popular among undergraduates, with Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram being the most commonly used platforms. Their study further revealed that most undergraduates used social media to socialize and engage in non-academic activities, rather than for educational purposes. Similarly, the findings of this study corroborate those of Hadi et al (2019) which showed that WhatsApp and Facebook, were widely used by undergraduates in seeking and sharing information.

The motives behind using social media for news consumption varied, with "Relevant information" and "Social interaction" being the most significant factors. This indicates that students value the relevancy of information and the social aspect of news consumption on these platforms. Also, the ability to interact with news items on social media platforms (like, share, comment, and tag), makes it a veritable channel for news consumption among undergraduates. Once more, Hadi et al. (2019) contend that the undergraduates' use of social media significantly influenced their information-seeking behavior because it allowed them to communicate with their peers and obtain information quickly. However, their study's conclusions showed that undergraduates' use of social media had some unfavorable effects on their information-seeking behavior, such as the spread of false information and an excessive reliance on it.

In addition, answers to the second objective showed that a significant proportion of participants used social media for news consumption for at least five hours a day, underscoring the importance of these platforms in their daily lives. Similar findings were made by

Fadip et al. (2013), who discovered that social media use significantly harmed academic performance because most respondents said they spent more time on social media than on their studies. This is because most undergraduates use social media for non-academic activities and socializing, not for academic purposes, the study claims.

Regarding the third goal, it is noted that undergraduate students' use of social media and their news consumption are related.It is clear that the respondents frequently use a variety of social media platforms to consume news, and they do so for a variety of purposes. In the same vein, Mofoluke and Eunice's (2018) research revealed that a sizable segment of Nigerian youth—67.2%—thought of social media as a reliable source of news. The study also discovered that social media credibility was significantly predicted by the frequency of social media use, platform trust, and content relevance. Additionally, the study found that a significant percentage of participants (73.2%) primarily sourced their news from social media.

The last objectiveestablished the various factors influencing news consumption on social media including digital literacy and news credibility. These findings emphasize the importance of media literacy programmes and credible news sources in ensuring that students make informed and responsible choices in their news consumption. This finding is in tandem with the findings of Adekannbi&Agbolabori (2018) which showed that factors such as ease of access, timeliness, and relevance of news content influence the choice of news sources among the majority of the respondents.

In conclusion, the results provide important insights into how much undergraduates use social media for news consumption, why they do so, how much time they spend doing it, and what influences their news consumption habits. These results advance our knowledge of how social media affects undergraduate news consumption in the research field. By using these findings, policymakers and educational institutions can create interventions that promote responsible and knowledgeable news consumption on social media platforms.

Conclusion

The findings of this study provide insight into how undergraduate students at Kwara State University, Malete, and the University of Ilorin consume news about their use of social media. The goal of the study was to address several important research questions, and the conclusions from the data analysis offer insightful information about the preferences and habits of these undergraduates when it comes to news consumption.

First of all, undergraduates at the chosen universities' news consumption habits are greatly influenced by social media. The vast majority of participants stated that they obtain news content via social media platforms. The most popular apps for consuming news were found to be Instagram and WhatsApp, highlighting the significance of these platforms as information sources.

The motivations driving undergraduates to use social media for news consumption are diverse. Respondents cited reasons such as seeking relevant information, social interaction, staying updated on news, and engagement with news content. These motives demonstrate the diversity of social media news consumption and the platform's capacity to meet a range of information needs.

Additionally, the study found that students use social media extensively for news consumption, with a notable percentage devoting five hours or more to this activity. This research emphasizes how important social media is to undergraduates' daily lives as a source of news and information.

Factors influencing news consumption on social media include digital literacy, demographics (including age, gender, education, and income), and news credibility. These factors shape the way students engage with news content on social media and impact their information-seeking behaviours.

Although this study offers insightful information about how undergraduates at Kwara State University and the University of Ilorin consume news, it is important to take these findings' wider implications into account. Politicians, educators, and media companies can all benefit from knowing how social media affects this demographic's news consumption as it provides information about the changing media landscape and the function of digital platforms in news distribution. They must therefore make use of these social media channels.

This study also underscores the need for media literacy education to empower undergraduates to critically evaluate news content on social media. Also, the findings emphasize the importance of tailored news content and credible sources in enhancing the news consumption experience for this demographic.

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Author profile

Victor Olusegun BABATUNDE is a lecturer in the Department of Mass Communication, at Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria. The author who just concluded his doctorate in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria holds a National Diploma, Bachelors, and Masters degrees in Mass Communication.He is a member of different professional bodies and has an overwhelming passion for teaching, research, and community service. His research interests include; Media and Society, Mass Media Effects Studies, Development Communication, and Broadcasting.

Oluwajuwonlo Emmanuel AYANWALE is a graduate of Mass Communication from the Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Performing Arts from the University of Ilorin, Nigeria, as well as a National Diploma in Mass Communication from Kwara State Polytechnic. He also has certifications in Media Ethics and Governance from the University of Amsterdam, Netherlands; Advertising and Society, from Duke University; Integrated Marketing Communications: Advertising, Public Relations, and Digital Marketing from IE Business School, amongst others. He is an ardent Communicator with a research interest in Investigative Journalism, Political Communication, and Development Communication.