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Facebook Live as a Digital Communication Platform: Opportunities and Challenges for Online Audiences in Uganda

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Abstract

The study assessed the opportunities and challenges presented by live-streaming media content to online audiences, using Facebook as a case study in Uganda. The study was guided by three objectives: to examine the influence of live streaming on audience engagement and participation, identify the opportunities associated with Facebook Live, and establish the challenges experienced by online audiences. A mixed-methods approach and descriptive research design were adopted. The study targeted 100 Facebook users, from whom a sample of 80 respondents was selected using purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Data were collected using questionnaires and interview guides, and analysed through descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. The findings revealed that Facebook Live enhances audience engagement through real-time interaction, immediate feedback, commenting, reacting, sharing, and discussions. The platform provides opportunities for timely information access, online learning, entertainment, business promotion, community interaction, and social participation. However, audiences face challenges including misinformation, cyberbullying, privacy concerns, inappropriate content, high internet costs, unstable connectivity, and inadequate content moderation. The study concludes that although Facebook Live offers significant communication opportunities, technological, ethical, and informational challenges may undermine audience experiences. It recommends strengthening content moderation, promoting digital literacy, improving internet affordability and accessibility, and encouraging responsible live-streaming practices among content creators and online audiences.

Key words: Live-streaming media content, online audiences, Facebook Live, audience engagement, digital literacy.

1.0 Background to the Study

Live streaming media has become an important form of digital communication, enabling individuals, organizations, governments, and businesses to broadcast content and interact with audiences in real time. Unlike traditional media, it facilitates immediate participation through comments, reactions, questions, and content sharing (Newman et al., 2024; Chen & Lin, 2024). Platforms such as Facebook Live, YouTube Live, Instagram Live, TikTok Live, and Twitch have expanded opportunities for information sharing, education, entertainment, marketing, and public engagement. The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated the adoption of live streaming as institutions increasingly relied on digital platforms to maintain communication (UNESCO, 2023; World Bank, 2023). These developments have enhanced audience engagement, transparency, and access to timely information (Wohn et al., 2022; Cunningham & Craig, 2019).

Despite these benefits, live streaming presents challenges, including misinformation, harmful content, privacy violations, cyberbullying, and digital fatigue (Gillespie, 2021; Guess et al., 2020; Lim et al., 2020). The immediacy of live broadcasts makes fact-checking

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and content moderation difficult, potentially exposing audiences to misleading or inappropriate material.

In Uganda, increased smartphone ownership and internet access have encouraged the use of Facebook Live for education, business, politics, religious activities, and entertainment. However, internet affordability, digital literacy, misinformation, and online harassment continue to affect users' experiences (Uganda Communications Commission, 2024; Mare & Matsilele, 2020). Sekamate and Nkonge (2025), in their study of Facebook and YouTube in newspaper content distribution in Uganda, highlight the growing significance of digital platforms in information dissemination. Similarly, Nkalubo et al. (2025), including Naswiru Sekamate, examined social media's role in disease control in Kampala, illustrating the importance of social media in public information sharing and the challenges associated with misinformation.

Although these studies provide useful insights into Uganda's digital media environment, limited empirical evidence specifically addresses how audiences experience the opportunities and challenges of Facebook Live. Therefore, this study seeks to assess the opportunities and challenges of live streaming media content among online audiences, using Facebook as a case study, with particular attention to audience engagement, information access, participation, and digital safety in Uganda.

1.1 Problem Statement

Live streaming has become an important form of digital communication, enabling online audiences to access real-time information, participate in discussions, engage with content creators, and benefit from educational, entertainment, and business opportunities. In Uganda, Facebook Live is increasingly used to disseminate news, promote businesses, facilitate public discussions, and share information. However, these opportunities are accompanied by challenges, including misinformation, cyberbullying, privacy violations, exposure to inappropriate content, high internet costs, and inadequate content moderation, which may affect audience participation and online safety.

Although previous studies have examined digital media use in Uganda, limited empirical evidence specifically addresses how online audiences experience and balance the opportunities and challenges associated with Facebook Live. For instance, Sekamate and Nkonge (2025) examined the opportunities and challenges of Facebook and YouTube in newspaper content distribution in Uganda, while Nkalubo et al. (2025) investigated social media's role in disease control in Kampala. However, these studies do not specifically establish how Facebook Live influences audience engagement, access to information, and digital safety.

Consequently, this study assessed the opportunities and challenges presented by live-streaming media content to online audiences, using Facebook as a case study, to generate evidence that can inform responsible platform use, improve audience experiences, and guide relevant policies and interventions.

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1.2 Objectives

i. To analyse how live-streaming media content influences audience engagement and participation on Facebook.

ii. To examine the opportunities associated with live-streaming media content for online audiences on Facebook.

iii. To identify the challenges faced by online audiences when consuming live-streaming media content on Facebook and examine possible measures for addressing them.

1.3 Theoretical Review

Social Presence Theory

Social Presence Theory was developed by Short, Williams, and Christie (1976) to explain how communication media differ in their ability to create a sense of human presence and interpersonal connection. The theory defines social presence as the extent to which a communication medium enables users to experience warmth, intimacy, immediacy, and emotional connection. Media that convey social cues, such as facial expressions, voice, gestures, and immediate feedback, are more likely to enhance perceived human presence and communication effectiveness. In digital communication, Facebook Live facilitates social presence through real-time video, comments, reactions, emojis, and live discussions, reducing the psychological distance between broadcasters and audiences (Lowenthal, 2010). Social Presence Theory explains how real-time interaction can strengthen audience engagement, trust, satisfaction, emotional attachment, and continued participation in online communication (Wohn et al., 2022). Unlike prerecorded videos, Facebook Live allows audiences to interact directly with content creators and receive immediate responses, making them feel involved in ongoing events. The theory is particularly relevant to platforms such as Facebook Live, YouTube Live, Zoom, and TikTok Live, where interpersonal connection contributes to effective communication. The theory has several strengths. First, it provides a useful explanation of online interaction and audience engagement. Second, it applies to contemporary digital communication platforms that support real-time interaction. Third, it emphasizes interpersonal relationships and emotional connection, which are important in live streaming. However, the theory also has limitations. It focuses primarily on interpersonal communication and gives limited attention to individual motivations for media use. It may also overemphasize the benefits of richer communication, although some audiences prefer fewer interactive media. Additionally, it does not adequately account for technological barriers, such as poor internet connectivity and digital inequalities, or fully explain the behaviour of passive viewers. Social Presence Theory is relevant to this study because it explains how Facebook Live features influence audience experiences. Real-time comments, reactions, sharing, and instant feedback can enhance viewers' feelings of connection, trust, engagement, and satisfaction. Conversely, misinformation, cyberbullying, privacy violations, inadequate content moderation, and poor internet connectivity may undermine trust and reduce the quality of interaction. Therefore, the theory provides an appropriate framework for examining the opportunities and challenges of Facebook Live among online audiences, particularly in understanding how real-time interaction influences audience engagement, participation, and perceptions of digital safety.

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2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Audience Engagement and Participation in Live Streaming Media

Audience engagement refers to the extent to which audiences actively interact with media content through watching, commenting, reacting, sharing, asking questions, and participating in discussions. Unlike traditional mass media, live streaming facilitates real-time, two-way communication, transforming audiences from passive recipients into active participants (Sjöblom & Hamari, 2017). Live streaming enhances audience engagement through immediate feedback, social presence, shared viewing experiences, and timely information. Features such as live comments, reactions, and direct responses encourage participation and sustained interaction (Wohn et al., 2020; Hilvert-Bruce et al., 2018). Furthermore, live streaming fosters online communities by connecting viewers from different locations, strengthening relationships between content creators and audiences, and encouraging repeated participation (Hamilton, Garretson, & Kerne, 2014). The real-time nature of broadcasts can also increase audience attention because viewers want to follow unfolding events and avoid missing important information. However, excessive viewing may contribute to digital fatigue and psychological stress (Lim et al., 2020). Live streaming also supports education, knowledge sharing, and civic participation. Educational institutions use live broadcasts for seminars and discussions, enabling learners to ask questions and receive immediate clarification (Zhao & Wang, 2020). Similarly, political leaders, government agencies, journalists, and civil society organizations use these platforms to engage citizens and promote public dialogue (Enli, 2017). The spontaneous nature of live broadcasts may enhance perceived authenticity and encourage audience participation and content sharing (Wohn et al., 2022). In Uganda, social media platforms have expanded opportunities for news distribution and audience interaction. Sekamate and Nkonge (2025) found that Facebook and YouTube had expanded the reach of *The New Vision* newspaper and facilitated real-time news dissemination, while also changing audience consumption habits. Their study highlights the growing importance of digital platforms in connecting media organizations with audiences. However, misinformation and the economic challenges associated with digital distribution remain concerns (Sekamate & Nkonge, 2025).

Despite these benefits, live streaming presents challenges, including misinformation, harmful content, privacy concerns, and excessive social media use (Gillespie, 2021; Lim et al., 2020). In addition, expensive internet data, unstable connectivity, limited digital literacy, and unreliable electricity may restrict consistent audience participation in developing countries such as Uganda (Mare & Matsilele, 2020). Although existing studies demonstrate the potential of live streaming to enhance engagement, limited empirical evidence explains how Facebook Live influences audience participation while accounting for Uganda's specific technological and social challenges. Therefore, this study seeks to examine how Facebook Live influences audience engagement and participation in Uganda, focusing on watching, commenting, reacting, sharing, asking questions, and joining live discussions. It will also investigate how internet affordability, network quality, digital literacy, misinformation, and online harassment influence participation, thereby contributing context-specific evidence on the opportunities and challenges of live streaming among Ugandan online audiences.

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2.2 Opportunities of Live Streaming Media Content to Online Audiences

Live streaming media has transformed digital communication by enabling content creators and audiences to interact in real time. Unlike traditional broadcasting, it allows viewers to participate through comments, reactions, and sharing, promoting participatory media consumption (Cunningham & Craig, 2019). One major opportunity of live streaming is enhanced audience engagement. Interactive features enable viewers to communicate directly with broadcasters, express opinions, and participate in discussions, fostering a sense of community and belonging (Sjöblom & Hamari, 2017). Additionally, live streaming provides access to timely information by allowing audiences to witness breaking news, political developments, and public events as they occur. This immediacy can improve transparency and reduce delays in information dissemination (Newman et al., 2022). Live streaming also expands educational and informational opportunities. Educational institutions, religious organizations, and professional communities use these platforms to deliver lectures, seminars, and training to geographically dispersed audiences. This accessibility enables individuals to acquire knowledge and participate in learning activities regardless of their location (Zhao & Wang, 2020). Furthermore, live content is often perceived as authentic because it is broadcast spontaneously, potentially strengthening audience trust, emotional connection, and continued engagement (Wohn et al., 2022). Another important opportunity is the promotion of media diversity and social inclusion. Live streaming enables individuals and marginalized communities to communicate directly with wider audiences without relying entirely on traditional media gatekeepers. This can support civic participation, social expression, and alternative perspectives, particularly in African contexts (Mare & Matsilele, 2020). Live streaming also creates economic opportunities for content creators, educators, entertainers, and entrepreneurs through audience development, sponsorships, and other monetization methods (Cunningham & Craig, 2019). However, the benefits of live streaming depend on factors such as internet accessibility, digital infrastructure, and users' digital literacy. Audiences with stronger digital literacy skills are better positioned to critically evaluate online information and identify potentially misleading content (Guess et al., 2020). In contexts such as Uganda, differences in internet affordability, connectivity, and digital skills may influence the extent to which audiences benefit from live streaming. Overall, literature demonstrates that live streaming offers opportunities for audience engagement, timely information access, education, transparency, social inclusion, and digital entrepreneurship. Nevertheless, these benefits depend on the technological and social conditions in which audiences' access and use the platforms. This study therefore examines the opportunities Facebook Live provides to online audiences in Uganda, while considering the contextual factors that influence users' experiences and participation.

2.3 Challenges of Live Streaming Media Content to Online Audiences

Despite its benefits, live streaming media presents several challenges that may negatively affect online audiences. One major concern is the spread of misinformation and unverified information. Because live broadcasts occur in real time, there is often limited opportunity for fact-checking before information reaches viewers, allowing false or misleading claims to spread rapidly (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2019). Audiences may also perceive live content as

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trustworthy because it appears spontaneous and unedited, increasing their vulnerability to misinformation, particularly when digital literacy is limited (Guess et al., 2020).

In Uganda, research by Nkalubo et al. (2025), which includes Naswiru Sekamate, highlights the dual role of social media in disseminating useful information and spreading misinformation. Their study on X and disease control found that social media facilitates public information sharing but may also circulate misleading health information, potentially affecting public trust and behaviour. Similarly, Sekamate and Nkonge (2025) examined Facebook and YouTube news distribution in Uganda, identifying challenges associated with digital media transformation. Although these studies do not focus specifically on Facebook Live, they provide relevant evidence of the broader information-quality challenges facing Ugandan social media audiences. Another challenge is exposure to harmful or inappropriate content, including violence, hate speech, harassment, and explicit material. The unpredictable nature of live broadcasts means viewers may encounter disturbing content before moderators intervene, potentially affecting their psychological wellbeing (Kircaburun et al., 2020). Privacy and ethical concerns also arise when individuals are recorded or broadcast without consent. Effective content moderation remains difficult because of the volume and speed of live-streamed material (Gillespie, 2021). Cyberbullying and online harassment can further discourage audience participation and negatively affect users' mental wellbeing (Kircaburun et al., 2020). In addition, digital inequality limits access to live streaming because audiences require reliable internet connectivity and suitable devices. In Uganda, high internet costs, unstable networks, and limited infrastructure may interrupt broadcasts and prevent consistent participation (Mare & Matsilele, 2020). Excessive consumption of live-streamed content may also contribute to digital fatigue, reduced productivity, and emotional exhaustion (Lim et al., 2020). Overall, live streaming presents challenges related to misinformation, harmful content, privacy violations, cyberbullying, technological barriers, and excessive media consumption. Addressing these concerns requires effective content moderation, appropriate regulation, improved digital literacy, and affordable internet access. These issues are particularly relevant to this study, which examines the opportunities and challenges of Facebook Live among online audiences in Uganda.

3.0 Research Methodology

The study on the opportunities and challenges presented by live streaming media content to online audiences, using Facebook as a case study, adopted a mixed methods research approach combining quantitative and qualitative methods. A descriptive research design was used to examine Facebook users' experiences, perceptions, engagement, opportunities, and challenges associated with live streaming content as they naturally occurred.

The target population comprised 100 Facebook users in Uganda who regularly watched, commented on, or interacted with Facebook Live content. A sample size of 80 respondents was determined using Slovin's formula at a 5% margin of error. The study employed purposive sampling to identify participants with relevant experience in live streaming, followed by simple random sampling to select questionnaire respondents. This approach helped ensure that participants had relevant knowledge of the subject while reducing selection bias.

Data were collected using two main instruments: structured questionnaires and interview guides. Questionnaires were used to obtain quantitative data on audience engagement, perceived opportunities, and challenges, while

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interviews provided detailed qualitative information about participants' experiences and perceptions. The study relied on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly from respondents through questionnaires and interviews, whereas secondary data were obtained from published books, academic journals, reports, theses, and credible online sources related to live streaming and digital communication.

To ensure data quality, validity was enhanced by aligning research instruments with the study objectives, obtaining reviews from academic supervisors and media experts, and conducting pilot testing. Reliability was promoted through standardized questions, clear instructions, and consistent data collection procedures.

Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Qualitative data were analysed thematically by categorizing interview responses and open-ended answers into themes related to the research objectives. The findings were presented using tables, charts, and narrative descriptions.

The study observed ethical principles, including informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and their right to withdraw without penalty. The research was guided by the Belmont Report principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice.

4.0 Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation of Findings

Introduction

This chapter presents, analyses and interprets the findings of the study on the opportunities and challenges presented by live streaming media content to online audiences using Facebook as the case study. The findings are presented in accordance with the study objectives and are supported by both quantitative and qualitative data collected from the respondents. Quantitative findings are presented using frequencies, percentages and tables, while qualitative findings are presented through verbatim quotations from key informants to provide deeper explanations of the quantitative results. The chapter begins with the response rate, followed by the demographic characteristics of respondents before presenting findings according to the three specific objectives of the study.

4.1 Response Rate

Table 4.1: Response Rate of Respondents

Category	Sample Targeted	Responses Received	Response Rate (%)
Questionnaire Respondents	80	80	100
Total	**80**	**80**	**100**

Source: Primary Data (2026)

The findings in Table 4.1 indicate that all the 80 respondents selected for the study successfully participated by completing the questionnaire, representing a 100% response rate. This excellent response rate implies that all the sampled respondents were available and willing to provide the required information regarding their experiences with Facebook Live. Achieving a complete response rate minimized non-response bias and enhanced the credibility of the findings.

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4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic characteristics provide information about the background of respondents who participated in the study. These characteristics are important because they influence people's exposure to digital technologies, internet usage patterns and participation in live streaming media. The study considered gender, age and education level.

4.2.1 Gender Distribution of Respondents

Table 4.2: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	**37**	**46.3**
Female	**43**	**53.7**
Total	**80**	**100.0**

Source: Primary Data (2026)

The findings in Table 4.2 reveal that 43 respondents (53.7%) were female, while 37 respondents (46.3%) were male. This indicates that females constituted a slightly larger proportion of the study participants than males.

The relatively balanced gender distribution suggests that Facebook Live is widely used by both males and females. The slightly higher female participation may indicate that women are increasingly using Facebook Live for communication, social interaction, education and business activities.

4.2.2 Age Distribution of Respondents

Table 4.3: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18–25 Years	32	40.0
26–35 Years	28	35.0
36–45 Years	13	16.3
Above 45 Years	7	8.7
Total	**80**	**100.0**

Source: Primary Data (2026)

The findings presented in Table 4.3 indicate that the majority of respondents were young adults. Respondents aged 18–25 years constituted the largest proportion (40.0%), followed by those aged 26–35 years (35.0%). Respondents aged 36–45 years represented 16.3%, while respondents aged above 45 years constituted only 8.7%. The findings suggest that Facebook Live is predominantly used by younger people, especially those below 35 years of age. This may be attributed to their greater familiarity with smartphones, internet technologies and social media platforms. Young adults are also more likely to consume digital content, participate in online discussions and interact with live broadcasts than older users.

The findings agree with Statista (2025), which indicates that the largest proportion of Facebook users globally consists of individuals aged between 18 and 34 years. Similarly, Newman et al. (2024) observed that younger

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adults are more active consumers of digital media because they possess higher digital literacy and spend more time on online platforms.

The findings are further supported by Wohn et al. (2022), who found that younger audiences participate more actively during Facebook Live broadcasts through comments, reactions and content sharing because they are more comfortable using interactive digital technologies.

4.2.3 Education Level of Respondents

Table 4.4: Education Level of Respondents

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Certificate	12	15.0
Diploma	22	27.5
Bachelor's Degree	34	42.5
Postgraduate Degree	12	15.0
Total	**80**	**100.0**

Source: Primary Data (2026)

Table 4.4 indicates that the majority of respondents (42.5%) possessed Bachelor's Degrees. Respondents holding Diplomas accounted for 27.5%, while those with Certificates and Postgraduate qualifications each represented 15.0%.

The findings indicate that most Facebook Live users in the study possessed relatively high levels of education.

4.2.4 Marital Status of Respondents

Table 4.5: Marital Status of Respondents

Marital Status	Frequency (n=80)	Percentage (%)
Single	30	37.5%
Married	42	52.5%
Divorced	5	6.25%
Widowed	3	3.75%
Total	**80**	**100%**

The findings show that the majority of respondents (52.5%) were married, followed by single respondents at 37.5%. A small proportion were divorced (6.25%) and widowed (3.75%). This distribution indicates that most respondents were within stable family structures, which may influence their perceptions and responses, particularly in studies related to household decision-making, resource use, or social behavior.

4.3 To Examine the Level of Awareness of the Study Subject Among Respondents

This section presents a detailed analysis of respondents' level of awareness regarding the study subject. Awareness is a critical determinant of behavior and decision-making, as individuals who are informed about an issue are more likely to engage meaningfully with it compared to those who lack knowledge. In development and social research, awareness is often considered the first stage of behavioral change, as outlined in diffusion of innovation theory, which emphasizes knowledge as the entry point for adoption of new ideas and practices (Rogers, 2003). awareness

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was assessed through three key dimensions: awareness of the concept, sources of information, and level of understanding. These dimensions were used to determine not only whether respondents had heard about the subject, but also the depth and reliability of their knowledge.

4.3.1 Awareness of the Study Concept

Table 4.6: Awareness of Facebook Live among Respondents

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	72	90.0
No	8	10.0
Total	**80**	**100.0**

Source: Primary data, 2026.

The high level of awareness observed in this study suggests that the subject under investigation is relatively well known within the study area. This finding is consistent with Rogers' (2003) diffusion of innovation theory, which argues that awareness is usually widespread when information has been disseminated through multiple communication channels over time. Similarly, Bandura's (1977) social learning theory emphasizes that individuals acquire knowledge through observation, interaction, and exposure to media, which may explain the relatively high awareness levels recorded.

However, the existence of a significant minority (10%) who were not aware indicates persistent information gaps. According to UNESCO (2021), such gaps are common in communities where access to formal education and structured communication systems is uneven. This suggests that while awareness campaigns may have reached a large proportion of the population, they have not been fully inclusive.

Furthermore, lack of awareness among some respondents may be attributed to differences in education level, access to media, and socio-economic status. Studies by World Bank (2020) show that individuals with lower education levels are less likely to access and interpret technical or development-related information, which can limit their awareness.

4.3.2 Sources of Information

The study further examined the sources through which respondents obtained information about the subject. The findings revealed that facebook and other social-media platforms was the most common source (40%), followed by radio/television (20%), friends and family members (15%), school or university (10%), Newspapers and Online news websites (8.8) and community meetings (6.2%).

Table 4.7: Sources of Information about Facebook Live

Source of information	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook and other social-media platforms	32	40.0
Friends and family members	12	15.0
Television and radio	16	20.0
School or university	8	10.0

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Newspapers and online news websites	7	8.8
Community meetings	5	6.2
Total	**80**	**100.0**

Source: Primary data, 2026.

Social media has become a major source of information due to its ability to disseminate content rapidly across different populations (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In Uganda, increased mobile phone access has further expanded its use. However, misinformation remains a concern, as false information can spread faster than accurate information on social media (Vosoughi et al., 2018). Sekamate and Nkonge (2025) similarly examine the opportunities and challenges of Facebook and YouTube in Uganda's news distribution, highlighting the relevance of digital platforms in information access.

4.3.3 Level of Understanding of the Concept

Respondents were asked to rate their level of understanding of the subject. The results showed that 47.5% had a moderate level of understanding, 25% had a high level of understanding, and 27.5% had a low level of understanding.

Table 4.8: Respondents' Level of Understanding of Facebook Live

Level of understanding	Frequency	Percentage
High	20	25.0
Moderate	38	47.5
Low	22	27.5
Total	**80**	**100.0**

4.4 To Assess the Factors Influencing Respondents' Engagement with the Study Subject

This section presents findings on the factors that influence respondents' engagement with the study subject. Engagement refers to the extent to which individuals actively interact with, apply, or respond to a given issue beyond mere awareness. In behavioral and social research, engagement is shaped by a combination of socio-economic, informational, institutional, and personal factors. According to the Health Belief Model, individuals' actions are influenced by perceived benefits, perceived barriers, cues to action, and self-efficacy (Rosenstock, 1974). Similarly, the Theory of Planned Behavior emphasizes that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control determine whether individuals engage in a particular behavior (Ajzen, 1991). This section uses these theoretical foundations to interpret the findings.

4.4.1 Socio-Economic Factors Influencing Engagement

Respondents identified several socio-economic factors affecting their engagement with the study subject, including income level, education, occupation, and time availability.

Table 4.9: Socio-economic Factors Influencing Engagement with Facebook Live

Factor	Frequency	Percentage
Affordable internet data	24	30.0

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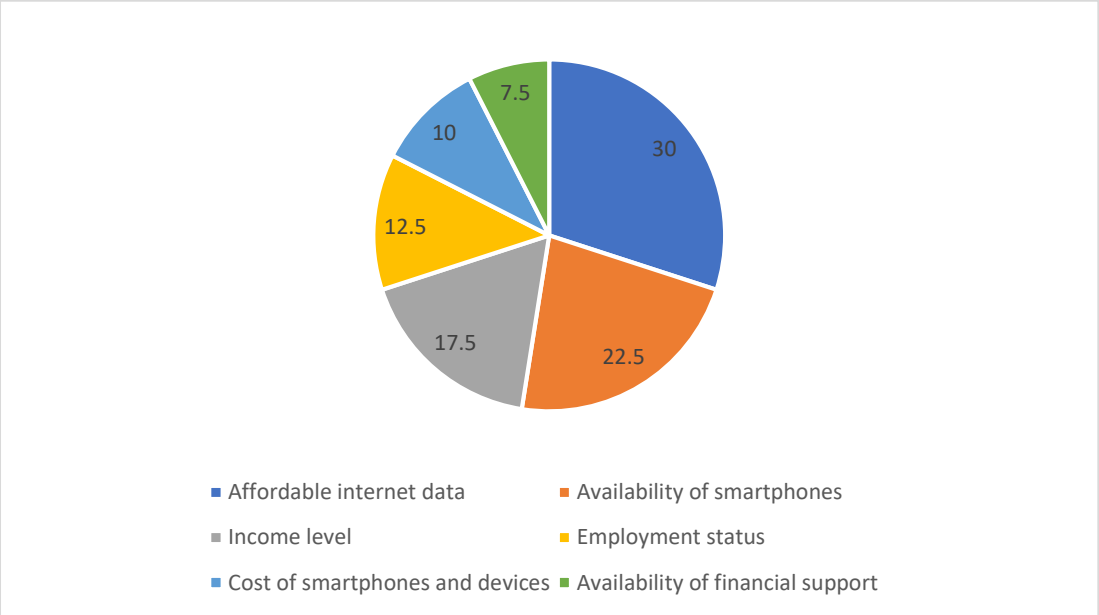
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Availability of smartphones	18	22.5
Income level	14	17.5
Employment status	10	12.5
Cost of smartphones and devices	8	10.0
Availability of financial support	6	7.5
Total	**80**	**100.0**

Source: Primary data, 2026.

The findings indicate that affordable internet data was the most significant factor influencing respondents' access to digital platforms, reported by 24 respondents (30.0%). This was followed by the availability of smartphones, cited by 18 respondents (22.5%), and income level, reported by 14 respondents (17.5%). Employment status accounted for 10 respondents (12.5%), while the cost of smartphones and other devices was identified by 8 respondents (10.0%). Availability of financial support was the least reported factor, accounting for 6 respondents (7.5%). Overall, the findings suggest that internet affordability, access to smartphones, and income levels are important determinants of digital platform access. These results highlight the need for affordable internet services and improved access to digital devices to promote participation in online activities, including Facebook Live. This is consistent with Sekamate and Nkonge (2025), whose study examined the opportunities and challenges of Facebook and YouTube in newspaper content distribution in Uganda, highlighting the relevance of digital platforms in the Ugandan context.

Figure 4.1: Socio-economic Factors Influencing Engagement



Source: Primary data, 2026.

4.4.2 Institutional and Environmental Factors

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Respondents also highlighted institutional and environmental factors influencing engagement.

Table 4.10: Institutional and Environmental Factors Influencing Engagement

Factor	Frequency	Percentage
Quality of internet connectivity	22	27.5
Platform content-moderation policies	16	20.0
Availability of digital-literacy training	14	17.5
Government regulation of online content	12	15.0
Availability of electricity	9	11.3
Support from educational and community institutions	7	8.7
Total	**80**	**100.0**

Source: Primary data, 2026.

The findings indicate that quality of internet connectivity was the most frequently identified factor, reported by 22 respondents (27.5%). This was followed by platform content-moderation policies, cited by 16 respondents (20.0%), and availability of digital-literacy training, reported by 14 respondents (17.5%). Government regulation of online content accounted for 12 respondents (15.0%), while availability of electricity was identified by 9 respondents (11.3%). Support from educational and community institutions was the least reported factor, accounting for 7 respondents (8.7%). Overall, the findings suggest that reliable internet connectivity, effective content moderation, and digital-literacy training are important for improving audiences' experiences with live streaming media. These factors may influence users' ability to access Facebook Live, evaluate online information, and participate safely in live broadcasts. The findings are relevant to Uganda's digital media environment, where the opportunities and challenges associated with social media platforms have also been examined by Sekamate and Nkonge (2025) in their study of Facebook and YouTube content distribution.

4.4.3 Individual Perceptions and Attitudinal Factors

Respondents further indicated that personal perceptions and attitudes influenced their engagement.

Table 4.11: Individual Perceptions and Attitudinal Factors Influencing Engagement

Factor	Frequency	Percentage
Perceived usefulness of Facebook Live	24	30.0
Trust in live-streamed content	18	22.5
Interest in the content being streamed	16	20.0
Fear of missing important information	10	12.5
Enjoyment and entertainment value	7	8.8
Concerns about privacy and online safety	5	6.2
Total	**80**	**100.0**

Source: Primary data, 2026.

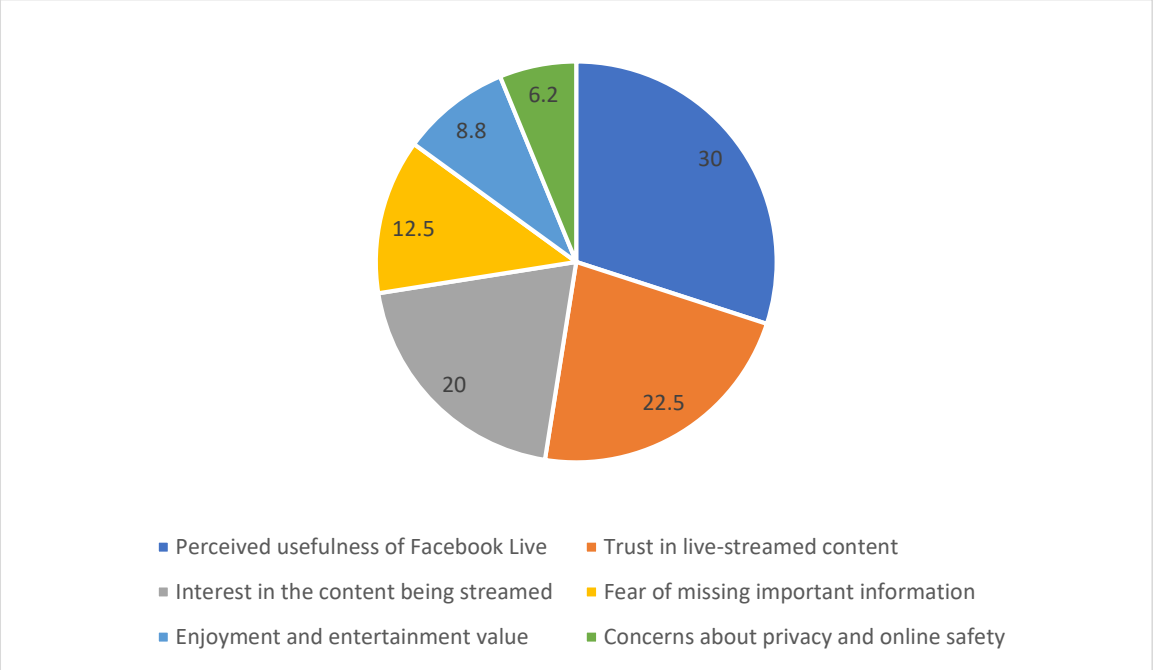
The findings indicate that perceived usefulness of Facebook Live was the leading factor influencing audience engagement, reported by 24 respondents (30.0%). This was followed by trust in live-streamed content, cited by

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18 respondents (22.5%), and interest in the content being streamed, reported by 16 respondents (20.0%). Fear of missing important information accounted for 10 respondents (12.5%), while enjoyment and entertainment value were reported by 7 respondents (8.8%). Concerns about privacy and online safety were the least reported factor, identified by 5 respondents (6.2%). Overall, the findings suggest that audiences are more likely to engage with Facebook Live when they consider its content useful, trustworthy, and relevant to their interests. Entertainment and the desire to access timely information also contribute to engagement, although to a lesser extent. These findings highlight the importance of providing relevant, credible, and valuable content while addressing privacy and online safety concerns to encourage meaningful audience participation.

Figure 4.2: Individual Perceptions and Attitudinal Factors Influencing Engagement



4.5 To Identify the Challenges Faced by Respondents in Relation to the Study Subject

This section presents findings on the challenges faced by respondents in relation to the study subject. Challenges refer to constraints, barriers, or difficulties that hinder individuals from effectively accessing, understanding, or engaging with a given issue.

4.5.1 Economic Challenges

Respondents identified several economic challenges affecting their engagement with the study subject.

Table 4.12: Economic Challenges Faced by Respondents

Economic Challenge	Frequency (n=80)	Percentage (%)
Low income	34	42.5%
Unemployment	18	22.5%
High cost of services	16	20.0%
Lack of financial support	12	15.0%

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Total	**80**	**100%**

The findings indicate that low income was the most significant economic challenge, reported by 34 respondents (42.5%). This was followed by unemployment, identified by 18 respondents (22.5%), and the high cost of services, reported by 16 respondents (20.0%). Lack of financial support was the least reported challenge, accounting for 12 respondents (15.0%). Overall, the findings suggest that limited financial resources are a major barrier affecting respondents' ability to access and use digital platforms. Low income and unemployment may restrict users' capacity to purchase internet data, acquire smartphones, and participate consistently in Facebook Live broadcasts. Similarly, the high cost of services may limit regular access to live-streamed content. These findings highlight the importance of affordable internet services, accessible digital devices, and improved economic opportunities in promoting inclusive participation in live streaming media among online audiences in Uganda.

4.5.2 Institutional and Structural Challenges

Respondents also highlighted institutional and structural challenges.

Table 4.13: Institutional and Structural Challenges Faced by Respondents

Institutional Challenge	Frequency (n=80)	Percentage (%)
Limited-service access	30	37.5%
Poor infrastructure	22	27.5%
Weak institutional support	16	20.0%
Bureaucratic procedures	12	15.0%
Total	**80**	**100%**

The findings indicate that limited service access was the most prominent institutional challenge, reported by 30 respondents (37.5%). This was followed by poor infrastructure, identified by 22 respondents (27.5%), and weak institutional support, reported by 16 respondents (20.0%). Bureaucratic procedures were the least reported challenge, accounting for 12 respondents (15.0%). Overall, the findings suggest that restricted access to essential services, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient institutional support may hinder effective participation in digital communication. In the context of Facebook Live, these challenges may limit access to reliable internet services, digital literacy training, and technical assistance, thereby affecting audience engagement. The findings highlight the need to improve digital infrastructure, expand access to relevant services, and strengthen institutional support to promote inclusive and effective participation in live streaming media among online audiences in Uganda.

4.5.3 Social and Information Challenges

Respondents further reported social and information-related challenges.

Table 4.14: Social and Information Challenges Faced by Respondents

Social Challenge	Frequency (n=80)	Percentage (%)
Lack of awareness updates	26	32.5%
Misinformation	20	25.0%
Peer influence	18	22.5%

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Low community support	16	20.0%
Total	**80**	**100%**

The findings indicate that lack of awareness and updates was the most prominent social challenge, reported by 26 respondents (32.5%). This was followed by misinformation, identified by 20 respondents (25.0%), and peer influence, reported by 18 respondents (22.5%). Low community support was the least reported challenge, accounting for 16 respondents (20.0%). These findings suggest that limited access to timely information, misleading content, and social influences may affect audience engagement with Facebook Live. This is consistent with Nkalubo et al. (2025), including Naswiru Sekamate, whose study found that social media facilitates information dissemination but also presents challenges related to misinformation and public trust. Similarly, Sekamate and Nkonge (2025) examined the opportunities and challenges of Facebook and YouTube in Uganda's news distribution, highlighting the growing importance of digital platforms in accessing information. Overall, the findings emphasize the need to promote digital literacy, reliable information sharing, and community awareness to encourage informed and responsible participation in live streaming.

4.5.4 Personal and Psychological Challenges

Respondents also identified personal and psychological barriers.

Table 4.15: Personal and Psychological Challenges Faced by Respondents

Personal Challenge	**Frequency (n=80)**	**Percentage (%)**
Lack of confidence	24	30.0%
Fear of failure	20	25.0%
Low motivation	18	22.5%
Resistance to change	18	22.5%
Total	**80**	**100%**

The findings indicate that lack of confidence was the most prominent personal challenge, reported by 24 respondents (30.0%). This was followed by fear of failure, identified by 20 respondents (25.0%). Low motivation and resistance to change were each reported by 18 respondents (22.5%). Overall, the findings suggest that psychological and attitudinal factors may influence individuals' willingness to engage with digital platforms such as Facebook Live. Lack of confidence may discourage users from commenting, asking questions, or participating in live discussions, while fear of failure may prevent them from expressing their opinions publicly. Similarly, low motivation and resistance to change may limit adoption and consistent use of live-streaming technologies. These findings highlight the importance of digital-literacy training, user encouragement, and supportive online environments to build confidence and promote active audience participation. However, the table presents reported challenges and does not establish their direct causal effects on participation.

5.0 Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Influence of Live Streaming Media Content on Audience Engagement and Participation

The results showed that live streaming media content notably improves audience engagement and participation. Participants concurred that Facebook Live promotes active interaction via comments, reactions, shares, and direct

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communication with content creators. The research found that audiences value the real-time aspect of Facebook Live since it fosters a feeling of involvement and participation.

The results additionally showed that audiences place more trust in live streamed content than in pre-recorded content, owing to its perceived authenticity and spontaneity. Respondents reported that live streaming allows them to join discussions, pose questions, and get immediate replies from broadcasters. This interactive communication setting boosts audience satisfaction and reinforces the bond between audiences and content creators.

Correlation analysis revealed a positive relationship between live streaming opportunities and audience engagement, and regression analysis confirmed that opportunities linked to Facebook Live significantly affect audience participation.

5.2 Opportunities Presented by Live Streaming Media Content

The study found that Facebook Live provides online audiences with numerous opportunities. Respondents cited access to real-time information as the most significant benefit of live streaming media content. Audiences noted that Facebook Live allows them to get immediate updates on news events, educational programs, entertainment activities, political discussions, and religious broadcasts.

The findings also showed that Facebook Live improves educational opportunities by offering access to seminars, training sessions, online learning programs, and knowledge-sharing platforms. Respondents recognized that live streaming lets people learn no matter where they are located.

The study further found that Facebook Live encourages community engagement and social interaction. Viewers can engage with content creators and other viewers, thus building online communities and strengthening social relationships.

The findings additionally indicated that live streaming encourages authenticity and transparency, since audiences can watch events as they happen. Respondents said they view live content as more trustworthy and credible than content that has been edited.

5.3 Challenges Faced by Online Audiences

The study brought to light a number of challenges linked to Facebook Live. Misinformation stood out as one of the most notable challenges. Respondents voiced concern that false information can spread quickly through live broadcasts before fact-checking measures are put in place.

The findings also showed that high internet costs restrict access to live streaming content for many audiences. Respondents noted that watching live broadcasts for extended periods uses large amounts of internet data, which makes it costly for regular users.

Privacy concerns were likewise identified as a major challenge. Respondents reported worries about unauthorized recording, the sharing of personal information, and the exposure of individuals without consent during live broadcasts.

The study further found that audiences are exposed to inappropriate content, cyberbullying, online harassment, and hate speech during live broadcasts. Respondents noted that weak moderation systems sometimes fail to curb offensive behavior effectively.

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Lastly, the findings showed that excessive consumption of live streaming content contributes to digital fatigue, reduced productivity, and emotional exhaustion among audiences.

Writing

5.4 Conclusion

The study concludes that Facebook Live enhances audience engagement through real-time communication, immediate feedback, and interactive discussions, transforming viewers into active participants. It provides opportunities for timely information access, education, community interaction, transparency, and social participation. However, challenges such as misinformation, privacy violations, cyberbullying, harmful content, high internet costs, and digital fatigue negatively affect audience experiences. Addressing these challenges requires collaboration among platform administrators, policymakers, content creators, and users to promote safe, affordable, and responsible live-streaming practices.

Writing

5.5 Recommendation

Facebook and other social media platforms should strengthen content moderation, improve privacy protection, and promote digital literacy to reduce misinformation, cyberbullying, and harmful content. Government and regulatory authorities should establish policies that protect audiences while respecting freedom of expression and invest in affordable internet access and digital infrastructure.

Educational institutions should integrate digital literacy into their curricula, emphasizing critical evaluation of online information, privacy, and responsible digital communication. Content creators should verify information before broadcasting, communicate ethically, and moderate comments to prevent harassment and offensive behaviour. Online audiences should critically evaluate live-streamed content, verify information before sharing, and use privacy settings and reporting mechanisms to protect themselves from online abuse.

5.6 Areas for Further Research

Future research should examine other live-streaming platforms, the long-term psychological effects of live-streaming consumption, the effectiveness of content moderation in preventing misinformation and harmful content, and the relationship between digital literacy and audience vulnerability to misinformation.

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