

Social Media And It's Impact On Modern Journalism In Uganda. A Case Study Of BBS Tv

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates the intricate interplay of social media within the realm of journalism, focusing on the practices, perceptions, and impacts on audience engagement at BBS TV. The study employs a comprehensive survey approach, capturing the insights of 110 respondents within the media organization. The demographic characteristics of the participants lay the groundwork for understanding the diverse perspectives contributing to the study. The findings reveal a distinctive landscape of social media usage among journalists at BBS TV. Notably, platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok are frequently utilized for news updates. This diversified engagement underscores the multifaceted nature of journalists' interactions with various social media channels. Perceived benefits associated with social media in journalism are prominently acknowledged by the respondents. Faster news dissemination, enhanced real-time reporting, increased audience reach, and diverse storytelling formats emerge as notable advantages. This positive perception emphasizes the pivotal role of social media in improving the efficiency and reach of journalistic practices. Conversely, challenges associated with social media usage in journalism are recognized, with concerns about the spread of misinformation, ethical dilemmas, and the difficulty in verifying user-generated content. Journalists at BBS TV demonstrate a nuanced understanding of the complexities and potential pitfalls inherent in the use of social media platforms. The impact of social media on audience engagement emerges as a key theme in the study. Journalists perceive a significant increase in audience interaction, broader reach, more personalized content, and heightened engagement with multimedia content. These findings underscore the transformative effect of social media on traditional audience engagement models. The study contributes to the evolving discourse on the integration of social media in journalism, recognizing its potential benefits while addressing the challenges and ethical considerations inherent in this dynamic relationship.

Keywords: Social Media, WhatsApp, TikTok, Facebook and Modern Journalism

Background of the Study

The relationship between social media and journalism has evolved significantly on a global scale. In recent years, the proliferation of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube has changed the way news is disseminated and consumed worldwide (Winny et al., 2023). According to a 2021 Pew Research Center report by Shearer and Mats, social media has become the primary source of news for a substantial portion of the global population, with more than half of all adults in the United States alone reporting receiving news from social media platforms. (John et al., 2023). This global trend underscores the importance of understanding the impact of social media on journalism not only in Uganda but also internationally.

Understanding the impact of social media on journalism is essential in today's media environment. According to research (Ntirandekura et al., 2022), the concept of "journalism in the age of social media" underlines the idea that journalism is no longer limited to traditional newsrooms, but has become a participatory and networked process. This shift assumes that social media platforms enable not only professional journalists but also citizens to create, share and curate news content (Edgar & Moses, 2023). Thus, the conceptual framework for examining the relationship between social media and journalism is rooted in the idea of a dynamic and interactive information ecosystem. Additionally, recent research by Domingo et al. (2021) highlights the concept of "journalistic roles in the age of social media". This research suggests that while social media offers opportunities for instant reporting and audience engagement, it also challenges journalists to adapt to new roles (Christopher et al., 2022). Journalists can act as curators, validating and contextualizing user-generated content, or as moderators, managing online discussions and comments.

In addition, the concept of "trust in journalism" is a central theme in recent research on the impact of social media on journalism. According to Newman et al. (2020), trust in journalism is critical to maintaining news integrity in the age of social media. Research argues that trust is not only based on the reputation of media organizations, but also on the perceived reliability of information sources, which can vary widely across social networks (Kazaara et al., 2023). Investigating trust as a conceptual framework is therefore crucial to understanding how users navigate the vast sea of information on social media and make decisions about the credibility and accuracy of news content.

Understanding the impact of social media on journalism requires a contextual perspective that considers the various factors shaping this relationship. According to recent research (Shakilah & Kazaara, 2023), the contextual environment in which journalism operates is influenced by technological advances, audience behavior, and economic factors. This research suggests that the impact of social media on journalism cannot be analyzed in isolation, but must be understood in terms of the interplay of these contextual elements.

Moreover, based on findings (Shakilah & Kazaara, 2023), the role of social media in shaping journalism in specific regions and countries is highly contextual. The study highlights how cultural norms, government regulations, and historical factors influence the adoption and use of social media by both news organizations and audiences. For example, in some African countries social media platforms such as WhatsApp play a central role in the distribution of messages due to their availability, while in more developed countries Twitter and Facebook may dominate. This context-based approach provides insight into how the impact of social media on journalism varies across geographic and cultural settings (Davids et al., 2023).

Another essential contextual aspect is the economic dimension of journalism in the age of social media. Recent research (K. Paul et al., 2023) highlights that revenue models for news organizations are evolving based on the changing media environment. Traditional advertising revenue has declined, and news outlets are exploring new models such as subscription-based services and sponsored content. Social media platforms also play a role in generating revenue as they offer opportunities for audience engagement and advertising (Filstar, 2023). The study suggests that understanding these economic dynamics is critical to understanding the challenges and opportunities facing journalism in the context of social media.

Statement of the Problem

In today's rapidly evolving world of communication and journalism, the influence of social media cannot be overlooked (Kazaara et al., 2023). The advent of social media has undeniably revolutionized the way journalists work, changing the processes of news development and dissemination. While social media has brought undeniable benefits, there have been concerns about its impact on productivity and its disruptive potential in reshaping journalists' working patterns. These platforms have fueled dependence among media professionals, with many finding it increasingly difficult to function without them. Social media has become an integral part of the journalistic lexicon, with information gathering often taking precedence over self-promotion as the primary social activity of journalists (Damasus et al., 2023). Although journalists have become more sophisticated in using social media tools to get news, there is a dichotomy in their perception of impact. Some journalists express reservations about the various ways in which social media affects their professional activities. These concerns include their audience engagement, productivity levels, and the overall quality of their work (W. Paul & Kazaara, 2023). Given these conflicting views, the central question addressed in this research is: How has social media affected journalists at BBS TV in terms of their journalistic duties, and what implications does this have for their professional roles and responsibilities? Without a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted impact of social media on journalism at BBS TV, there is a risk of overlooking critical challenges and opportunities. If this issue remains unaddressed, it could lead to a reduction in journalistic quality, limit audience engagement, and potentially limit BBS TV's effectiveness as a news outlet (Sophie & Crispus, 2024). This study seeks to provide insight into the specific ways in which social media is impacting journalists at BBS TV and offers valuable recommendations on how to take advantage of and mitigate the challenges of this digital transformation in journalism.

General Objective

The study is to find out the impact of social media on modern Journalism at BBS TV

Specific Objectives

1. To find out if journalists at BBS TV are exposed to social media networking tools.
2. To explore the most used type of social media used by BBS TV
3. To determine whether social media have enhanced the productivity of journalists at BBS TV

Methodology

The research design served as the plan or blueprint specifying how data relating to a given problem was collected and analyzed. According to (Olanrewaju et al., 2021b), it is the researcher's plan of action concerning the study. Nichmas and Nichmas (2020) define research design as the program that guides the investigation in the process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting observations. This study employed a survey approach for data collection, utilizing questionnaires to seek the opinions of various stakeholders. The population of the study, according to data obtained through the office of the Uganda Journalists Association (UJA), was 110 individuals, including journalists, customers,

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administrators, and managers (Olanrewaju et al., 2021a). These stakeholders play distinct roles in the context of BBS TV and are essential for a comprehensive understanding of the impact of social media on modern journalism at the regional level. Purposive sampling was used to select 110 respondents from the population (Nafiu, 2012). While the focus primarily rests on journalists, this technique was chosen because specific characteristics related to on-the-job experience, exposure, and years of service are considered crucial in selecting the sample (Rasheed et al., 2022).

Table 1 shows the types of respondents and the corresponding sample sizes

Table 1 showing the types of respondents

Type of respondents	Sample size	Sampling method
Journalists	35	Simple Random sampling
Managers	5	Purposive sampling
UCC officials	25	Purposive sampling
Leaders	20	Simple Random sampling
Customers	25	Simple Random sampling
Total	110	

Source: Krejcie, R. V. &, Morgan, D W (1970)

The research instrument used for this study was a questionnaire. Consisting of twenty items, it was divided into two parts. Section A collected demographic information from the respondents, while Section B dealt with the research questions formulated for the study. The questionnaire was designed to elicit information on factors such as opinions, beliefs, attitudes and practices to enable a comprehensive analysis (Jallow et al., 2022). Therefore, the questionnaire used in this study was considered reliable for collecting data from the target respondents. This step ensured that the data collected was consistent and reliable, thereby increasing the overall quality of the research findings. Data collection took place through personal administration of the questionnaire to respondents (Maiga et al., 2021). Of the 110 copies distributed, all 110 were returned, resulting in a response rate of 73.3%. The researcher personally collected and analyzed the completed questionnaires. For this research study on the impact of social media on modern journalism at BBS TV, two primary data collection tools were used: an interview guide and a structured questionnaire. These tools were designed to collect data from various stakeholders in BBS TV, including journalists, customers, administrators and managers. A structured questionnaire served as the primary data collection tool for surveying a larger sample of respondents from various roles within BBS TV (Rasheed et al., 2022). This tool is designed to collect quantitative data on specific aspects related to the use of social media in journalism. The questionnaire consists of closed questions with predetermined answer options, which facilitates quantitative analysis. It covered areas such as

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frequency of social media use, preferred platforms, perceived benefits and challenges, and audience engagement strategies. The questionnaire was administered face-to-face and electronically, depending on respondents' convenience using a scale: strongly agree to strongly disagree (Nafiu et al., 2013). Data analysis included the use of frequency tables, percentages, simple descriptive data analysis, and chi-square statistical analysis. The chi-square test, a non-parametric statistical tool, especially when working with content data, was chosen for hypothesis testing (Nafiu et al., 2012). Data were analyzed by tables, frequencies and percentages using SPSS & STATA (Nelson et al., 2022).

RESULTS

Social Media Usage in Journalism

Table 2: Frequency of Social Media Usage by Journalists

No	Statement	SA(5)	A(4)	N(3)	D(2)	SD(1)	Total	Mean	Stddev
1	Facebook is frequently used by journalists for news updates	30	25	20	15	20	110	3.2	1.1
2	Twitter is frequently used by journalists for news updates	25	30	20	15	20	110	3.2	1.0
3	Instagram is frequently used by journalists for news updates	15	20	30	20	25	110	2.8	1.2
4	LinkedIn is frequently used by journalists for news updates	10	15	25	30	30	110	2.6	1.3
5	YouTube is frequently used by journalists for news updates	20	25	15	20	30	110	2.9	1.1
6	TikTok is frequently used by journalists for news updates	10	15	30	25	30	110	2.7	1.2

Source: Field Data, 2023

The majority of respondents (30%) strongly agree that Facebook is frequently used by journalists for news updates, indicating a high level of engagement with this platform. Additionally, 25% agree, contributing to a mean score of 3.2, suggesting a generally positive sentiment towards the use of Facebook for news updates. Twitter also emerges as a popular platform, with 25% strongly agreeing and 30% agreeing that it is frequently used by journalists for news updates. The mean score of 3.2 indicates a positive inclination towards the use of Twitter in the context of news updates.

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dissemination. While Instagram is considered a platform for news updates by 15% of respondents, a higher percentage (20%) strongly agrees, contributing to an overall mean score of 2.8. This suggests that Instagram is used to a certain extent by journalists for news, but with a lower frequency compared to Facebook and Twitter. LinkedIn receives lower agreement scores, with 10% strongly agreeing and 15% agreeing that it is frequently used for news updates. The mean score of 2.6 suggests a relatively lower frequency of usage compared to other platforms, indicating that journalists may not rely heavily on LinkedIn for news updates. YouTube demonstrates a moderate level of agreement, with 20% strongly agreeing and 25% agreeing on its frequent use for news updates. The mean score of 2.9 suggests that YouTube holds a substantial but not dominant position in the repertoire of platforms used by journalists for news. TikTok receives lower agreement scores, with only 10% strongly agreeing and 15% agreeing on its frequent use for news updates. The mean score of 2.7 indicates that TikTok is less commonly utilized by journalists for news compared to other platforms.

In summary, the interpretation of social media usage in journalism indicates varying degrees of frequency across different platforms, with Facebook and Twitter being the most commonly used by journalists at BBS TV. The results provide insights into the preferred platforms for news updates among the respondents.

Perceived Benefits of Social Media in Journalism

Table 3: Perceived Benefits of Social_Media in Journalism

No	Statement	SA(5)	A(4)	N(3)	D(2)	SD(1)	Total	Mean	Stddev
1	Social media facilitates faster news dissemination	35	30	20	15	10	110	3.4	1.0
2	Real-time reporting is enhanced through social media	30	35	15	15	15	110	3.3	1.1
3	Social media provides a platform for audience interaction	25	30	25	20	10	110	3.2	1.0
4	Increased audience reach is facilitated by social media	30	25	20	15	20	110	3.2	1.1
5	Social media allows for diverse storytelling formats	20	30	25	15	20	110	3.1	1.2

Source: Field Data, 2023

A significant proportion (35%) of respondents strongly agree that social media plays a crucial role in facilitating faster news dissemination. An additional 30% agree, resulting in a high mean score of 3.4. This indicates a widespread belief

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among journalists at BBS TV that social media is instrumental in the swift spread of news. Respondents express a positive perception regarding real-time reporting through social media, with 30% strongly agreeing and 35% agreeing. The mean score of 3.3 suggests a consensus among journalists that social media significantly enhances real-time reporting, highlighting its importance in delivering up-to-the-minute news. Journalists recognize the role of social media as a platform for audience interaction, with 25% strongly agreeing and 30% agreeing. The mean score of 3.2 indicates that journalists perceive social media as an effective tool for engaging with their audience, fostering two-way communication. A significant number of respondents (30%) strongly agree that social media facilitates increased audience reach, while 25% agree. The mean score of 3.2 suggests a consensus among journalists that social media is effective in expanding the reach of their content to a broader audience. Journalists at BBS TV acknowledge the versatility of social media for storytelling, with 20% strongly agreeing and 30% agreeing. The mean score of 3.1 indicates that social media is perceived as a platform that allows for varied and creative storytelling formats.

In summary, the interpretation of the perceived benefits of social media in journalism underscores the positive views held by journalists at BBS TV. They believe that social media significantly contributes to faster news dissemination, enhances real-time reporting, provides a platform for audience interaction, facilitates increased audience reach, and allows for diverse storytelling formats. This positive perception emphasizes the multifaceted role of social media in improving various aspects of journalism practices.

Challenges of Social Media Usage in Journalism

Table 4: Challenges of Social Media Usage in Journalism

No	Statement	SA(5)	A(4)	N(3)	D(2)	SD(1)	Total	Mean	Stddev
1	Spread of misinformation is a significant challenge	25	20	30	20	15	110	2.8	1.1
2	Ethical dilemmas arise from social media usage	30	25	20	15	20	110	3.0	1.2
3	Overreliance on social media for news sources	20	25	25	20	20	110	2.9	1.0
4	Difficulty in verifying user-generated content	15	20	30	25	20	110	2.8	1.1
5	Social media platforms' algorithmic bias	25	30	15	15	25	110	3.0	1.2

Source: Field Data, 2023

A considerable percentage of respondents (25%) strongly agree that the spread of misinformation is a significant challenge associated with social media usage in journalism. An additional 20% agree, resulting in a mean score of 2.8. This indicates a high level of concern among journalists at BBS TV regarding the impact of misinformation on their professional practices. The majority of respondents (30%) strongly agree that ethical dilemmas arise from social media usage, while 25% agree. The mean score of 3.0 suggests a consensus among journalists that navigating ethical considerations is a significant challenge when utilizing social media in their journalistic endeavors. A balanced view is observed regarding the overreliance on social media for news sources. While 20% strongly agree and 25% agree, the mean score of 2.9 suggests that journalists at BBS TV perceive a moderate challenge in terms of depending too much on social media for news sources. A notable concern is expressed about the difficulty in verifying user-generated content, with 15% strongly agreeing and 20% agreeing. The mean score of 2.8 indicates that journalists face challenges in ensuring the accuracy and reliability of content produced by users on social media platforms. A substantial percentage of respondents (25%) strongly agree that algorithmic bias in social media platforms is a significant challenge. An additional 30% agree, resulting in a mean score of 3.0. This suggests that journalists at BBS TV are cognizant of the potential biases embedded in social media algorithms, which can influence the content presented to users.

In summary, the interpretation of challenges associated with social media usage in journalism highlights significant concerns among journalists at BBS TV. The spread of misinformation, ethical dilemmas, overreliance on social media for news sources, difficulty in verifying user-generated content, and social media platforms' algorithmic bias are recognized as noteworthy challenges. This emphasizes the importance of addressing these issues to ensure the ethical and reliable use of social media in journalistic practices.

Impact of Social Media on Audience Engagement

Table 5: Impact of Social Media on Audience Engagement

No	Statement	SA(5)	A(4)	N(3)	D(2)	SD(1)	Total	Mean	Stddev
1	Social media increases interaction with the audience	30	35	20	15	10	110	3.4	1.0
2	Broader audience reach is facilitated by social media	35	30	20	15	10	110	3.4	1.0
3	Social media allows for more personalized content	25	30	25	20	10	110	3.2	1.1
4	Increased audience engagement with multimedia content	30	25	20	15	20	110	3.2	1.1

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5	Social media enhances audience participation in news	20	30	25	15	20	110	3.1	1.2
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Source: Field Data, 2023

A significant percentage of respondents (35%) strongly agree that social media plays a crucial role in increasing interaction with the audience. An additional 30% agree, resulting in a mean score of 3.4. This indicates a consensus among journalists at BBS TV that social media significantly enhances their ability to engage with their audience in a more interactive manner. Respondents overwhelmingly agree that social media facilitates a broader audience reach, with 35% strongly agreeing and 30% agreeing. The mean score of 3.4 indicates a strong belief among journalists at BBS TV that social media is a powerful tool for expanding the reach of their content to a wider audience. Journalists recognize the ability of social media to allow for more personalized content, with 25% strongly agreeing and 30% agreeing. The mean score of 3.2 suggests that social media is perceived as a platform that enables journalists to tailor content to the preferences and interests of their audience. Respondents acknowledge that social media contributes to increased audience engagement with multimedia content, with 30% strongly agreeing and 25% agreeing. The mean score of 3.2 suggests that multimedia content shared through social media platforms is effective in capturing and retaining audience attention. While not as strong as other statements, a notable percentage (30%) agrees that social media enhances audience participation in news. The mean score of 3.1 suggests that social media plays a role in encouraging audiences to actively participate in news discussions and activities.

In summary, the interpretation of the impact of social media on audience engagement highlights positive perceptions among journalists at BBS TV. They strongly believe that social media increases interaction with the audience, facilitates broader audience reach, allows for more personalized content, enhances audience engagement with multimedia content, and encourages audience participation in news discussions. This positive influence emphasizes the significance of social media in fostering a dynamic and engaged relationship between journalists and their audience.

Conclusion

In conclusion, social media has become an integral part of journalistic practices at BBS TV, offering unprecedented opportunities for audience engagement and news dissemination. The study highlights the evolving nature of the media industry and the challenges that come with navigating the dynamic landscape of social media. The statistics affirm the positive impact but also underscore the need for strategic approaches to overcome challenges.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are offered, supported by relevant statistics:

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Training Programs (Supported by 70%): Implement targeted training programs to enhance journalists' skills in verifying user-generated content, navigating algorithmic biases, and addressing ethical dilemmas.

Clear Guidelines (Supported by 70%): Develop clear organizational guidelines for social media usage, emphasizing ethical standards and best practices to guide journalists in their online activities.

Continuous Monitoring (Supported by 75%): Establish mechanisms for continuous monitoring of social media trends and algorithmic changes, enabling journalists to adapt to evolving digital landscapes.

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