

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON NEWS GATHERING AND NEWS DELIVERY IN NIGERIA: A CASE STUDY OF THE NIGERIAN TRIBUNE

Stephen Ojochegbe Oma-Ofozor, * Ignatus Achilike Njoku, **

* Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, Lagos State University, Ojo, Nigeria.

* Department, Benson Idahosa University, Benin City, Nigeria.

Abstract

The advent of social media platforms due to the unprecedented growth in Information and Communication Technology has played a pivotal role in disrupting the modus operandi of virtually all business operations. The journalism profession is not exempted from the insurmountable impact of social media, as journalism has undergone a significant transformation necessitated by the proliferation of social media platforms in this present domain. Social media has transformed traditional newsrooms by speeding up the delivery process and providing journalists with tools to track trends, share updates, and collaborate with peers globally. Against this backdrop, this study investigated the impacts of social media on news gathering and delivery in Nigerian Tribune newspaper. The study population comprised journalists in Nigerian Tribune newspaper. The study was anchored on the Diffusion of Innovation Theory. The study employed a qualitative approach, using in-depth interviews as the research method. The purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents sampled for the study. The findings revealed that journalists at The Nigerian Tribune extensively utilize social media tools for news gathering and dissemination as participants noted that platforms like Twitter and Facebook are crucial for sourcing real-time information and monitoring breaking news. Results also indicated that several challenges such as poor internet connectivity, technical glitches, and difficulties in verifying information sourced from social media are faced by journalists at The Nigerian Tribune when using digital tools for news gathering and delivery. The study recommended that media organizations should ensure regular assessment of social media strategies and their impact on news delivery as this can help identify areas for improvement.

Keywords: Social Media, Newspaper, Nigerian Tribune, Diffusion of Innovation Theory

Declaration of conflicting interests: The Authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Introduction

The advent of social media platforms due to the unprecedented growth in Information and Communication Technology has played a pivotal role in disrupting the modus operandi of virtually all business operations (Ezurike, 2023). The journalism profession is not exempted from the insurmountable impact of social media, as journalism has undergone a significant transformation necessitated by the proliferation of social media platforms in this present domain (Deuze & Witschge, 2018). Dyer (2010) cited in Apuke (2016) asserts that a century and a half ago, international communication required physical presence. At that time, reporters had to swiftly return to the newsroom after interviews, racing against competitors to be the first in print. However, the digital age transformed the journalist's role. The emergence of information

communication technology, particularly the internet, enables individuals to learn about events without being physically present. Journalists now have the capability to disseminate news globally through online platforms. The rise of social media platforms has increased interactivity among people, enabling them to act as both creators and consumers of information concurrently (Goyanes, 2019). Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have significantly enhanced the communication landscape, offering various entertainment features that function as catalysts for social transformation and swift information exchange.

Affirming the impact of social media on journalism practice, Ruth (2010) connotes that social media via online newspapers can be used to spread information far and wide. Explicating further, the scholar noted that established Nigerian newspapers

such as "The Vanguard" and "The Sun" are prominently featured on social media platforms, where millions of advertisements are showcased for widespread public consumption. Other aspects as outlined by Nigel et al. (2012), is entertainment. According to Nigel et al. (2012), another dimension to consider is entertainment. Social media contributes to the public's amusement and humour. Media professionals curate various forms of entertainment that capture the interest of the masses. Additionally, social media enables reporters to promptly share breaking news, providing the audience with immediate access to information and the opportunity to provide feedback (Ruth, 2010). The foregoing implies that the advent of social media has accelerated the pace of journalism practice. Although the advent of social media platforms has provided numerous benefits to the journalism practice. On the flip side, its emergence has also contributed to the proliferation of misinformation and disinformation, causing drastic damages in the journalism landscape. Supporting this assertion, Samuel et al. (2019) purports that the internet's constant connectivity and the rush for attention and ad revenue lead to the spread of fake news, as online platforms prioritize speed over accuracy in a competitive environment.

Due to the competition for attention and influence, many journalists feel compelled to publish quickly and verify later, contributing to the proliferation of fake news (Adeleke, 2016). Nigeria faces a similar problem as news sites and blogs in the country often disseminate unverified stories, especially those with sensational content, leading to rapid spread. Given the substantial reader base of these platforms, people tend to believe the fake news stories they encounter. Subsequently, individuals on these platforms share these stories on social media, driven by the desire to be among the first to know. Unfortunately, even after the misinformation has been debunked, the persistence of the fake news still endures (Adeleke, 2016). It is noteworthy to say that while reporters are held to journalistic standards, requiring them to rigorously fact-check and ensure the credibility and reliability of their reports before publication, there is a lack of similar standards applied to irresponsible social media sites and independent blogs, posing a threat to the credibility, ethics, and professionalism of journalism. Against this backdrop, this study seeks to investigate the influence of social media misinformation on journalism practice in Nigeria. Despite the challenges posed by the spread of misinformation and disinformation, social media platforms continue to play a vital role in modern journalism, particularly in news gathering and delivery. Social media offers journalists unprecedented access to real-time information, enabling them to monitor breaking news, public sentiment, and global events as

they unfold. It also facilitates direct engagement with audiences and sources, making it easier for journalists to gather diverse perspectives and on-the-ground reports. Platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram have become essential tools for distributing news quickly, allowing media outlets to reach a broader audience in real time. In fact, social media has transformed traditional newsrooms by speeding up the delivery process and providing journalists with tools to track trends, share updates, and collaborate with peers globally.

In Nigeria, the effects of social media on news gathering and delivery have become more pronounced, with media organizations relying on these platforms to stay competitive in a fast-paced digital environment. However, the unchecked flow of unverified information on social media has led to the spread of fake news, sensationalism, and public mistrust in the media. While previous studies, such as Adeleke (2016) and Samuel et al. (2019), have explored the impacts of social media on news gathering and delivery processes, little to no research has specifically examined its influence in The Nigerian Tribune. This knowledge gap is critical, as understanding the unique experiences of journalists at The Nigerian Tribune can provide valuable insights into how Nigerian media outlets can adapt to the evolving media landscape while upholding professional standards. Hence, this study seeks to fill this gap by investigating impacts of social media on news gathering and delivery processes using The Nigerian Tribune as the case study.

Statement of Problem

The rise of social media has significantly transformed the journalism industry, providing journalists with new tools for news gathering and delivery (Apuke, 2015). Platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram allow reporters to access real-time information, connect directly with sources and engage with a global audience. However, the speed at which news spreads on social media also poses challenges, including the increased risk of misinformation, disinformation and the pressure to publish news quickly without proper verification (Obaze, 2017). Furthermore, social media has brought about the rampant fake news and citizen journalism, because of the lack of control and proper editing. These challenges can undermine the credibility and ethical standards of traditional journalism.

In Nigeria, the effects of social media on news gathering and delivery have become more pronounced, with media organizations relying on these platforms to stay competitive in a fast-paced digital environment. However, the unchecked flow of unverified information on social media has led to the spread of fake news, sensationalism and public mistrust in the media. While previous studies, such as Adeleke (2016) and Samuel et

al. (2019), have explored the impacts of social media on news gathering and news delivery processes, little or no research has specifically examined its influence in The Nigerian Tribune. This knowledge gap is critical as understanding the unique experiences of journalists at The Nigerian Tribune can provide valuable insights into how Nigerian media outlets can adapt to the evolving media landscape, while upholding professional standards. Hence, this study seeks to fill this gap by investigating the impacts of social media on news gathering and delivery processes using The Nigerian Tribune as the case study.

Research Objective

The main aim of this study is to examine the impacts of social media on news gathering news and delivery process in The Nigerian Tribune with the intent to discover the relevance of the new media tools to optimal and efficient newsroom management. The choice of The Nigerian Tribune invariably, is predicated on its long standing service and survival as the oldest privately-owned newspaper outfit in Nigeria; established in 1949 (76 years ago) by late Chief Obafemi Awolowo, it is only natural to make it a choice for the study to ascertain its compliance and challenges with the advancement in communication technology in the digital age, particularly in era of the new media. However, the specific objectives of the study are to:

- 1) Discover the extent of social media usage in news gatherings and dissemination in Tribune newspaper.
- 2) Examine journalists' perceptions on the impact of social media use on the news gathering and delivery in Tribune newspaper?
- 3) Discover the challenges encountered by journalists in The Nigerian Tribune as they use digital tools in their daily news gathering and news delivery.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is focused on exploring the impacts of social media on the news gathering and delivery processes at The Nigerian Tribune, a leading newspaper in Nigeria; this entails news coverage at national and international levels viz: politics, business, current affairs, sports, education and health, agriculture et al, with in-depth analysis of the various news developments as regard governance, policy and issues about Nigeria; business trends, entrepreneurship and economic development; sports analysis; analysis of education issues; music and movies amongst others. It examines how journalists at The Nigerian Tribune utilize various social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to source, verify, and disseminate news. Specifically, the research will focus on how social media affects the speed, accuracy, and credibility of news reporting, as

well as the challenges journalists face in balancing the pressure to publish quickly with maintaining journalistic integrity.

The study is geographically limited to Nigeria, with a particular emphasis on the operations of The Nigerian Tribune in Ibadan. It will involve interviews with journalists, at The Nigerian Tribune to gain **insight into their** experiences and perceptions regarding social media's role in news reporting; this is within the period from 2002-2023 when social media took the centre stage.

Literature Review

The Role of Social Media in News Gathering

Social media has transformed the news-gathering process in journalism by providing journalists with instant access to information and events from around the world. Platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram enable reporters to stay informed about breaking news in real time (Hermida, 2019). This immediate access allows journalists to react more quickly to events as they unfold. According to Lee (2015) noted, social media has changed the speed at which news is reported, creating a dynamic environment where journalists are always connected to the latest developments.

Beyond breaking news, social media has expanded journalists' ability to engage with a diverse range of sources. By following various accounts—from officials to citizens—journalists gain access to unique perspectives and insights that may not be available through traditional reporting methods. This has democratized news gathering, as it enables journalists to access a broader spectrum of voices and viewpoints. This engagement enriches reporting by including different perspectives, which can lead to more balanced coverage of events.

Despite the advantages, social media presents challenges, particularly in terms of the accuracy and reliability of the information shared. Misinformation and unverified content circulate rapidly on platforms like Facebook and Twitter, which can complicate the verification process for journalists (Samuel et al., 2019). The rapid spread of false information requires reporters to invest additional time in fact-checking and source verification, which can slow down the reporting process.

It is of great pertinence to note that while social media has become a crucial tool for news gathering, it has not replaced traditional methods. Journalists still rely on established practices such as face-to-face interviews, document analysis, and official statements to corroborate stories. In this wise, social media serves as a supplement rather than a replacement for traditional journalism (Tandoc et al. 2020). Social media may provide the initial lead, but traditional methods are essential for in-depth reporting and

verification. This balance between digital and conventional techniques mirrors the hybrid approach observed at many news organizations, where social media serves as a real-time resource while traditional methods ensure the depth and credibility of stories (Newman, 2021).

Furthermore, social media has influenced how journalists distribute news. Platforms such as Twitter allow journalists to share stories directly with their audience, breaking the news in real time without needing to go through traditional channels (Bruno, 2011). This capability has extended the reach of newspapers and enabled greater interaction with readers, which mirrors findings that social media enhances engagement between media organizations and their audiences. Through these platforms, news organizations can not only deliver news but also foster feedback and discussions with their readers, further enriching the journalistic process.

Social media has also transformed the speed at which news is gathered and delivered by allowing journalists to report breaking news almost instantly. Platforms like Twitter and Facebook enable journalists to access and share real-time updates, which has redefined the pace of journalism (Bujak & Smit, 2020). This immediacy has made social media a critical tool for newsrooms, allowing for rapid dissemination of stories and continuous updates as events unfold. However, this emphasis on speed often raises concerns about the accuracy and credibility of the information being reported. To tackle this, journalists must navigate the tension between delivering news quickly and ensuring that the information is verified through a rigorous approach to fact-checking (Tandoc et al., 2020).

Beyond speed, social media has reshaped how journalists interact with their audience. Platforms like Facebook and Twitter have facilitated direct communication and real-time engagement between journalists and readers, fostering a more interactive relationship (Vos et al., 2021). This direct feedback allows journalists to gauge public interest, respond to questions, and clarify details, creating a more dynamic and collaborative form of news consumption (Quandt et al., 2020). By enabling such interaction, social media not only broadens the reach of news but also strengthens the connection between news organizations and their audiences, enhancing the overall engagement in the news-gathering and dissemination process (Singer et al., 2019).

Challenges in Social Media Usage for News Gathering and Delivery

The rise of social media has revolutionized news gathering and delivery, providing journalists with new tools and platforms to disseminate information rapidly. However, alongside these advancements, several challenges have emerged that hinder the effectiveness of social media in the journalistic

process. These challenges include inadequate infrastructure, concerns about the credibility of information, and technical difficulties associated with using social media tools.

Inadequate infrastructure poses a significant challenge for journalists in Nigeria, impacting their ability to gather and deliver news effectively. The lack of reliable internet connectivity, power supply, and necessary technology hampers the speed and accuracy of news dissemination. Journalists often find themselves struggling with slow internet speeds or complete outages, which can delay their reporting and reduce the timeliness of the information shared with the public. This infrastructure gap not only affects immediate news coverage but also diminishes the overall quality of journalism, as reporters may be forced to rely on outdated or incomplete information.

The credibility of information shared on social media is another critical concern for journalists. This perhaps accounts for the reason why Pavlik (2020) posits that rapid pace of digital journalism necessitates a delicate balance between speed and accuracy. Journalists are under constant pressure to report breaking news quickly, which can lead to hasty decisions regarding the verification of facts. This urgency increases the risk of spreading false information, undermining the trustworthiness of news organizations. Therefore, thorough fact-checking becomes paramount to ensure that the information disseminated is reliable and credible, which is crucial for maintaining the integrity of journalism in the digital age.

Technical difficulties also present significant obstacles for journalists utilizing social media tools. These issues disrupt the news dissemination process, making it difficult for journalists to effectively reach their audience. Vos et al. (2021) noted that the constant updates and changes in social media platforms require journalists to remain adaptable and continually update their skills to stay effective in the digital landscape.

To tackle the challenges encountered in the usage of social media for news gathering and delivery, several key strategies must be implemented. First, there is a pressing need for continuous training and investment in digital skills among journalists (Olorunnisola & Martin, 2020). Continuous training ensures that journalists stay updated with the latest digital tools and trends, allowing them to balance the need for speed with the necessity for accuracy in their reporting.

Also, strategic investments in social media infrastructure are essential. Hiring social media specialists and creating digital-first content that resonates with online audiences are critical steps that can enhance engagement. In congruence with this viewpoint, Lee and Ma (2019) argue that tailored digital content—such as infographics, videos, and interactive

posts—can help media organizations attract a broader and more diverse audience, particularly among younger, tech-savvy users.

Furthermore, entrusting social media management to specialized teams with expertise in content optimization and audience engagement is vital. Research by García-Avilés (2021) highlights that effective social media integration requires not only the utilization of digital platforms but also strategic thinking and the involvement of skilled professionals. By adopting these approaches, news organizations can better navigate the challenges posed by social media, which in turn can play a pivotal role in enhancing their overall performance in the digital landscape.

Theoretical Framework

Diffusion of Innovation Theory

The Diffusion of Innovation Theory explores how new ideas and technologies spread within societies and highlights the media's role in influencing people's adoption of these innovations. Introduced by Everett Rogers in 1962, this theory examines the reasons behind the acceptance or rejection of new technologies, illustrated through Rogers' research on farmers in Iowa who either embraced or resisted agricultural innovations, such as high-yield hybrid seeds and chemical fertilizers (Momoh, 2015).

Rogers defines diffusion as the communication process through which a new idea or product gains acceptance in the market, while the rate of diffusion refers to how quickly this new idea spreads from one consumer to another. He also discusses adoption, which pertains to the psychological decision-making process individuals undergo when considering new technologies.

According to Daramola (2012), the diffusion of innovation process comprises five key stages: awareness, interest, evaluation, trial, and adoption.

Awareness: In this initial stage, potential adopters become aware of the innovation's existence, generating interest among members of the social system.

Interest: Here, individuals seek additional information and details about the innovation after becoming aware of it.

Evaluation: During this stage, potential adopters assess the advantages and disadvantages of the innovation to decide whether to accept or reject it.

Trial: Individuals experiment with the innovation to varying degrees, determining its usefulness and often seeking more information in the process.

Adoption: The final stage occurs when individuals decide to fully integrate the innovation into their routine, influenced by their experiences during the trial phase.

Rogers (cited in Momoh, 2015) identifies five categories of adopters, each with distinct characteristics:

Innovators: These are adventurous and educated

individuals who possess multiple information sources and are willing to take risks. They are motivated by the desire to be change agents within their social circles.

Early Adopters: This group consists of socially influential and educated individuals who see themselves as visionaries in their market. They are drawn to high-risk, high-reward projects and are less sensitive to prices due to their focus on achieving significant competitive advantages.

Early Majority: These deliberate adopters have many informal social connections and prefer gradual changes over radical shifts to enhance productivity.

Late Majority: Typically, skeptical and conservative, this group of adopters is often price-sensitive and requires well-established solutions. They adopt innovations mainly to keep up with competitors and often rely on a single trusted advisor.

Laggards: This category consists of skeptics who prefer the status quo and are resistant to change, often holding onto outdated ideas.

The Diffusion of Innovation Theory is highly relevant to this study as it aims to investigate how social media impacts the news gathering and delivery processes at the Nigerian Tribune. By applying this framework, the study will examine the stages through which journalists and media organizations navigate the adoption of social media as a tool for news dissemination, as well as the various adopter categories among media practitioners. This analysis will shed light on how these dynamics influence the overall effectiveness and integrity of news reporting in the digital age.

Empirical Review

Ekeli and Enobakhare (2013) explored how social media platforms have become integral to the way news is produced, disseminated, and consumed, fundamentally altering the traditional practices of journalism. In conducting this study, the researchers employed a survey method, which involved administering a 16-item questionnaire to a carefully selected group of 50 respondents. These respondents included news reporters, feature writers, and producers working across radio, television stations, and a newspaper organization in Edo State. The systematic sampling technique ensured that the study gathered insights from individuals who are deeply embedded in the journalistic field, thereby providing a robust understanding of the changes being observed. The study's findings revealed that social media has significantly transformed the processes of news production and dissemination within mainstream journalism. Journalists are increasingly relying on these platforms to source information and to reach their audiences with greater speed and efficiency than traditional methods would typically allow. The study also discovered that 73.53% of the respondents

identified Twitter as their preferred social media platform for accessing information. Twitter's real-time nature, combined with its widespread use, has made it an essential tool for journalists who need to stay informed about ongoing events and engage with their audience as news breaks. In light of these findings, the study recommended that mainstream media organizations should embrace the virtues of social media, such as participation, openness, and connectedness, and integrate these into their journalistic practices. By doing so, they can maintain their relevance and competitiveness in a rapidly evolving media landscape. Additionally, journalists are encouraged to innovate in the way they package and disseminate news, developing new formats that leverage the interactive and far-reaching capabilities of social media.

Omosotomhe and Olley (2018) aimed to explore the role of social media in contemporary reporting. Data was collected through questionnaires and interviews with respondents from various media organizations across Edo State in South-South Nigeria. Findings revealed that a significant number of journalists now view social media as an essential tool for news gathering and dissemination. Results also showed that social media has a substantial impact on several aspects of journalism, such as enhancing coverage and expanding audience reach. However, the study also reveals that social media can invade privacy and infringe upon copyright laws, largely due to a lack of legislative and regulatory frameworks. Additionally, social media platforms face credibility challenges because of their anonymous nature, which allows some sources to use pseudonyms. Based on these findings, the study recommended media organizations to leverage social media more effectively for news gathering and dissemination.

Inobemhe and Santas (2021) assessed the adoption and use of social media in the newsroom operations of selected television stations in Nigeria. The study adopted both quantitative and qualitative survey methodologies to investigate how social media is influencing the operations of television newsrooms in Nigeria. Due to the nature of the study, the researcher purposively selected four television stations, two from the Southern region and two from the Northern region of the country. The primary population for the study comprised staff from the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) headquarters in Abuja and Lagos, as well as African Independent Television (AIT) headquarters in Abuja and Lagos. The selection of these four broadcast stations aimed to ensure geographical representation and balance in terms of ownership, with NTA being a public-owned media organization and AIT being privately owned. Findings revealed that the adoption of social media within the studied media organizations is quite significant, with these platforms being utilized as

both news sources and channels for news dissemination. The study concluded that while the adoption of social media is essential, users, particularly journalists, should exercise caution, as these platforms can easily facilitate the spread of unverified information and misinformation.

Msughter et al. (2024) examined the influence of social media on news consumption and credibility in Lagos State, aiming to assess the net benefits of social media as a source of information in Nigeria. It sought to evaluate the credibility of news obtained from various social media platforms while analyzing the challenges posed by misinformation and fake news. Source Credibility Theory was employed as the theoretical framework for the research. A well-structured questionnaire was used as the data collection instrument, and the data were analyzed using simple percentages and frequency statistics. The results indicated a significant presence of misinformation on social media platforms, with Facebook identified as the primary source, followed by WhatsApp and TikTok. The analysis revealed that susceptibility to social media misinformation varied by age, education, income, and occupation, suggesting that younger generations and individuals with lower education levels are more vulnerable to misinformation. Consequently, not all social media users possess the ability to combat misinformation effectively. Based on these findings, the study recommended several measures for regulating social media. It advocates for the verification of accounts to ensure that only credible sources are permitted to share information and news on social media platforms.

Agbo and Chukwuma (2016) conducted a study to determine the extent to which broadcast journalists in South-East Nigeria utilize social media for news gathering and transmission. Employing a survey research method, the researchers used a questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument. The study's population comprised all 867 broadcast journalists in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria, from which a sample of 274 was selected using Taro Yamane's formula. Through purposive sampling, the findings revealed that broadcast journalists in South-East Nigeria have not significantly adopted social media for news gathering and transmission. Consequently, the researchers recommended that these journalists should embrace social media platforms, as they are valuable tools for contemporary journalism practices.

A study conducted by Ruth's (2010) revealed various social media tools available to journalists. The research explored the impact of social media on journalists' work efficiency, pointing out that platforms like social networks allow investigative reporters to gather valuable content and engage virtual audiences to assist in uncovering information. The findings revealed that while newspapers have a strong

legacy of breaking news and uncovering significant stories, they are losing ground to a generation increasingly favouring digital and mobile news alternatives. Despite the rise of social media, television remained the dominant news source, with 71% of respondents preferring it. Additionally, the study observed that younger audiences favour quick access to news and information, making the internet a convenient option. Furthermore, about 60% of respondents perceived news organizations as politically biased and untrustworthy, while only 20% believed that these organizations were independent or willing to admit their mistakes.

Methodology

The research method for this study is in-depth interview, which is one of the most common data collection techniques in qualitative research. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2011), interviews provide a way to interrogate individuals' values, memories, emotions, experiences, opinions, and motivations on specific topics. In-depth interviews are particularly suitable for this study as they allow the researcher to engage with media professionals at the Nigerian Tribune on a personal level. This method enables the researcher to gain detailed insights into how social media has impacted the processes of news gathering and delivery, as well as the opportunities and challenges faced by journalists in adapting to these digital platforms.

The population of this study comprises journalists and media professionals working at the Nigerian Tribune, one of Nigeria's prominent and long-standing newspapers. These individuals include editors, reporters, and other news personnel who are directly involved in the processes of news gathering and dissemination. The choice of this population is based on the premise that these professionals are actively engaged in the field of journalism and are likely to have firsthand experience with the impact of social media on their day-to-day operations. The sample size for this study consists of six participants, all of whom are journalists from the Nigerian Tribune. The sampling technique employed is purposive sampling. This non-probability sampling method allows the researcher to deliberately select participants based on their knowledge, expertise, and involvement in the news gathering and delivery process.

For this study, thematic analysis was utilized to systematically examine the qualitative data collected from the in-depth interviews. Thematic analysis is a method that enables researchers to identify, analyze, and report patterns or themes within data. This process involves coding the interview responses to categorize and interpret the information meaningfully. The analysis was conducted using NVivo 15, a powerful qualitative data analysis software that facilitates the

organization and coding of textual data. NVivo 15 allowed for efficient management of the data, enabling the researcher to identify recurring themes and patterns more effectively.

Results

Demographic Data

Table One: Demographic Data

Participant Code	Gender	Age Range	Educational Qualification	Years of Experience	Interview Duration
P1	Male	51 above	Bachelors	16 years above	27 minutes
P2	Female	41-50	Masters	16 years above	34 minutes
P3	Male	41-50	Higher National Diploma	16 years above	18 minutes
P4	Male	41-50	Doctorate	16 years above	22 minutes
P5	Male	41-50	Higher National Diploma	11-15 years	29 minutes
P6	Male	41-50	Higher National Diploma	11-15 years	33 minutes

The demographic data of the six participants, as presented in Table One, reveals a predominantly male group of journalists, with five males and one female. The participants are largely within the 41-50 age range, with only one participant above 51 years. In terms of educational qualifications, three participants hold Higher National Diplomas, while one has a Bachelor's degree, one a Master's degree, and one a Doctorate, indicating a variety of educational backgrounds. Most participants (four out of six) have over 16 years of experience in journalism, reflecting a wealth of professional knowledge. Two participants have 11-15 years of experience, further highlighting the group's significant expertise. Interview durations varied, ranging from 18 to 34 minutes, providing substantial insight into their perspectives on the use of social media in the news gathering and delivery processes at The Nigerian Tribune.

Theme 1: Utilization of Social Media Tools in News Gathering and Dissemination by The Nigerian Tribune

This theme explores how social media tools are utilized in the news-gathering and dissemination process by The Nigerian Tribune. The frequency of social media use for news gathering varies among the participants,

highlighting its role as both a supplementary and primary tool.

Participant Three noted the significance of social media, stating:

"I use social media to a great extent for gathering news tips and staying updated on trending issues. While it's not my primary source for in-depth reporting, it provides a quick snapshot of the major stories of the day, especially through posts from key public figures." This reflects a common sentiment that social media serves as a valuable resource for immediate updates, albeit not for comprehensive journalism.

Participant Five emphasized the immediacy of Twitter, saying:

"I use social media quite frequently, especially Twitter, where news tends to break first. These platforms give me access to real-time updates and allow me to track stories as they develop. It's a valuable resource for monitoring trends and staying ahead of the curve."

Participant Six echoed this perspective, explaining:

"I use social media tools like Twitter and Instagram almost daily for news gathering. These platforms provide a direct line to real-time events, public opinion, and even official communications. Twitter, for instance, is my go-to platform for breaking news, while Instagram helps me capture visual content that enhances storytelling."

Conversely, Participant Two expressed a more cautious approach, stating:

"Social media tools are used to a low extent for actual news gathering. While these platforms are valuable for spotting trends, viral stories, and gaining audience feedback, traditional methods of sourcing news, such as direct interviews, official press releases, and on-the-ground reporting, remain dominant. We treat social media with caution, particularly because of the prevalence of unverified information." This perspective reflects a recognition of the limitations of social media, emphasizing the need for careful verification and traditional practices in journalism.

In summary, the participants highlighted varying degrees of reliance on social media for news gathering, with some viewing it as an essential tool for real-time updates and trend monitoring, while others remained cautious due to the potential for misinformation.

Theme 2: Journalists' Perceptions of Social Media's Impact on News Gathering and Delivery

The second theme that emerged from the interviews pertains to journalists' perceptions of how social media impacts news gathering and delivery processes.

Participants expressed diverse perspectives on how social media affects the processes of news gathering and delivery.

Participant Three highlighted the immediacy that social media brings to news delivery, stating: "Social media has had a significant impact on the speed of news

delivery. It allows us to share stories as they develop in real-time."

Participant Five elaborated on the dual nature of social media's impact, saying:

"Social media has significantly altered the news gathering and delivery process. On one hand, it has accelerated the pace at which news can be gathered and shared with the public. Stories break fast, and by the time our hard copy hits the stands, many readers may have already encountered the news online. This creates a need for the print version to provide additional insights or analysis that goes beyond the initial social media posts."

Participant Six noted the efficiencies gained through social media, stating:

"Social media has streamlined the news gathering process, offering immediate access to eyewitness accounts, videos, and photos of events as they unfold. However, it's not without challenges. We still need to carefully verify every piece of information, which sometimes takes extra time compared to traditional methods. But overall, it has made our job faster and more efficient."

This illustrates how social media provides a wealth of resources that can enhance reporting, while also emphasizing the continued importance of verification to maintain journalistic integrity.

Participants also shared insightful reflections on how social media influences the quality and speed of news delivery in their reporting practices.

Participant One affirmed the positive impact of social media, stating:

"Yes, I think and strongly believe that social media platforms help journalists in the Nigerian Tribune to improve the quality and speed of news delivery. Like I stated earlier, social media platforms are a tool rather than a challenge. Journalists now type their stories on the go, unlike before its advent." Participant Two echoed this sentiment, asserting:

"Absolutely. Social media has revolutionized the news industry in Nigeria by making the reporting process faster, more accessible, and cost-effective. Journalists can now deliver news directly to a wide audience without the logistical limitations of traditional print media. Social media also allows for continuous updates, something print media cannot offer. However, this has also shifted the focus toward more real-time, breaking news stories, often at the expense of in-depth investigative journalism."

Participant Four added:

"Social media provides real-time updates, often faster than traditional news outlets can manage. This has fundamentally changed the way news is consumed and delivered in Nigeria, as it pushes journalists to be more immediate and responsive."

In summary, the participants collectively acknowledged that social media significantly enhances the quality and speed of news delivery, enabling journalists to disseminate information quickly and efficiently.

Theme 4: Challenges of Using Digital Tools in News Gathering and Delivery

The fourth theme that emerged from the interviews addresses the challenges journalists face when using digital tools for news gathering and delivery.

Participants highlighted several challenges associated with using digital tools in the news gathering process.

Participant Two pointed out:

"The key challenges include network issues, transmission difficulties, and technical glitches. Sometimes, poor internet connectivity can delay the uploading or sharing of news on social platforms."

Participant Three added:

"One major challenge is ensuring accuracy. With the fast pace of social media, there's always the risk of misinformation. It requires constant fact-checking to make sure the information we disseminate is credible."

Similarly, Participant Four emphasized:

"Accuracy is a major challenge. Social media is prone to misinformation and ensuring that the news we report is accurate requires thorough fact-checking, which can be time-consuming." This reinforces the need for meticulous cross-checking in the age of rapid, user-generated content that often lacks verification.

Participant Five noted:

"One of the biggest challenges is connectivity and network issues. Accessing the internet in real time is crucial for staying updated with breaking news, and any disruption can hinder our ability to deliver timely content."

Participant Six highlighted a different challenge:

"Another challenge is keeping up with the constant changes in social media algorithms and trends, which can affect how widely our news gets seen."

This speaks to the evolving digital landscape where algorithmic changes can influence visibility and engagement, requiring journalists to stay adaptable. Participants also highlighted the technical difficulties they encounter when using social media tools in the course of news dissemination.

Participant Two shared:

"Technical difficulties such as platform malfunctions, handling various file types (audio, video, text), and dealing with algorithm changes on social platforms can disrupt news dissemination."

In a similar vein, Participant Five noted:

"Yes, the technical difficulties mainly revolve around connectivity and navigating new tools and platforms. However, with continuous training and experience, these challenges become manageable. Regular updates to social media algorithms also require us to stay informed and adapt to new trends."

This response reflects the importance of adaptability and ongoing training to overcome

technical obstacles, emphasizing that while such challenges exist, they can be mitigated through proper training and staying informed about platform changes.

Participant Six also added:

"Yes, especially in terms of understanding new tools and algorithms. However, The Nigerian Tribune offers regular training, which helps us stay updated on best practices for social media usage. With each new update, we adapt our strategies to optimize our reach and accuracy."

This highlights the proactive approach of continuous learning and strategic adaptation to ensure that technical difficulties do not hinder news delivery.

Discussion

The first research objective sought to determine the extent to which social media tools have been utilized for news gathering and dissemination by The Nigerian Tribune. Several participants acknowledged the importance of social media platforms such as Twitter and Instagram, especially for monitoring breaking news and trending topics. This aligns with the findings of Hermida (2019), who argued that social media has transformed how journalists stay informed about real-time events, with platforms like Twitter serving as key tools for breaking news. However, while some journalists regularly engaged with social media for quick updates, others used it more selectively, primarily as a supplementary resource rather than a primary tool for in-depth reporting. This observation is consistent with Tandoc et al. (2020), who noted that although social media is widely used in journalism, it often functions as an additional tool rather than replacing traditional news-gathering methods.

The second research objective was aimed at exploring journalists' perceptions of the impact of social media on news gathering and delivery processes at The Nigerian Tribune. From the interviews conducted, the theme "Journalists' Perceptions of Social Media's Impact on News Gathering and Delivery" emerged. Many participants noted that social media significantly accelerates the speed at which news is gathered and disseminated, enabling journalists to share breaking news almost instantaneously. This immediacy aligns with the findings of Bujak and Smit (2020), who argued that social media has redefined the speed of information flow in journalism. However, participants also emphasized the need for careful verification of information, as the rapid pace of social media can lead to challenges in ensuring accuracy and credibility. This dual impact illustrates how social media, while enhancing efficiency, also necessitates a rigorous approach to fact-checking and validation to maintain journalistic integrity, a sentiment echoed by Tandoc et al. (2020), who noted that journalists must balance the speed of news delivery with the necessity for accuracy. Journalists also recognized that social media platforms have transformed the reporting landscape by enabling quicker dissemination of news, which has improved accessibility for audiences. This is consistent with the work of Kumpel (2022), who found

that social media enhances the speed of news delivery while also allowing for continuous updates. However, concerns emerged regarding the emphasis on speed potentially compromising the quality and depth of coverage, as some journalists felt pressured to prioritize breaking news over comprehensive reporting. This aligns with the findings of Chuka and Adebawale (2023), who observed that while social media facilitates rapid reporting, it often shifts the focus away from in-depth investigative journalism, presenting an ongoing challenge within the industry.

The third research objective aimed to investigate the challenges journalists encounter when using digital tools in their daily news gathering and delivery processes at The Nigerian Tribune. From the interviews conducted, the theme "Challenges of Using Digital Tools in News Gathering and Delivery" emerged. Participants highlighted issues such as poor internet connectivity, technical glitches, and transmission delays, all of which hinder the real-time sharing of news on social platforms. This aligns with the findings of Shadrach (2023), who emphasized that inadequate infrastructure remains a significant obstacle for journalists in Nigeria, affecting the speed and accuracy of news dissemination. Participants also noted the difficulty in ensuring the credibility of information sourced from social media, as the fast-paced nature of these platforms increases the risk of spreading misinformation. This challenge resonates with Pavlik (2020), who discussed the delicate balance between speed and accuracy in digital journalism, stressing the importance of thorough fact-checking to avoid the spread of false information.

Participants also cited frequent platform malfunctions, navigating various file types, and adapting to ever-changing social media algorithms as challenges that disrupt the news dissemination process. These technical issues were also identified in research by Vos et al. (2021), who pointed out that constant updates and changes in social media platforms require journalists to remain adaptable and continually update their skills to stay effective in the digital landscape.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings and objectives of this study, the study concludes that social media plays a pivotal role in news gathering and delivery at The Nigerian Tribune. Journalists at The Nigerian Tribune have diverse perceptions of the impact of social media on their work. Many view social media as a valuable resource for obtaining real-time information, while others are concerned about the potential threats to journalistic integrity. Journalists encounter significant challenges in their daily news gathering and delivery activities, including poor internet connectivity, the prevalence of misinformation, and technical complexities associated with various social media platforms.

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

1. The Nigerian Tribune should prioritize ongoing training programs for journalists to improve

their digital skills and proficiency with social media tools. This training should focus on best practices for using social media responsibly and effectively in the news gathering process.

2. The Nigerian Tribune should invest in better technical infrastructure, including reliable internet connectivity, to facilitate seamless news dissemination and improve overall operational efficiency.
3. The management of The Nigerian Tribune should develop a comprehensive editorial guideline for social media use can help journalists balance speed with accuracy. These guidelines should emphasize the importance of verifying information before dissemination and provide clear protocols for addressing misinformation.
4. The Nigerian Tribune should engage digital media experts can help optimize social media strategies and ensure that journalists effectively navigate the complexities of these platforms while maintaining journalistic integrity.

References

1. Adeleke, I. D. (2016, December 17). Nigeria has always had a fake news problem, but why have we decided not to talk about it? Ventures Africa. <https://www.google.com/amp/venturesafrica.com/nigeria-fakenews-problem/amp>
2. Agbo, B. O., & Chukwuma, O. (2016). Social media usage in gathering and transmission of news among broadcast journalists in South-East Nigeria. *Media Watch*, 7(3), 345-356. <https://doi.org/DOIif available>
3. Apuke, O. D. (2016). The impact of social media on conventional journalism practice in Nigeria: A study of journalists in Jalingo Metropolis. *Canadian Social Science*, 12(12), 59-65.
4. Bruno, N. (2011). Tweet first, verify later? How real-time information is changing journalism. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk>
5. Bujak, A., & Smit, J. (2020). The role of social media in breaking news reporting. *Journal of Media Innovations*, 7(2), 45-58. <https://doi.org/DOIif available>
6. Daramola, I. (2012). Introduction to mass communication. Rothan Press.
7. Deuze, M., & Witschge, T. (2018). Beyond journalism: Theorizing the transformation of Journalism: Theory, Practice & Criticism, 19(2), 165-181. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884916688550>
8. Ekeli, O. E., & Enobakhare, J. O. (2013). Social media and the changing nature of journalism practice in Nigeria. *The Nigerian Journal of Communication*, 11(1), 118-138.
9. Ezurike, N. (2023). Awareness and adoption of wearable technology amongst Gen-Z in selected fitness centers in Lagos state. *International*

- Journal of Management Technology, 10(1), 20-37.
10. García-Avilés, J. A. (2021). Social media and journalistic routines: Adoption and integration of Twitter by news organizations. *Digital Journalism*, 9(4), 469-486. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2020.1866965>
 11. Goyanes, M. (2019). Antecedents of incidental news exposure: The role of media preference, use and trust. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 96(3), 769-788. [https://doi.org/\[DOI if available\]](https://doi.org/[DOI if available])
 12. Hermida, A. (2019). Twittering the news: The emergence of ambient journalism. *Journalism Practice*, 13(4), 633-648. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2019.1584222>
 13. Omosotomhe, S. I., & Olley, W. O. (2018). Utilisation of social media for news gathering and dissemination by journalists in Edo State, Nigeria. *The Nigerian Journal of Communication (TNJC)*, 15(2), 375-390.
 14. Inobemhe, K., & Santas, T. (2021). Adoption and use of social media in the newsroom operations of selected television stations in Nigeria. *Styles of Communication*, 13(1), 43-59. <https://doi.org/10.31178/SC.13.1.02>
 15. Lee, F. L. F., & Ma, L. (2019). News engagement on social media: Its antecedents and consequences. *Digital Journalism*, 7(2), 183-201.
 16. Momoh, I. (2015). An introduction to media and communication theories. Rhime Nigeria Limited.
 17. Msughtar, E. A., Igwe, E. C., Akin-Odukoya, O. O., & Ridwan, M. (2024). Influence of social media on news consumption and credibility in Nigeria. *Confrontasi Journal: Culture, Economy and Social Changes*, 11(2), 80-92.
 18. Newman, N. (2021). Journalism, media, and technology trends and predictions 2021. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk>
 19. Nigel, M., Graham, J., & Ant, H. (2012). Social media: The complete guide to social media from the social media guys. Tailieu Vn.
 20. Olorunnisola, A. A., & Martin, B. L. (2020). Journalism in the digital era: Challenges and opportunities for Africa. *African Journal of Communication*, 17(2), 105-123. <https://doi.org/10.4314/ajc.v17i2>
 21. Pavlik, J. V. (2019). Journalism in the age of social media. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, 74(1), 57-68. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077695818799204>
 22. Quandt, T., Singer, J. B., & Vos, T. P. (2020). Digital journalism: What's next? *Journal of Communication*, 70(5), 827-837. <https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqz041>
 23. Ruth, A. H. (2010). Social media revolution: Exploring the impact on journalism and news media organizations. *Student Pulse*, 2(3).
 24. Samuel, O. A., Out, I. M., Olumide, K. A., & Nonso, O. D. (2019). Fake news in Nigeria: Causes, effects and management. *Information and Knowledge Management*, 9(2), 96-99.
 25. Singer, J. B., Domingo, D., Heinonen, A., Paulussen, S., & Vujnovic, M. (2019). Participatory journalism: Guarding open gates at online newspapers. Wiley-Blackwell. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444334811>
 26. Tandoc, E. C., Jr., Jenkins, J., & Thomas, R. J. (2020). Journalists and social media: Building trust, breaking news. *Journalism Practice*, 14(4), 519-535.
 27. Vos, T. P., Craft, S., & Ashley, S. (2021). Navigating social media and trust in the digital newsroom. *Journalism Studies*, 22(6), 726-741.