TITLE PAGE

ONLINE NEWS CHANNELS SELECTION AND USES AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF UNIVERSITY OF JOS.

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DECLARATION

I, Kehinde Funmilayo Mefolere, with Matriculation Number UJ/2014/PGAR/0006 hereby declare that this work is the product of my own research efforts undertaken under the supervision of Mr. Dantala Daniel Yohanna Garba and has not been presented elsewhere for the award of a degree or certificate. All sources have been duly distinguished and appropriately acknowledged.

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the research work for this dissertation has been examined and approved for

the award of the degree of MASTER OF ARTS (M.A) MASS COMMUNICATION

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DEDICATION

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on examining the use, gratifications and dependence on online news channels by undergraduate students of the University of Jos. This study investigated their usage pattern of online news channels; news categories or media repertoire of interest to them and their reasons or motivations for such use and dependence. Media dependency theory and Uses and Gratifications theory were the theoretical foundation of this research. The study used survey as the research design; questionnaire as instrument for data collection and stratified purposive sampling method on a sample of three hundred and fifty (350) undergraduate students who were taken purposively and proportionately from each faculty in the Institution. Data retrieved were analysed using frequency count, cross tabulation and simple percentage. The study found out that undergraduate students of the University of Jos used online news channels for various reasons such as inexpensiveness and convenience of use of such channels; ability to comment, share, post and get feedbacks but most importantly to stay updated and informed on various issues The study therefore recommended that media content producers, University of Jos management, government and service producers all have roles to play in effective and efficient use of online news channels.

Key Words: Online news channels, Gratifications, Dependency and Media repertoire.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of the study

The Internet is seen as a network that links computers and devices together throughout the whole world. The Internet has continued to evolve into a major news source (Aina, 2003).

> The Internet with all its capabilities have changed the way we live, learn and work. It permits us to communicate more with people around the world, regardless of location and distance, thus making it a global village…the Internet has changed the face of the printing industry and newspapers have taken the lead (Hanson cited in Olley and Chile, 2015 p.1).

This implies that people do not have to wait 24 hours for newspapers to update them of happenings around the world as newspapers now have 'breaking news' online which was an exclusive of the broadcast industry. In essence, Olley and Chile (2015) noted that people do not have to wait until the vendor(s) deliver the newspaper(s) before knowing what is happening around the world. Clearly, Information Technology has completely changed from a network of oral and print mechanisms to one that is largely visual and computer-generated, "and the speed with which one can get information has been reduced from months and days to nano-seconds" (Adeya cited in Okonofua 2015, p.2).One important reason for this phenomenon is the growth of Internet availability to consumers, both at work and at home.

Despite, the seeming successes of the Internet as a medium for news, questions have been raised about the credibility of online news (Lasica, 1998 and Online News Association, 2002).However it was noted that these concerns were significant because, journalism is built on the principles of credibility and the public is likely not to pay attention to a medium that they do not trust because trust is a factor in news reporting (Olley and Chile, 2015). Moreover, lack of trust in information obtained from the Internet could keep it from becoming an even more important and influential news source (Johnson and Kaye, 1998).

The Internet, however, offers its audiences an immense range of communication opportunities since networks are always "up," allowing 24-hour asynchronous or synchronous interactions and information retrieval and exchange among individuals and groups (Kiesler, 1997). Moreover, in terms of platforms and networks, increased broadband availability at cheaper prices has boosted online activities such as online news consumption. Also in, terms of Internet technologies, news dissemination over the Internet increasingly relies on new information distribution technologies such as news aggregation, syndication technologies (RSS technologies) and blogs. Services such as Google News; innovative web tools such as NetVibes,

delicious.com, Permalink and Digg.com allow users to find content in different ways and organise the information on the Internet (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2006).

Researchers have argued that, in recent times, technological developments within the media have contributed to an increased flow of information in different ways and is considered to strengthen citizens' partaking possibilities (Limonard and Esmeijer, 2007; Madden and Fox, 2006; and OECD, 2006). Supplementing this, Bergstom (2008) noted that during the first years of the new millennium, a new generation of web applications was developed such as Web 2.0 which is an umbrella term for new interactive web services and possibilities; characterized by the freedom to share media content and to participate in its production, giving the audience the ability to participate in content production as well as to publish content.

Similarly, there are two significant technological trends that influence news consumption behavior. They include, the advent of social media platforms such as social networking sites and blogs which have helped news become a social experience in fresh ways for consumers to the extent that people now use their social networks and social networking technology to filter, assess, and react to news. Also, the ascent of mobile connectivity via smart phones has turned news gathering and news awareness into an anytime, anywhere affair for a segment of avid news watchers (Kristen, Lee, Amy, Tom and Kenny, 2010).

Yet, the way news is consumed is radically different online. Online news readers get variety of news from different sources or channels instantly, news alerts via their mobile phones, over various online news channels at work, and while surfing the Internet in the evening. Their Internet access to news is increasing daily and for those working in offices or owning a Smartphone, the access to news can be continual throughout the day, rather than just in the morning. Online news readers access news via search engines, via e-mail newsletters or mail

forwards, or aggregation tools and sometimes they spend only a few seconds or minutes on a particular article (or headline, video or picture) before leaving that particular news site to find similar articles elsewhere (Althaus and Tewksbury, 2001).

In terms of capturing the whole news spectrum rather than focusing on individual stories, some online readers might never get an overview of all news through the home page of a particular news site. Others however will use news aggregators, newspaper home pages or the mail or mobile phone service of online news sites to get such overviews. In any case, this more fragmented way of reading the news allows them to mix different channels and compile their own personalised information (Althaus and Tewksbury, 2001).

Bergstrom (2008) also noted that 'News' could be used in two ways in everyday discourse. It could refer to what has happened to individuals, as in the conversational opening, 'Any news?' It could also refer to information about significant events on the public stage. On the Internet, in newsgroups, these two meanings intersected. News of both kinds became the mortar of online "virtual" communities, many of them brought together and sustained by a sense of social solidarity for which the traditional media were not considered suitable or available channels.

In relation to convergence, technology has led newspapers all over the world restructuring themselves and becoming more user-friendly, more casual, more lifestyle-oriented, and more in touch with youths (Baran, 2004). Similarly, this new multi-platform media environment has made people's relationship to news become portable, personalized, and participatory (Kristen, et al. 2010). This implies that users owing to the portability, personalization and participatory features of the new multi-platform environment could now access news on their cell phones; customize their home page to include news from sources and

on topics that particularly interest them; contribute to the creation of news, comment about it, or disseminate it via postings on social media sites like Facebook or Twitter.

Another factor to promise a bright future for online news is the potential adoption of broadband. Nguyen (2003) sees broadband characteristically, not only as a permanent means of connection but also as high speed of data transfer which saves much surfing time and makes the web truly accessible at any time so that the need to dial up through a telephone modem is eliminated. This high speed also facilitates downloading big files (such as video clips), making web content much more enjoyable and compelling to users, who might quickly embrace the multimedia advantage of the web as a result of the gratifications derived from its use. What this holds for the future according to Nguyen (2003) is a potentially huge impact on the use frequency and time budget of online activities in general and online news in particular.

Taking a closer look at journalism, Okonofua (2010) noticed a dramatic change recently as media is no longer dependent on time and space; new technology now makes it possible to consume up-to-date media contents at all times and the consumer plays an increasingly important role in choosing his or her own media content to meet his or her needs. This clearly states that owing to the 'currency' of media content on new technology, audiences play significant roles in their choice and use of media content to satisfy or gratify their needs.

Moreover, in line with American survey findings, online news sites turn out to be the news platforms with the highest increase in use: half of the respondents said their use of online sites for news had increased over the past two years (Drok and Schwartz, 2009). Such shifts from traditional to online media platforms among young news consumers can be better understood when taking into account recent technological evolutions resulting in today's high-tech environment, and youngsters' changing lifestyles. Although young people do consider it important to keep up with current events, they tend to find the ways in which traditional media

offer these events hardly appealing (Costera Meijer, 2007; Raeymakers, 2003; Beekhoven and Van Wel 1998; Huang, 2009). For them, news is not an end in itself but a means for experiencing the world around them which is, monitoring their environment, giving meaning to their lives, identifying personal values for truth, getting a sense of belonging, for conversation and inspiration (Costera Meijer, 2007; Huang, 2009).

Growing up in the "DotNet" generation, with news made accessible through an array of offline and online media platforms, young people have become news grazers, combining different platforms; multiple online news channels and selecting the bits of news they deemed necessary to gratify their needs(Zukin, Keeter, Andolina, Jenkins and Della, 2006; and Pew Research Center, 2015). Such increased use of digital news platforms illustrates the demand for self-selected, custom-made information, with each individual deciding what news or information should be made available at what moment in time (Althaus and Tewksbury, 2002; Costera Meijer, 2007; Huang, 2009). This new orientation towards news reflects the hasty lifestyle of the young, combining education, jobs, social networking, hobbies, etc. within a limited time frame (Costera Meijer, 2007; Huang, 2009).

Similarly, in a survey carried out by the Pew Internet and American Life Project and the Project for Excellence in Journalism aimed at understanding the new News landscape (2004), they discovered that today, Americans routinely get their news from multiple sources and a mix of platforms. Nine in ten American adults (92%) get news from multiple platforms on a typical day, with half of those using four to six platforms daily. Fully 59% get news from a combination of online and offline sources on a typical day. Just over a third (38%) rely solely on offline sources, and 2% rely exclusively on the Internet for their daily news.

Consequently, "newspapers currently provide a range of online interactive features where audience can register their views, and debate and discuss in real time" Richardson and Stanyer

(2011 p.984). However, wireless news consumers have fitted this "on-the-go" access to news into their already voracious news-gathering habits as they use multiple news media platforms on a typical day, forage widely on news topics, and browse the web for a host of subjects therefore, users of online news platform engage in tagging or categorizing online news content; contributing their own article, opinion piece, picture or video to an online news site; commenting on a news story or blog they read online; posting link to a news story or blog on a social networking site and using Twitter to post or re-tweet a news story or blog (Kristen et al, 2010). This further buttress the fact that new media should possess at least three attributes of data not commonly associated with traditional media which are interactivity, demassification and asynchroneity and provide a vast continuum of communication behaviors to examine (Ruggiero, 2000). This implies that the new media provides a platform for user-control content and participation.

Interactivity is " the degree to which participants in the communication process have control over and can exchange roles in their mutual discourse" (Williams, Rice and Rogers cited in Ruggiero 2000, p.15) while Demassification on the other hand is "the ability of the media user to select from a wide menu" (Ruggiero 2000, p.16). This means that the audience choice is important in media selection and use depending on the kind of medium that gratify their needs. In addition, asynchroneity is viewed as the concept that messages may be staggered in time. This implies that senders and receivers of electronic messages can read at different times and still interact at their convenience. With the Internet, an individual has the potential to store, duplicate, transfer information to an online webpage (Ruggiero, 2000). This implies that once messages are in digitized form, manipulation of the media becomes infinite thereby allowing the individual user much more control than traditional means. Moreover, much of the current activity on the

web involves exploratory behavior, offering an environment in which users can get contacts of the sources they contact (Eighmey, 1997).

In a similar way, technology also plays a crucial role in how the media connect with and engage with their audiences – interactive information sharing. In today's broadcast media environment when news breaks, it is usually on Twitter. The first photos are not from mainstream media outlets or agencies; they are tweeted or posted to Instagram by eyewitnesses. In effect, anyone with a Smartphone can become an extension of the newsgathering operation (Posetti, 2009). Also, audience of new media technologies can also access many different sources of information online, they can easily get this information from different pages or groups that they are subscribed to and it can even be sent to their mobiles phones from the accounts they follow (Habib, 2012).

However, some unanswered questions arise. Have people adopted news on the web because they enjoy using its exclusive technological features? Or is it simply because it is largely offered without charge and/or is convenient to integrate into Internet usage, which is multi-purposeful in nature? If the power of online news is a strong driver, how strong is 'strong'? Even more provocatively, could some early adopters of Internet news abandon it for some unknown reasons – as happened to videotex news services (the precursor of the web) which were hailed as the coming revolution of the 1980s (Fidler 1997; Boczkowski 2004)? If yes, how many would and what are the reasons? If no, why do people keep on with the news online? To what extent are they satisfied with it and do they really consider it a powerful medium? Without knowing the answers to these questions and the like, it is almost impossible to know whether the web as a news medium is going to continue its impressive uptake in the years ahead (and then possibly dominate the future news environment) or whether it is soon going to reach a saturation point.

Consequently, without these answers, the popular technology-determinist belief of the possible displacement and replacement effect of online news on traditional sources would remain open to question.

Unfortunately, inadequate academic attention has been paid to issues relating to the important questions. This is not because online news consumption has been ignored in research but many studies have intensively and extensively investigated the effect of information presentation on computer screens, including its efficiency and effectiveness (Wearden 1998; Wearden et al 1999; Schierhorn et al. 1999; Wearden and Fidler 2001; Vargo et al. 2000) and its influence on cognitive aspects of online news consumption (Oostendorf and Nimwegen 1998; Sundar 1998; Sundar 2000; Tewksbury and Althaus 2000; Tewksbury, Weaver and Maddex 2001; D'Haenens, Jankowski and Heuvelman 2004). Others have compared the web with other traditional news sources in terms of preferences (Mueller and Kamerer 1995; Chyi and Larosa1999), pattern of use and gratification of online use (Nguyen, Ferrier, Western and Mckay, N.d) and credibility (Johnson and Kaye 1998; Schweiger 2000; Abdulla et al 2002; Nozato 2002). Substantial research has also been devoted to the relationship between Internet; Internet news adoption and traditional news usage (Bromley and Bowles 1995; Stempel III, Hardrove and Bernt 2000; Dutta-Bergman 2004; Dimmick, Chen and Li 2004). In essence, most researches have been tilted towards comparison of online news link which is the Internet and traditional news platforms or channels but they haven't looked at it from various online avenues or channels used such as downloaded news apps, emails through subscription to newsletters, search engines, links to news websites pages, social media among others which is the focus of this research. Also Terragon Insight (2013) noted that in Nigeria, the Internet penetration rate is 28.4% while mobile penetration is 69.01%. Nigeria is also considered to have the largest internet population in Africa taking the 11th position in the world. This is in line with the fact that the

average Nigeria Netizen spends not less than three (3) hours on the internet daily; 67% of this population are males while 78 % of the Nigeria Netizen are between the ages of 19 and 35 and 45 % are students while the remaining fall in 55 % (Terragon Insight, 2013).

Kuehn (1994) in his report however emphasized interactivity capacity of computer-mediated communication and therefore suggested a group of uses and gratification statements to be used as rating scales to evaluate computer-aided instructional programme and his typology includes convenience, diversion, relationship development and intellectual appeal. This implies that in studying uses, gratifications and dependence of online news channels by audience, this typology may be taken into cognizance. Users of online news channels therefore will use it based on the convenience, diversion, relationship development and intellectual appeal it gives them in respect to their goals.

1.2   Statement of the problem

Several valid questions have been raised about the usage of online news. Attempts have also been made to answer them, in the face of insufficient academic focus on what may be considered important aspect of these question. This study therefore took cognizance of the unanswered questions mentioned above and focused on examining the use, gratification and dependence of online news channels by undergraduate students of the University of Jos.

Similarly, as emerging technologies provide users with a wider range of source selection and channels of information, individuals are now selecting media repertoire in their areas of most interest (Rugerrio, 2000). This implies that audience depend, use and select media repertoire based on their interest. It is suggested that 'active selectors' use of the media to achieve audience goals will result in being dependent on the media (DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach, 1989); people will also become more dependent on media that meet a number of their needs

than on media that provide only a few ones (Littlejohn, 2002). If a person finds a medium that provides them with several functions that are central to their desires, they will be more inclined to continue to use that particular medium in the future (Kristen et al, 2010).

Moreover, the advancement in electronic communication technology may sufficiently alter the context of media use that current mass communication theories do not yet address. This study therefore examine the pattern of usage of online news channels by undergraduate students of the University of Jos; their media repertoire and goals that guide their selection and dependence on such channels.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The following research objectives guided this study:

(i) To examine the pattern of online news channels use by Undergraduate students of the University of Jos.

(ii) To identify the media repertoire interest of Undergraduate students of the University of Jos in selection and use of online news channels.

(iii) To find out the goals of Undergraduate students of the University of Jos that guide their selection, use and dependence of online news channels.

1.4 Research questions

The following served as questions to the study:

1. What are the usage pattern of online news channels used by Undergraduate students of the University of Jos?

2. What kind of media repertoire are of interest to Undergraduate students of the University of Jos that guide their selection and use of online news channels?

3. What are the goals of Undergraduate students of the University of Jos that guide their selection, use and dependence of online news channels?

1.5 Significance of the study

This study is of significance in many ways as it exposes the reason why students use online news channels; their usage pattern and benefits or gratification derived from its use. What users do with news content, could significantly influence the economics of the news industry. Understanding not only what content users will want to consume but also what content they are likely to pass along may be a key to how stories are put together and even what stories get covered in the first place.

It is also hoped that findings of this study will serve as reliable resource materials for further researchers as it will provide a guide for further studies in the field of online journalism. This study will contribute to the growth of existing literature on assessment of online new channels uses and gratifications by its audience as this will help media producers, journalist to be aware of what the audience really desire or want from the medium used.

Theoretically, Uses and Gratifications Approach and Media Dependency Theory are the best theories to help study the relationship between the new communication tools and its users, and why they use or prefer certain media outlets than other and how they use it. Media dependency theory on its own helps to understand why people depend on the mass media and its messages.

1.6 Scope of the study

This study examined audience usage pattern of online news channels; the media repertoire or categories that guide their selection of online news channels use and their goals which are also the motivations or reasons for online news channels use and selection. Similarly, the study took the Uses and gratifications perspective of audience being active participant of media use and selection and media dependency perspective of audience being dependent on whatever news channels that has the capability to satisfy their goals. This study restricted its population to Undergraduate students of the University of Jos.

1.7   Limitations of the study

One main limitation is the representative population targeted at a single institution and cannot be used to signify the opinion of the young adults of today. The generalization of the study is limited to the geographic scope of the study.

1.8   Definition of terms

Media repertoire: messages that are distributed through technologies, principally computer networks, blogs, mobile phones etc.

Dependency: is the relationship in which the satisfaction of needs or attainment of goals by one party is contingent upon the resources of another party. It is also the activation and expression of goals during media use.

Gratification: refers to the level of feeling of pleasure or satisfaction derived from the use of a certain media content, medium or format which the user of such medium exposes self to.

Online news channels: are platforms through which mainstream media as well as blogs and other self-published news stories are and are made accessible to users.

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CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. **Introduction**

The digital world has fragmented the locations where the public access news and public affair information. Today, with all these online news sources or channels and a growing number of digital devices, people now access news and information not only on their digital websites and apps but also access news through search engines linked to with other online content aggregator and also social media(Oliver and Ohlbaum Associated ltd, 2004).

Ruggenberg (2007) views News as information about political, historical, social or cultural events that recently happened in the world considered interesting enough to be distributed to the public via different news media. Knowledge about news can contribute to the strive for a well-informed society. According to Rocho cited in Ruggenberg (2007, p. 4) "news is continually sought and offered in the course of social communication because it is necessary and therefore a valuable commodity of social exchange".

Similarly, Ruggenberg (2007) also noted that the medium of preference of younger people have changed alongside with the technological development of mobile phones and the internet. Similarly, Insight Express (2004) found out that American youngersters prefer online news sources above televised news. Oliver and Ohlbaum Associated ltd (2004) in their study noted that consumers use multiple sources across multiple media and they embrace this choice and are actively pursuing information from variety of sources based on different view point, confirmation, and specialization or for many other reasons. According to them, understanding the behaviour and forces that shapes this is very important. This implies that the need to know whether users use this multiple channels or sources because of consumer plurality or for specific needs such as for sport, international news among others is paramount. Oliver and Ohlbaum Associated ltd (2004) also suggested that in measuring usage, it is important to note the number of people using the source, the volume of their use, their engagement and the extent to which the youth engage with and use the content. Similarly, understanding how users get access to and navigate around service is paramount to understanding usage which is also what is taken into cognizance in this research.

Furthermore, it was argued that consumption of news needs to be understood in terms of how the public uses multiple devices individually and collectively and in different social

settings. This is because measurement of news consumption previously relied upon platform specific measurement that never accurately reflected how individual mixed and matched media in practice. A multiple platform analysis will permit a more nuanced or detailed analysis of how different types of media supplement each other in place of more simplistic assumption about the 'new' media replacing the 'old' media (Oliver and Ohlbaum Associated ltd,2004).

2.2   Review of Concepts

2.2.1   Media Dependency

Media dependency, which was developed by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin Defleur in 1976 is grounded in classical sociological literature and posit that media and their audience should be studied in the context of larger social system(Habib, 2012). Media dependency as a concept ties together the interrelation of broad social system, mass media and the individual into a comprehensive explanation of media effect. At its core, the basic dependency hypothesis states that the more a person depends on media to meet needs, the more important the media will be in a person's life and therefore the more effects media will have on a person(Nikolaus, 2010).

Similarly, the key idea behind media dependency is that audiences depend on media information to meet needs and reach goals. Therefore, social institution and media system interact with audience to create needs, interest and motives in individuals(Yaroson and Asemah, 2008). Dependency degree on online news channels is therefore influenced by the number of information functions of such channels and its social stability while Habib (2012) on the other hand pointed out that dependency emerge from three relationship which are the relationship between the society and the media, relationship between the media and the audience and the relationship between the society and the audience

Habib (2012) explained that within the relationship between the society and the media, media access and availability are regarded as important antecedent to individual's experience within the media. The nature of media dependency on societal systems varies across political, economic and cultural system. This implies that for users of online news channels to be dependent on such channels, they must have constant access to such channel which is made available to them at any time they need its services. Secondly, the relationship between the media and the audience. This relationship is the key variable in this theory because it affects how people might use a mass medium. This relationship also varies across media systems. This also implies that the more salient the information need, the stronger are the motivation to seek mediated information and the dependency on the medium. In results, the likelihood for the media to affect audience becomes greater. Thirdly, the relationship between the society and the audience. The society influences consumers' needs and motives for the media use and provide norms, values, knowledge and laws for their members. Social system, can function as an alternative to the media by offering similar services of the media. When these needs for media are high, the more people turn to media to meet these needs and therefore the media have a greater opportunity to affect them. None of these media needs are constant over long period of time. They change based on aspect of our social environment(Habib, 2012). Yaroson and Asemah (2008) further stated that these questions need to be raised to know the degree of dependency level of users of the mass media which are; do media create need?; do people turn to media to achieve gratification and satisfy needs?, are media needs personal, social, cultural, political or all of these and are media our friends? (Yaroson and Asemah 2008, p.95). In addition, Defleur and Ball-Rokeach, 1976 cited in Ball-Rokeach (1998, p. 15) noted that there are conditions that can heighten media needs, these may be when the number of media function in a society are high and when a society is undergoing social change and conflict .

Media dependency becomes manifest on both macro and micro levels (Ball-Rokeach, 1998; Patwardhan and Ramaprasad, 2005). The micro refers to the individual and his or her goals and resources; the macro deals with the media system and its goals and resources (Nikolaus, 2010). This studyis focused on the individual, or micro, level. Relations are defined as "the extent to which attainment of an individual's goals is contingent upon access to the resources of the media system, relative to the extent to which attainment of media system goals is contingent upon the resources controlled by individuals" (Ball-Rokeach, 1998, p. 18). Media dependency relations at the micro level vary, for example, according to the intensity of the dependency relation. This implies that individual media dependency at this level on online news channels vary based on its ability to satisfy his or her needs. Nikolaus (2010) sees intensity as the perceived exclusivity of resources for goal attainment. For individuals, the intensity of the dependency relation grows with the perceived helpfulness of the media in attaining personal goals(Nikolaus, 2010).

Audiences developed dependency on mass media in several ways, such as: (1) dependency on mass media to understand their social world; (2) dependency on mass media to learn how to act meaningfully and effectively in the social world; and (3) dependency on mass media to escape their daily problems and tensions in the social world (Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur1976 cited in (Chen 2011, p.6). Supporting this view, Yaroson and Asemah (2008) noted that the degree of users dependence on media and their content is key variable in understanding when and why media messages alter audience beliefs, feelings or behaviours and also the level of dependency is related to the number and centrality or importance of the specific information delivery functions served by a medium and the degree of change and conflict present in the society while Lowrey (2004) noted that different factors determined individuals' media dependency for instance, it was discovered that degree of perceived threat and age were the key

predictors, also Gordon (2009) discovered that socioeconomic status and social vulnerability were most important.

Similarly, motivation was discovered to have contributed to Internet dependency significantly more than demographics(Sun, Rubin, and Haridakis, 2008), whereas on the other hand Lyu (2012) found out that social understanding and social play, or interaction, were the common goals motivating media dependency. Whatever the factors contributing to media dependency, social crises makes it important for individuals to receive and make sense of information, roles best filled by mass media due to their speed and connectedness (Page 2013, p.16).

According to media dependency theory, the intensity of a dependency relation is influenced by the perception that the media are an exclusive information system: Individuals considering the media as exclusive are more dependent on them (Nikolaus 2010, p 7). For the research purpose at hand, however, this perception of exclusivity was equated with the individual perception of being dependent on mass media and seeing no alternatives to them.

Dependency itself has been treated by many as a negative outcome (Morahan-Martin and Schumacher, 2000). It has also been noted that some studies have focused on extreme cases of dependency (Hall and Parson, 2001; Kandell, 1998) that seemed applicable to a smaller percentage of individuals. These depict very high embeddedness of new media into college students' daily routines, yet the issues still need scrutiny because as Internet use increases overtime and strong habits of consumption builds up, the problematic outcome are bound to ensue (Ball-Rokeach 1998 cited in Yoowhan, 2009, p 15).

Furthermore, users especially younger ones, are increasingly engaging with computer and digital media at home and school during most of their scheduled and discretionary time. These individuals can become pathologically dependent on such media (Wallace, 1999). This implies

that interaction and relationship with these new technologies will decisively shape how individual think, know, react, feel, behave and will consequently impact society and culture. Meanwhile Lenhart and Madden (2005) argued that among college students, the new media and web 2.0 are becoming important information system useful for them to make sense of their world. This participatory interaction with the new media increases the involvement with the content and information proffered by the medium and deepens their relationship with the media, this can intensify certain outcome in a sense that people who spend much time with new media technologies and its content are more likely to think about things they never thought of before. In this sense, getting people to think is a media effect (Thomas, 2006).

2.2.2   News Gratification

Media gratifications was categorized into two namely; Process Gratifications and Content Gratifications. Where process gratifications are what people gain from using the media, content gratifications are gratifications that arise from information gotten from the media message(Cutler and Danowski, 1980; Kayahara and Wellman 2007 as cited in Chen 2011).

In a study on *Online news information seeking: An analysis of usage of search engines vs social networks in Egypt,* findings indicated thatsocial gratification is obtained from reading news online(Aref, 2013).This implies the need for users to stay current with what is happening around them and high levels of agreement regarding the personal satisfaction people gain in sharing news on social networks and the reasons for doing so which include receiving friend's opinions on posts they share and preference in reading news that have a personalized point of

view. Therefore, the extent to which news gratifications sought are obtained depends on a complementary role of the media which must supply details to news and that of the news consumers who must be ready to access the news details(Saleeman and Budiman 2015, p.10).

Another study on *Readership of online newspaper by users of selected cyber café in Uyo Urban* revealed that in general researchers have found four kinds of gratifications which include information where users would want to find out about their society and the world in order to satisfy their curiosity; Personal Identity which may entail users try to look out for models for their behavior; integration and social interaction captures media use in order to find out more about the circumstances of other people and entertainment in which online media users sometimes use the media for enjoyment, relaxation or just to fill time (Okonofua, 2010; Yaroson and Asemah, 2008). A study on *emerging consumption pattern among young people of traditional and internet news platforms in the Low Countries* however pointed out five gratifications for using the media and they are entertainment, information/surveillance, social utility, pastime and escape. Their findings also indicated the relevance of information/surveillance gratification for consuming news, as individuals perceived it as the most important motive driving their consumption of television news, newspaper and online news sites although their findings similarly, demonstrated that other diversion gratifications also played an explanatory role in young people's news consumption(Cauwenberge, d'Haenens, and Beentjes, 2010). Consequently, the findings of their study indicated that news consumption across the different platforms was partly driven by the same needs, some platform specific gratifications were found. More specifically, the results from their regression analysis showed that the social utility gratification was only statistically significant and positively related to time spent with online news sites. (Cauwenberge, d'Haenens, and Beentjes 2010, p.12).

In another study titled *An examination of Microblog as News source among University students in Mainland China*, Muyang (2011)discovered that the gratification university students acquired when getting news from microblog was that university students liked to use Weibo as news source due to the scope in coverage and large quantity of microblog news; because it can meet their demands of getting interesting information and accurate news reporting; because they liked its function in communicating with other users when reading the news; speediness and convenience, multi-formed information and the ease of getting public feedbacks, which are quite crucial to news, especially for breaking news. For online news sites, this study only found a positive significant effect of escape gratifications. Interestingly, however, the social utility gratification showed only a significant positive relation with time spent on online news sites(Muyang, 2011). So young people with higher information needs to use in everyday conversations consult more online news than those with lower social utility gratification needs (Cauwenberge, d'Haenens, and Beentjes, 2010).

For the youth, news is not an end in itself but a means for experiencing the world around them: i.e. monitoring their environment, giving meaning to their lives, identifying personal values for truth, getting a sense of belonging, for conversation and inspiration (Costera Meijer, 2007; Huang, 2009). Growing up in the "DotNet" generation with news made accessible through an array of offline and online media platforms, young people have become news grazers, combining different platforms and multiple online news sources and selecting the bits of news they deem necessary to gratify their needs (Pew Research Center, 2015). Such increased use of digital news platforms illustrates the demand for self-selected, custom-made information, with each individual deciding what news or information should be made available at what moment in time (Althaus and Tewksbury, 2000; Costera Meijer, 2007; Huang, 2009; Zukin, et al. 2006).

2.2.3   Online News Channels

We live in a twenty-four seven world of journalism, a world of news about news that exist providing people with near-instant and ever-present news information. In this fast paced technology driven society we live in, it has been proven within the last few years that one of the most sought after channels in finding information is no other than the Internet (Aref, 2013). Similarly, online and digital news consumption, continues to increase, with many more people now getting news on cell phones, tablets or other mobile platforms. And perhaps the most dramatic change in the news environment has been the rise of social networking sites (Pew research center, 2012). Supporting this view, Newman, Levy, and Nielsen (2015) noted in their study that within online, there have been a sharp rise in the growth of social media in the past year as a source of news. Some of the biggest increases have come in the US, UK, Brazil, and Denmark (Newman, et al 2015).

Initially online users would log on to specific websites or use a search engine such as Google or Yahoo! to find relevant news about a topic of interest. However, recently, social networks such as Facebook and Twitter have been playing an instrumental role in the 'search' scene where individuals are relying on them further as online news sources (Newman, 2011).People have started to use social networks frequently to learn, send and share news about affairs within the country and the region (Arslan et al, 2012). Augmenting this, a study carried out by Pew research center however noted that in the shifting online landscape, the use of mobile devices and social networking sites have replaced a traditional tool — search engines — as the driver of growth in finding news online. Search engines like Google, Bing or Yahoo continue to be the largest single tool in finding news online, but the substantial growth in their use between 2008 and 2010 has leveled off (Pew Research Center, 2012).

Social networking sites are also acting as alert systems for people. This might be hindering the act where people have to go and hunt for news. Studies have shown that an increasing number of online users depend on news being circulated by other users on social networking sites. Users now "stumble" by news and another name for this is 'serendipitous' news consumption (Aref, 2013). Just as online newspaper readers make up an ever-greater share of all newspaper readers, so also do substantial percentages of the regular readers of leading newspapers read them digitally. Currently, 55% of regular New York Times readers said they read the paper mostly on a computer or mobile device, as do 48% of regular USA Today and 44% of Wall Street Journal readers (Pew Research Center, 2012).

According to their study, the percentage regularly getting news from a social networking site, such as Facebook, Google Plus or LinkedIn, also has increased dramatically – from just 2% in 2008, to 7% in 2010 and 20% currently. These trends are complementary: Those who have smartphones – about half of the public (48%) – are far more likely to regularly see news or news headlines on social networking sites than those who do not (29% vs. 11%). Similarly, those who have iPads, Kindle Fires and other tablet computers (21% of the public) also are much more likely to get news from social networks than are those who do not own these devices (Pew Research Center. 2012). Furthermore, Newman, et al (2015) in *Reuters institute digitals news report, 2015* noted that news accessed from smartphones has jumped significantly over the last 12 months, particularly in the UK, US, and Japan. Average weekly usage has grown from 37 to 46% across all our countries. Two-thirds of smartphone users (66%) are now using the devices for news every week. Surprisingly, given the amount of time spent in apps generally, people in most countries said they are likely to access news via a mobile browser. This suggests that news may not always be a primary destination but will often be found through links from social media

or email (Newman, et al 2015). This may be partly because news organisations have stepped up their presence, investing in new social media teams.

Online news websites and social media are valued more for serendipity (alerting audience to stories they didn't know about). Social media are considered least reliable. Here online is considered best on all dimensions, while social media is considered particularly valuable for alerting people to stories they didn't know about. Interestingly, though, even this group of young people is highly distrustful of the accuracy of information in social media when compared with reputable brands online (Pew Research Center 2012). A study by Newman, et al (2015) argued that the move to smartphone may be making users less adventurous with their choices. The study found that people use fewer sources of news each week when using a smartphone than when accessing news via a tablet or a computer. They however pointed out that it may be that on a smartphone, where people are often short of time and more task focused, they are happier to stick to one or two brands they trust. On a tablet or computer there may be more time to browse, more time for serendipity.

Similarly, Newman, et al (2015) also noted that in the last few years, most news publishers have created specific apps for mobile platforms – designed to create a slicker, faster experience that links to additional features of mobile operating systems. At the same time they have also spent time and engineering resource in optimising their mobile browsing experience for the small screen. Against that background, it is interesting to note that in most countries the mobile browser remains the main access point to news. This includes a typology of different online sources or channels: whether they are traditional newspaper providers such as the New York Times, broadcaster websites like NHK, Globo, and the BBC, or digital-born players like Yahoo, Huffington Post, Buzzfeed, and Google News.

Additionally, when other online and digital news channels are added in − including seeing news on a social network or Twitter, getting news from email and listening to podcasts, the percentage of Americans getting news from online and digital sources continues to grow, and that trend has been sustained in the last two years by an increase in the use of mobile devices. However, the percentage who regularly get news on a cell phone, tablet or other mobile device has nearly doubled since 2010, from 9% to 15%, and the number regularly seeing news on social network sites has almost tripled, from 7% to 20% (p.19). Other online platforms have had less impact than social networking sites. Just more than one-in-ten (12%) regularly get news from reading blogs, a figure that has changed little since 2008. About the same percentage (13%) regularly gets news by email. Just 5% said they regularly get news by listening to podcasts. And just 3% of the general public regularly follows news on Twitter (Pew Research Center 2012, p 20).

2.3   Use and Consumption of News on Online News Channels

Attitudes and interest do not automatically lead to use, but media use in general often depends on interest in certain topics or facilities and could be a condition for use. Consequentially, since the news practice on the Internet more or less equals quick checking and a short glance at the headlines, it might be the case that frequent news users simply do not consider news sites as places you are interacting or commenting on and it is striking that there are no gender effects, despite the fact that findings from studies about general Internet use show that men spend more time online than women(Bergstrom, 2008). News audience studies also show that men are more frequent online news users. In other ways, Media Insight Project in their study also agrees with the fact that gender is a more significant determinant of news habits than age. Women, for instance, are more likely to share news and get it through social media, and to

follow news about schools and health and lifestyle. Men are more likely to watch cable news and follow different subjects, including sports and foreign affairs (Media Insight Project, 2014).

In contemporary media culture, the consumption of media content in the online environment is increasingly a communal and shared social experience. Online media; particular applications and services designed for sharing media content, enable and encourage the audience members to share their media consumption experiences. As a result, the importance of audience communities in distributing and marketing professional media content is growing (Newman and Dutton, 2011). Online news sources used in America include yahoo news, CNN, local news sources, MSN, Fox, MSNBC, New York times, AOL, Huffington post, Facebook, ABC news, Wall street Journal, BBC, USA today, Internet service providers, ESPN, Washington post and The Drudge report (Pew Research Center, 2012 p. 21) and in the US, for instance, up to 75% of the online news audience consume news forwarded to them through email or social networking sites, such as Facebook or Twitter (Kristen et al. 2010). Similarly, according to the study by Hermida et al. (2012), two out of five Canadians who use social networking sites receive news content on a daily basis from family, friends and acquaintances in social media. A recent survey conducted in Finland (Matikainen and Villi, 2012) shows how 17% of Finns consume news distributed by others online on a daily basis (Villi 2012, pp. 614-615). Hence this study supports the view of Bergstrom that interest in new technology and curiosity about new innovations seem to be driving forces in adopting new areas of use on the Internet(Bergstrom, 2008). Furthermore, people access different reporting sources on a regular basis. When asked about their use of eight different reporting sources in the last week, Americans report using an average of between four and five sources. That contrasts starkly with the long-held idea that news habits are strictly ingrained and often limited to a few primary sources. Similarly, there are only small differences across age, political party, or socioeconomic status in the news topics people follow. For

example, the percentage of people who said they follow news about local affair business and the economy, health and medicine, schools and education, and social issues, among other topics, differs little by generation. And, even for topics where younger news consumers are less avid followers than their elders, they still report high levels of interest (Media Insight Project, 2014). The survey sought to examine whether people distinguish between a reporting source—that is, the news organization that gathered the news—from the means by which they discovered the news—social media or a search engine, for instance—and what device they used—for example, print publications or smartphones. When asked to volunteer how they came to the news, people tend to think less about the device than the news gathering source and the means of discovery (social media or search). Taken in combination, the findings suggest that people make conscious choices about where they get their news and how they get it, using whatever technology is convenient at the moment (Media Insight Project, 2014).

Similarly, social consumption of media content takes place in smaller, networked audience communities that maintain contact through several channels and communication tools (Marshall 2004, p.103.) However, it should be noted that, like networked publics, the members of audience communities have different social ties to the group and also varying levels of interest in the media consumption activities (Ville, 2012). Supporting this notion, Bergstrom is of the view that it "is a well-known fact that Internet use and interest for online facilities differ when comparing different groups in society. First of all, we can state that Internet use is far more widespread among younger, well-educated people" (Bergstrom, 2008 p.10).

Likewise, in Britain, the BBC, *Financial Times*, *Guardian* and the *Economist* have seen a sharp rise in the number of referrals from Facebook, Twitter and other social networks. Search engines are thus being partly replaced by social media as a portal to news and other information

(Newman and Dutton, 2011) while Purcell et al. (2010) also noted how, in their study, 44% of online news consumers said that one of the factors they use in choosing where to get news online is whether it is easy to share the site's content with others (Hermida et al. 2012). Motivations for sharing are of intense interest to news organisations and to academics. Studies have shown that content that drives a strong emotional response (either positive or negative) tends to become viral. Their data suggest that someone's level of trust in the news may also be a factor (Newman, et al 2015).

Similarly, as the online news audience grows, the educational divide in online news use – evident since the Internet's early days in the mid-1990s – also is increasing. Currently, 44% of college graduates said they get news online every day, compared with just 11% of those with a high school education or less(Cauwenberge, et al 2010). Buttressing this, a study by Pew research center noted that there continue to be sizable age and educational differences in online news use. Nearly two-thirds of college graduates (65%) regularly get news online, compared with just 28% of those with no more than a high school education (Pew Research Center,2012).

Online news sites turn out to be the news platforms with the highest increase in use: half of the respondents said their use of online sites for news had increased over the past two years (Drok and Schwartz cited in Cauwenberge, et al 2010). The two trends in online news consumption – growing numbers getting news via mobile devices and the increasing use of social networks – are complementary. Overall, 55% of Americans access the Internet on a mobile device, such as a cell phone or tablet; among this group, 30% said they saw news on social networking sites yesterday. That compares with just 9% of Americans who are online but do not access the Internet on a mobile device (Pew Research Center, 2012).

Furthermore, Media Insight Project in their study argued that news consumers who use more technology are more likely to report that they enjoy keeping up with the news and are more likely to said that it's easier to keep up with the news today than it was five years ago but there is a strong correlation between mobile technology and social media and various other digital activities. Smartphone owners, for instance, are two and half times as likely to get news through social media as those without smartphones, twice as likely to use search engines and aggregators for news and to get news alerts, and more than twice as likely to share news. Patterns are similar for tablet owners as well. Not only do people consume news from many different devices, nearly half said they have no one preferred means of doing so. Furthermore, people access different reporting sources on a regular basis. When asked about their use of eight different reporting sources in the last week, Americans report using an average of between four and five sources. That contrasts starkly with the long-held idea that news habits are strictly ingrained and often limited to a few primary sources (Media Insight Project, 2014).

Overall, for instance, social media is becoming an important tool for people across all generations to discover news—but hardly the only one, even for the youngest adults. Social media, in other words, has become a significant part of the news consumption habits for many Americans across generations. Yet social media appears to be largely adding to, rather than replacing, other ways that people get news (Media Insight Project, 2014). The generational breakdowns do indicate the path of future change. Younger adults are more likely to find news through web-based media. Younger people are three times more likely to discover news through social media than adults age 60 and older. Similarly, people under 40 are more likely than those 40 and over to discover news through Internet searches and online news aggregators(Media Insight Project, 2014). Younger adults are more likely to express a preference for social media as a means of discovery.

For online news users, keeping up with the news is an activity that occurs throughout the day and across different formats, devices, and technologies. But while Americans are discovering news through a variety of means, they are discriminating in how much trust they have in the information they get from each method. Americans trust the news they hear directly from newsgathering organizations, with 43 percent of people saying they trust the information acquired this way either very much or completely, 44 percent saying they trust it moderately, and 13 percent saying they only trust it slightly or not at all (Media Insight Project, 2014). Between discovering news through aggregators or search engines, Americans who use them said they have more faith in search engines. In all, 32 percent who get news via search said they trust the information they provide either very much or completely compared to just 24 percent who use news aggregators(Media Insight Project, 2014).

Similarly, Media Insight Project (2014) in their report argued that while social media is becoming an important means of discovering news, even those who use it bring some skepticism to it. Only 15 percent of adults who get news through social media said they have high levels of trust in information they get from that means of discovery. Social media and word-of-mouth are the least-trusted means of discovering the news. Less than one-third (31 percent) of Americans report that they discovered the news in the last week through electronic news alerts or subscriptions they've signed up for (more Americans, 47 percent, report that they ever receive news alerts through text, email, or apps), but they trust this information at higher rates (50 percent) than any other discovery method. Most people who get news from electronic news alerts (92 percent) also report getting information directly from news organizations that report the news. The survey data also show the powerful connection between the growth in mobile Internet technology and social media. Those adults with a cell phone that connects to the Internet are much more likely than those without one to find news through social media (56 percent vs.

22 percent) (Media Insight Project, 2014). Similarly, adults with smartphones are also much more likely than non-mobile users to get news through search engines (61 percent vs. 31 percent); online news aggregators (61 percent vs. 33 percent); sharing with friends via email, text, or other online methods (54 percent vs. 29 percent); and electronic news alerts (38 percent vs. 19 percent). Similar patterns emerged for owners or users of tablets. Tablet owners are also more likely to report discovering news through social media, search engines, online news aggregators, electronic communications with friends, and news alerts than people who don't own tablets (Media Insight Project, 2014). For the most part, mobile users are not more likely than non-users to trust electronic means of discovering the news.

Levels of trust in social media, search engines, electronic communications with friends, and news alerts are similar between users and non-users. The one exception is that smartphone owners are more likely than non-owners to say they trust news from online aggregators (27 percent vs. 17 percent). While people use different media for news each week, and only half express a preference for a device, most Americans do care about the means of discovery, or where they first hear the news. More than 6 in 10 Americans (61 percent) said they prefer getting news directly from a news organization compared with any other way (Media Insight Project, 2014). Similarly, while Americans cite electronic news alerts as a highly trusted method of discovering the news, only 3 percent volunteer news alerts as their most preferred way to discover the news. (Notably, nearly everyone, 92 percent, who gets news from electronic news alerts also reports getting news directly from news organizations.) Word-of-mouth in person or over the phone (2 percent) and sharing news with friends through email, text message, or other ways online (1 percent) are cited by very few Americans as their most preferred way to get their news. Online-only sources or channels of the news such as Yahoo! News, BuzzFeed, or The Huffington Post, and blogs garner lower levels of trust. One in 4 users of these news sources said

they trust them completely or very much, while 1 in 5 users said they trust them only slightly or not at all (Media Insight Project, 2014.p 11). Again the findings suggest that news consumers with a plethora of choices are discriminating—utilizing sources that fit their habits. Mobile technology, similarly, correlates with heavier use of non-traditional sources. People with a smartphone are much more likely than those who do not have smartphones to say they get news from online-only channels like Yahoo! News, Buzz Feed, The Huffington Post, or other blogs (58 percent vs. 26 percent). Mobile news consumers are also more likely than others to say they get news directly from newswires such as the AP or Reuters (36 percent vs. 27 percent). In contrast to the idea that in the era of digital plenty people only follow news relating to a few matters about which they are really passionate, Americans consume news about a wide variety of subjects. In general, larger numbers of Americans report following current events and "news you can use" topics than follow news about entertainment and leisure. Of all subjects covered by the survey, the most-followed is traffic and weather: 84 percent of respondents said they "try to keep up" with news about them. Two-thirds or more said they follow news about the environment and natural disasters, about their local town or city, national government and politics, business and the economy, crime and public safety, foreign or international issues, and health and medicine. Fewer Americans report keeping up on leisure topics such as sports; lifestyle subjects such as food, exercise, or parenting; entertainment and celebrities; and art and culture (Media Insight Project, 2014.p 13). In general, people show some consistent news-gathering habits across types and some customized behaviors depending on the type of news they are following. Much the way people tailor how they find out about news and their go-to sources for the news topic they follow, they also adjust their behavior for the type of news they follow. Averaging across all topics, when it comes to how consumers follow news they feel passionately about, their news-gathering habits are similar to those for following slower-moving news trends (Media Insight

Project, 2014 p. 19). Age does not impact people's attentiveness to various news topics. Even the youngest adults are as likely to pay attention to news on topics such as business, politics, social issues, and foreign affairs as older adults. Further, they are no more likely than older adults to follow news on lifestyle topics. Entertainment news is the only topic followed by a majority of younger people and a minority of older people. The only topic on which less than a majority of the youngest adults (49 percent) said they are likely to follow that a majority of older adults follow is schools and education. Even if one thinks that people are inclined to overstate their interest in some of these subjects, the difference in age groups, or the lack thereof, is revealing (Media Insight Project, 2014.p 24).

2.4   Use and Consumption of News on Online News Channels in Africa

There has been a longstanding interest among media scholars in examining how people choose between different news media channels. Research on this topic has revealed that media consumers utilize different news media platforms for different purposes and they have different rationales for choosing news from different media sources (Elareshi and Gunter, n.d, p. 3).

Elareshi and Gunter in their work also noted Henke investigation on patterns of news media consumption and examined the role of CNN in the news media choices of college students and Parker and Plank study of media habits of college students by emphasizing three areas of information search, media habits and motivations in which Respondents were asked where they obtained most of their information and where they could check multiple information sources. Predictably, Elareshi and Gunter (n.d) noted that students were abandoning established media in favor of the Internet as an important source. They drew attention to the rising importance of the Internet as a source of information and as a job-seeking tool. Research in Kuwait cited in Elarashi study found that young people made complex judgments about media content sources

and chose news media services in relation to the specific gratifications they expected to obtain in each case.

Research in Africa and beyond suggested that students constitute the main consumers of Internet services in developing countries (Furuholt, et al., 2008; Omotayo, 2006; Kwansah-Aidoo and Obijiofor, 2006). Sparks (2003) as cited in O'Neill (2005) noted that: Patterns of media consumption are altered and renegotiated in Internet-based forms of delivery. In contrast to the relatively fixed patterns of existing media, online consumption is not bound by the same time patterns and daily routines they are consumed according to patterns of social behaviour that are embedded in daily routines. Consumption of the Internet is less structured and not as well established (Dunu, Ugbo and Ezepue, 2015). Audiences of the mass media today are enveloped in what McLuhan (1962) referred to as 'new uncertainties' owing to changes in patterns of production, distribution, and consumption of media messages. It is then imperative to increase focus towards the audience to appraise the effect of these new alterations in their media consumption pattern.

In Nigeria the number of Internet users is 48,366,179 and it has the largest Internet penetration in Africa and the 11th in the world (Terragon Insight, 2013) even with high Internet penetration and convergence where almost all Nigerian newspapers are online and television and radio stations are streamed, most audiences, except maybe the youths, are not yet conversant with the online application driven technology of the new media(Dunu, et al.2015). Nevertheless, Terragon Limited noted that students represent 45 % of Nigerian's Internet population. Financially, majority of the Nigerian audience do not have individual access to the Internet as is in the developed countries and they find it time consuming and a challenge to always surf the net

by using Internet cafe services. In addition to these challenges most people still regard the new media as 'new invention' to be embraced gradually (Dunu, et al, 2015).

Dunu, et al (2015) also argued as pointed out by scholars elsewhere that each medium serves its audiences in different manner within different contexts and that the audiences since they are active users usually select particular medium that best gratifies particular need. Therefore media use pattern by audiences could be affected by these variables resulting in a situation quite different from what we see in developed societies. Nigeria has a relatively high Internet penetration rate, driven primarily by a rapid expansion of mobile platforms. Recent figures suggest that over a third of the population have access to the Internet and there are over 50 mobile phones per 100 Nigerians. However, Internet access is concentrated geographically within just 16 percent of the country, and overwhelmingly within urban areas (Akoh, Jagun, Odufuwa and Akanni, 2012) while Terragon Limited stated that the rate of mobile subscription as at 2012 is 113,195,591 (Terragon Limited, 2013).

The new media environment is becoming embedded into the daily life of young people more than any other dominant media (Kubey 2001; Lin and Tsai 2002) this can be attributed to the high level of audience activity or user participation, searchable content features and social media activity. Young audiences have benefitted from technological innovations punctuated by interactivity and interaction. They are likely to interact and build stronger relationship with media(Yoonwhan, 2009).

Terragon Limited(2013) in their study noted that mobile penetration in Nigeria is at 69.01%. Also according to the Media Planning Services' *All Media and Products Survey 2010*, based on interviews with 22,000 respondents, they discovered that Google, Yahoo!, and Facebook are the most popular websites in Nigeria (Akoh, et al 2012).While all the major social

networking sites in Nigeria are international, Nairaland.com, a Nigerian social networking site, is quite popular with Nigerians whether resident in the country or living abroad. Founded in March 2005 by SeunOsewa, Nairaland.com has grown to become Nigeria's most popular UGC site. Ranking above Twitter, LinkedIn, BBC Online, and Wikipedia with over 600,000 members, the site features large chat rooms where Nigerians interact on various issues including news, romance, politics, and entertainment (Akoh, et al 2012).

Most blogs tend to be owned and run by individuals (as opposed to corporations). They also tend to be focused on the blogger rather than on users, though a few are quite busy with comments and articles by readers and guests. Blogging itself is still in its infancy in Nigeria, a stage of development with some notable characteristics in which the content is gradually becoming rich (though often poorly presented and organized), creatively specialized, and focused in order to serve a more specific audience(Akoh, et al. 2012). Blogs tend to suffer from severe design constraints and are generally visually tedious; save for a few, user activity is limited and the frequency of updates is sparse; some blogs suffer from intermittent downtime. In spite of the present drawbacks, Nigerian blogs are diversifying across a wide variety of issues including those that would generally be considered controversial by traditional media. Many utilize the speed of the Internet to share breaking news, although some of this tends to be discovered later to be either untrue or unverifiable (Akoh, et al 2012).

Use of social networking sites by traditional media is on the rise. For example, Vanguard (Vanguardngr.com), a leading national newspaper house, has revamped its website to incorporate User Generated Content (UGC) and has garnered five-digit figures in Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter followers over a short period to become the leading local online publisher. It has incorporated posts and tweets into its electronic platforms and created avenues for reader interactivity, comments, and discussions. Vanguard has a well-packaged community

site where user content is right on the home page as the main news presence (See Community.vanguardngr.com). Other traditional media players with a growing UGC presence are Daily Trust (dailytrustng.com), Guardian (ngrguardiannews.com), and Punch (thepunchonline.com) (Akoh, et al 2012, p. 40). Corroborating this view Dunu, et al. (2015) in their study noted that print media now have online version and this might affect consumption pattern of users.

Nearly all Nigerian news organizations—print and broadcast—update their websites more often than they produce print editions or broadcast bulletins, and many now have breaking news sections on their websites where stories are published before they appear on conventional platforms. The first Nigerian newspaper to go online was the defunct *Post Express*, which began its Internet edition in 1997. According to Joke Kujenya, formerly of *The Post Express* and now Assistant Editor at *The Nation*, the weeks leading to the launch date were laden with "in house frenzy." She continued: "The General Manager then, Dr. Chidi Amuta almost made a music album out of it repeating it to the editorial staff that they should go get Internet knowledge." According to her, because theirs was the only newspaper on the net at that time, they were always too quick to flaunt it before existing and potential advertisers even when they did not understand the implications. *The Guardian*, *The Punch*, and *The Comet* (now defunct) joined *The Post Express* on the Internet in 1999. The three most visible weekly news magazines at that time, namely *The News*, *Newswatch*, and *Tell*, mounted only a few of their headlines on the Internet. The full contents of print editions were not republished online (Akoh, et al 2012).

One notable development over subsequent years is that the Internet has come to avail Nigerian newspapers of a novel means of perpetuating their existence. In other words, even when publishers may no longer have the wherewithal to sustain the conventional version, they can still continue to operate online, which requires substantially fewer resources. One notable

example is *Next* newspaper, which stopped publishing its paper edition in 2010. Another paper, the *Premium Times*, began to distribute news using several listservs in 2011, ahead of schedule, in order to avoid dependence on the competition-saturated advertising market(Akoh, et al 2012). As noted by Cheriam and Jacob, about thirty three percentages of the individuals tend to read newspapers via mobile phones and thirty seven percentages of the individuals use social web sites such as Facebook and Twitter to read newspapers. There has been an increase in the number of people who use mobile phones and other technologies (Cheriam and Jacob, 2013)

All the news organizations' websites started as text-based sites with still photographs, but several have expanded their sites to accommodate archive audio and video, slide shows, and in some cases real-time audio and video streaming. Soon after it started publishing in 2009, *Next* newspaper began to display audio and video materials on its website to enrich the stories. It was later joined in this practice by *The Punch* and *This Day*. In 2010, the nation's foremost television news outlet began live streaming on the Internet; today it makes its content available on smartphones including Blackberry and Android(Akoh, et al 2012).

2.5   Review of Empirical Studies

The phenomenon of online news is mainly due to the growth in the number of Internet users. Reading news online is now becoming a habit for many people. Based on the World Association of Newspapers report in the Asian Media (2006), the global readership for online newspapers rose about 9% in 2005 and by more than 200% since 2001(Hasim, 2007). The emergence of online news enables news to be delivered and transmitted digitally in real time (i.e., breaking news). In addition to timeliness, it also increases the quantity and richness of news information by enhancing news using audio, videos and loads of pictures (Gilder 1994; Massey and Levy 1999; Palmer and Eriksen 1999; Palmer and Eriksen 2000) cited in (Hasim 2007, p. 4). This flexibility of online features empowers users to browse and choose stories on their own time and

at their own setting .Consequently, the use of technology brings users closer to the news not only to educate and inform, but also to entertain them (Brown, 2000).

The implication is that this young generation, growing up with more skills, enjoyment and dependence in relation to computers and the Internet, will more and more rely on the Web as their source of news. The Internet is the news medium of the future in this sense. The link between news consumption and broadband connection has also been established (Nguyen, 2003). In 2001, Market Facts conducted a nation-wide study to discover that American broadband users were much more likely to take advantage of the multimedia nature of the Internet to optimise coverage of breaking news and live events. Accordingly, 23 percent of the broadband audience relied on the Web as a primary source of breaking news while only six percent of dial-up users did so (MSNBC, 2001). British Broadcasting Service (BBC) (2014) also in a report for Mediatique Limited discovered that users within the ages of 18- 24 demographics spend more time accessing news via a PC, Smartphones and Tablets than any other media. Also users within these age grades are more likely to be identified with social media as a key source of News.

Some other important, sometimes decisive, factors will add to the likelihood of wide broadband adoption and the possible subsequent increase in online news consumption. As research shows, current Internet users are lovers of a media-rich environment, who tend to use a wide range of media and are the most willing to pay to enrich their media experience. In terms of news habits, these people, typically more educated, are largely news junkies, who receive news from all or most available sources and spend more time than non-users on news and current affairs (Nguyen, 2003).

The explosive growth of social networking sites has been another contributor to the online search for news, with the percentage saying they saw news or news headlines on social networking sites the previous day increasing from 9% in 2010 to 19%(Pew Research Center, 2012, p. 19). However, the percentage who regularly get news on a cell phone, tablet or other mobile device has nearly doubled since 2010, from 9% to 15%, and the number regularly seeing news on social network sites has almost tripled, from 7% to 20%. In the shifting online landscape, the use of mobile devices and social networking sites have replaced a traditional tool — search engines — as the driver of growth in finding news online. Search engines like Google, Bing or Yahoo continue to be the largest single tool in finding news online, but the substantial growth in their use between 2008 and 2010 has leveled off. In addition, Terragon Limited(2013)however noted that in Nigeria, there are at least 9 million social media users, social media penetration is about 5.4% and 83 percent of social media users are active. Other online platforms have had less impact than social networking sites. Just more than one-in-ten (12%) regularly get news from reading blogs, a figure that has changed little since 2008. About the same percentage (13%) regularly gets news by email. Just 5% said they regularly get news by listening to podcasts. And just 3% of the general public regularly follows news on Twitter (Pew Research Center, 2012.p 18). Collaborating this, Gaddy's review (2010) of the Knights Fellows in Community Journalism Survey of how different age groups use and want their news in Alabama revealed that despite many national findings to the contrary, young (19-29) and middle-aged (30-49) readers are seeking news through social networking and mobile devices as alternative (Dunu, et al, 2015).

As news consumption on cell phones and other mobile devices has increased, so has the use of news apps, which allow people to access news and news headlines on their mobile devices. In the current survey, a quarter of all Americans, including 45% of mobile Internet

users, said they have ever downloaded a news app to their cell phone, tablet, or another mobile device. In 2010, 16% of the public, and only 20% of mobile Internet users, said they had ever downloaded a news app (Pew Research Center, 2012) while Magid(2012) in a research carried out for the Newspaper Association of America noted that one in 4 digital newspaper readers use special aggregator programs to organize their regular sources, while nearly all mobile platform users employ news apps and the user experience with newspaper-sourced apps is generally positive. Overall, the percentage of all Americans who regularly get news from social network sites has roughly tripled – from 7% to 20% – since 2010. And the proportion of social networkers who regularly get news there has more than doubled, from 16% to 36%.Young people, who use social network sites at much higher rates than do older adults, increasingly use Facebook and other social network sites to get news. About a third or more of those ages 18 to 39 regularly see news or news headlines on social networking sites. Twitter users appear to be more closely connected to professional journalists and news organizations than their social networking counterparts when it comes to relying on them for online news. More than a third (36%) of those with Twitter accounts use them to follow news organizations or journalists. On social networking sites, 19% of users said they got information there from news organizations or journalists(Pew Research Center, 2012).

Pew Research Center (2012) also discovered that after a sharp increase from 2004 to 2010, the use of search engines like Google, Yahoo or Bing to find news has leveled off. After growing from 11% to 33% between 2004 and 2010, the number of adults who use search engines such as Google, Bing or Yahoo to search for news three or more days a week has steadied at 33%.The same leveling-off of search engines also has occurred among regular online news users. Just over four-in-ten (42%) said they used search engines to find news three times a week or more. Prior to that, the number of online news users who frequently turned to search engines

had jumped from 19% in 2004 to 44% in 2010. In addition, Althaus and Tewksbury (2000) examined *Patterns of Internet and traditional news media use in a networked college community*. Overall, their study showed members of the community to perceive the World Wide Web primarily as an entertainment medium and only secondarily as a news medium; passing time was rated as the most likely use of this medium but respondents who used the Web most frequently said they find it at least comparable and perhaps even superior to traditional news media.

Furthermore, where people go for news, moreover, depends significantly on the topic of the story—whether it is sports or science, politics or weather, health or arts—and on the nature of the story— whether it is a fast-moving event, a slower-moving trend, or an issue that the person follows passionately. Research data gotten from Media Insight Project's report challenged another popular idea about the digital Age which is the notion that with limitless choices people follow only a few subjects in which they are interested and only from sources with which they agree—the idea of the so-called "filter bubble" (Media Insight Project, 2014). Consequently, Magid (2012) is of the view that the path for most, but certainly not all newspaper media users, is to go from print to computer to smartphone to tablet. Among those who read their local newspaper by tablet, only half also use a smartphone for this purpose although reasons for this choice pattern was not explored, but anecdotally it appears that some consumers find tablets generally satisfy their mobile needs. Also, reader satisfaction with newspapers on smartphones trails that for other platforms.

Supplementing this, BBC (2014) noted that users of online news are shifting their behavior towards more personalized pattern of consumption such as multiple sourcing of news which can be known as promiscuous usage, personalization such as news alerts, blogging, tagging and on more consumption via new portable devices.

2.6   Uses and Gratifications Perspectives on Media Use

Uses and gratification is a psychological communication perspectives that examines how individual use mass media. An audience based theoretical framework grounded on the assumption that individual selects media and content to fulfill felt needs or wants. These needs are expressed as motives for adopting a particular medium use and are connected to the social and psychological makeup of the individual. Based on these perceived needs, social and psychological characteristics and media attributes, individual use media and experience related gratifications. The strength of uses and gratification lies in its applicability to a variety of media context. A typical uses and gratification study will either focus on a particular medium or compare uses and gratification across media.

Uses and gratification research has shown that media frequently are employed to fulfill both mediated and interpersonal needs so both interpersonal and mediated communication motives are incorporated in studies of media consumption. Social and psychological antecedents typically present mediating concepts that influence the selection of media content, amount and motivation of media use and possible outcomes of the media experience. Antecedents are preceding variables that influence media- related decision, attitude and behavior (Papacharissi, 2000, p. 140).

In addition to demographic variables that may influence media use, several social-psychological characteristics have been linked to pattern of media consumption for example contextual age which include physical health, interpersonal interaction, mobility, life satisfaction, social activity and economic security. Similarly locus of control, a concept that measures how people differ in the amount of responsibility for their own lives, they attribute to internal and external factors is connected to media consumption and motives. People with high internal locus control perceive that they are steering their own lives course while those with high

external locus of control perceive that factors outside themselves steer their lives. Affinity with certain media have been linked to many motives such as arousal, habit, pastime, escape, entertainment, companionship and information seeking Perse 1986 in (Papacharissi, 2000). Additional attributes linked to media consumption include loneliness (Perse and Rubin, 1990); Parasocial interaction, anxiety, creativity and sensation seeking. Hawkin et al (2001) found that mood and content preference were strong predicators of selective viewing.

Uses and dependency model proposes a model of understanding media uses and effects by centering on media consumption and studying relevant concepts. Dependency is affected by social and psychological attributes because it is these attributes that influences the availability of communication alternatives. In general, dependency on a particular medium augments the effects that a particular medium could produce. Dependency also illustrate how uses and gratification can interface mediated, personal and political communication. The presence of functional alternatives demonstrates the multitude and diversity of communication channels individual may use to fulfil certain needs and lessen dependency effects.

2.7   Theoretical Framework

One way to develop an understanding of online audience motivations is to start with an appropriate theoretical framework. This study is anchored on Uses and gratfications theory and Media Dependency theory.

Uses and Gratification theory

Commentators like Williams, Rice, and Rogers (1988) have called for a theoretical grounding in new media studies. Specifically, the mass media theory of uses and gratifications which holds particular promise for the study of new communication technologies like "video cassette or disk, cable television, new telephone services, home computers, and videotext or

teletext services" Williams et al(1988, p. 241). Until the 1970s the Uses and Gratifications research was mainly concentrated on gratifications sought, neglecting gratifications obtained (Rayburn, 1996). In a comprehensive review of uses and gratifications theory and research, the challenge was issued to explore "the adaptation and molding" of the uses and gratifications "conceptual framework" to "deal with new communication technologies" Palmgreen et al (1985, p. 49). As many of the forecasts about online news sources (outlined above) are based on assumptions about their audience's uses and gratifications, it does seem that uses and gratifications theory might be a suitable framework for testing (or at any rate, exploring) these assumptions. The Internet, too, has been categorized as a mass medium. Electronic was classified as media enabling an exponential increase in audience numbers (Levinson, 1990).

In addition to being historically applied to mass media study, and thus applicable to considerations of both newspapers and online media, uses and gratifications is a receiver-based communication theory. Uses and gratifications is viewed as a framework in which "audience gratification is primary, and "media consumers are seen as rational agents whose various uses of media offerings depend upon how these offerings serve various social-psychological functions" Evans (1990, p. 151). A seminal discussion of the tradition states concisely that, in uses and gratifications framework, the question is not "What do the media do to people?", but rather, "What do people do with the media?" Katz (1959 p. 2). In fact, almost any consideration of media from a uses and gratifications standpoint explicitly asserts as its central maxim the idea of an active, rational, goal-seeking audience (Evans, 1990; Loges and Ball-Rokeach, 1993; McQuail, 1984; O'Keefe and Sulanowski, 1995; Orlik, 1994; Rubin and Windahl, 1986; Swanson and Babrow, 1989; and Windahl, 1981) which is also the standpoint of this study. An oft-cited classic seven-point principle of the uses and gratifications tradition were given (Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch 1974). Uses and gratifications studies were defined as been concerned

with (1) the social and psychological origins of (2) needs, which generate (3) expectations of (4) the mass media or other sources, which lead to (5) differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other activities), resulting in (6) need gratifications and (7) other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones" (p. 20). This implies that users of online news channels will use, expose themselves to it based on the gratifications they derive from such usage and its ability to satisfy their needs.

Related to this central assumption of an active, goal-driven audience is the assumption that the audience selects from and uses various media and non-media "functional alternatives." Functional alternatives provide audience members with alternate means of achieving the same ends (fulfilling needs or gaining gratifications) (Katz, Gurevitch, and Haas, 1974 Rubin and Windahl, 1986). Methodologically, uses and gratifications research assumes that audience members are self-aware enough to report on their personal motivations for using media (Babrow, 1988; Galloway and Meek, 1981; Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch, 1974; Katz, Gurevitch, and Haas, 1973). Most uses and gratifications studies, with their reliance on surveys and self-reporting as data-gathering techniques, accept the validity of this assumption.

One final tenet of the uses and gratifications tradition is the belief that "value judgments about the cultural significance of mass communication should or at least can be suspended while audience orientations are explored on their own terms" (Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch, 1974, p. 22). Uses and gratifications research, then, sometimes suspends value judgments about cultural implications of media use in order to explore audience activity on its own terms. Uses and gratifications research has been subject to criticism for some of its assumptions. First, the tradition has been criticized for a "tunnel vision" focused so exclusively on the audience's actual mediated communication experience that other substantial concerns (like

the cultural significance of the exchange, or the long-term effects on the audience) have been ignored. (Elliott, 1974; Swanson, 1977; and Rubin and Windahl, 1986.)

In a comprehensive review of the tradition, it was pointed out that, though individual items in Katz et al.'s seven-point principles have been given more or less attention, none have been completely neglected (Palmgreen,et al 1985). In particular, six main strands of research evident in uses and gratifications studies were identified, and a theoretical model was proposed to integrate all of them. These six research strands are: "(1) gratifications and media consumption; (2) social and psychological orientations of gratifications; (3)gratifications and media effects; (4) gratifications sought and obtained; (5) expectancy-value approaches to uses and gratifications; and (6) audience activity" (p. 21). Of particular interest to this study is the fourth research strand Palmgreen identifies: a consideration of gratifications sought and obtained. In essence, this study focused on the reasons, motives, or goals of users of online news channels; their media repertoire or news categories taking into cognizance their usage pattern in terms of devices, time and various online news channels

Scholars like Blumer (1979) claimed that one problem in the development of strong uses and gratification tradition is the "extraordinary range of meanings" given to the concept of activity. He identified several meaning for the term including the following: utility which means that the media have uses for people and people can put the media to those uses; intentionality which relates to the fact that consumption of media content can be directed by people prior motivation; selectivity which indicates that people use of media might reflect existing interest and preferences and imperviousness to influence which means that audiences members are obstinate and might not want to be controlled by anyone or anything .

The synopsis of uses and gratification perspective basic assumption raises several question such as what factors affects audience members level of activeness on their awareness

of media use; what other things in the environment influence the creation or maintenance of the audience members need and their judgment of which media use will best meet those needs. Scholars also argued that the social situation that people find themselves in can be involved in the generation of media related needs in any of the following ways " social situation can produce tension and conflict leading to pressure for their easement through media consumption; social situation can create an awareness of problem that demand attention, information about which might be sought in the media; it can improvish real life opportunity to satisfy certain needs and the media can serve as substitute or supplement; it can elicit specific values and their affirmation and reinforcement can be facilitated by the consumption of related media material and can provide realms of expectation of familiarity with media which must be met to sustain membership in specific social group Katz; Blumer and Gurevitch (1974 p. 27). This implies that users of online news channels might turn to them for information based on the social situation which could create awareness of problem that demands attention such as economic, religious, political issues currently in the country. Users could also gear towards online news channels that best suit these needs.

Living in this digital age has also expanded the concept of active audience, as the new communication tools has given the audience the chance to create content and share it on different social media platforms. The audience is no longer limited in their choices when it comes to media messages, now they have numerous of media outlets from which they can choose what they prefer, they can also create their own content. That is why the Uses and Gratifications approach is the best theory to help us study the relationship between online news channels and its users, and why they use or prefer certain media outlets than other and how they use it. Unlike other media theories, which are mainly concerned with the effects of media on audience, the Uses and Gratifications theory considers the audience as active media users and it tries to explain

how and why the audience use their chosen media outlets, and how their preferences are driven from their desire to satisfy their cognitive and affective needs (Urista, Dong and Day, 2009 cited in Habib 2012).

According to the theory, audiences differ in the gratifications they obtain from mass media. Generally, the Uses and Gratifications theory focuses on the motives for media use, the factors that influence those motives, and the outcomes from media-related behavior (Habib, 2012). This is also why this theoretical frame work is suitable for this study as it correlates with its research questions on goals, reason for online news channels. Using Uses and Gratifications approach, the core assumptions provide a framework for understanding the correlation between media and audiences:

1. The audience is conceived as active, thus an important part of mass media use is assumed to be goal oriented, and that patterns of media use are shaped by more or less definite expectations of what certain kinds of content have to offer the audience member.

2. The audience member is the one who links the needs gratification with the choice of media.

3. The media competes with other sources of need satisfaction, and those needs served by mass communication only form a section of the wider range of human needs. So the degree of satisfaction through mass media consumption certainly varies from one user to another.

4. Many of the goals of mass media use can be derived from data supplied by individual audience members themselves, hence people are sufficiently self-aware to be able to report their interests and motives in particular cases.

5. Value judgments about the cultural significance of mass communication should be suspended while audience orientations are explored on their own terms. (Katz, Blumler, and Gurevich, cited in (Habib, 2012 p. 12-13).

Relevance of the theory to this study is its recognition of the audience as active and goal oriented in their media use, implying that through the use of online news channels, most audience members can be satisfied by the media. This is because the key assumption of the theory which has been proven by researchers is that through exposure and use of the mass media, the audience are able to find out about relevant event and condition in immediate surroundings, society and the world.

Critiques of the theory

Some mass media scholars believed that the Uses and Gratifications theory is one of the best theories that could be used as a framework for the Internet and new media studies (Kuehn, 1994; Morris and Ogan, 1996). These three scholars argued that the Uses and Gratifications approach would provide a very useful method to examine the Internet use at this time (Habib 2012) while Perse and Dunn (1998) agreed that the Uses and Gratifications approach would help giving a theoretical explanation for the changes of media use that took place after the adoption of any new communication technology.

Consequently, other critics believed the theory cannot measure an active audience (Blumler, 1979). For some researchers, the media serve specific purposes and it is left for the audiences to key into these and then locate which amongst the media activities is relevant to their use, and consequent gratification. West and Lynn (2010) paraphrased Blumler (1979) and listed four of these activities to include utility, Intentionality, selectivity, and imperviousness to Influence, Lin (1993) posits that "viewers who were most active had a greater expectation of gratification and also reported obtaining greater satisfaction". Invariably, the audience would attempt to understand the gratification in order to maximize the media for this purpose, hence Wimmer and Dominick (2010) submit that the gratification sought by the audience form the central concept though there are however, many antecedent variables such as media structure,

media technology, social circumstances, psychological variables, needs, values, and beliefs that all relate to the particular gratification pattern used by the audience(Egede and Nwosu, 2013 p.1).

Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) argue in favour of utility, passing time, seeking information, convenience, and entertainment. On the involvement factor, Galloway and Meek (1981) submit that motivation to use any mass medium is also affected by how much an individual relies on it. The emphasis on the active nature of the receiver led Mings (1997) to conclude that Uses and Gratifications theory is a receiver based communication theory, while Evans (1990) defined Uses and Gratifications as a framework in which "audience…gratification is primary, and media consumers are seen as rational agents whose various uses of media offerings depend upon how these offerings serve various social-psychological functions.

Media Dependency Theory

Furthermore, related to this, an extension of uses and gratification theory is media dependency theory which noted that in the process of using media, consumers may develop certain dependencies that allow media greater power than uses and gratification theory originally imagined (Ruggiero 2000). Such dependencies according to Ruggiero lead to cognitive, affective and behavioural outcomes. He however pointed out that a number of things that can increase or decrease dependencies on a particular medium include the individual's needs and motives, social conditions outside of individual's control and life attributes. The main notion of the theory is that audiences depend on the media that fulfills their needs and helps them attain their goals, the theory also predicts that audience do not depend on all media in the same way and the more the person depends on certain media the more this media becomes important to him (Lane, 2000 cited in Habib 2012, p 23). This implies that online channels' users will depend on the channel that best suit their goals.

According to Schrock (2006) media dependency theory was developed by Defleur and Ball-Rokeach in 1975 as a reaction to the 'magic bullet' view of the mass media which claimed the media has universal impact on individual across populations saying that the reason behind the widely differing impact of the media on individuals was the result of the relationship between the individual, the media and the society. These relationships were conceived as dependencies between the levels of media. Dependency according to Ball-Rokeach as cited in Schrock (2006, p. 3) is "the relationship in which the satisfaction of needs or attainment of goals by one party is contingent upon the resources of another party". Goals as noted by Schrock (2006) are attributes describing basic human needs while dependencies are the activation and expression of goals during media use. He however argued that goals differs from the uses and gratifications perspectives in several ways. The primary difference is that uses and gratifications conceives of an individual's actions as a result of specific factors related to the individual while media dependency theory sees goals as broadly capturing the motivation behind all possible media related activities.

Unlike the Uses and Gratifications theory that focused only on the relationship between audience needs and mass media, the media dependency theory focus on the relationship between audience, mass media and the larger social system. The theory focuses on the relationship between audience, media and social system through two levels: Macro level and Micro level. The Macro level is the relationship between the media systems and societal systems and how they rely on each other for information, while the Micro level focus on the relation between the individual and the Macro level (Lane, 2000).

The theory hypothesizes that how the media actually influence the audience is mainly related to the correlation between those three elements and it suggests that media have cognitive, affective and behavioral effects (Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur, 1976 cited in Habib 2012 p 23).

This correlation between the three factors can be illustrated as follows: The audience (Individual) needs information to function in society, societal systems depend on mass media to pass on and spread the news and information to those audiences, while mass media aims to have power over societal systems and individuals by controlling the information resources (DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach, 1989).

The theory predicts that there are two factors that influence the audience dependency level on certain media: The first factor: is that the audience will be more dependent on the media that will fulfill more than one need for them, and they will depend less on the media that will be only able to gratify just a few needs. The second factor: is social stability, according to Ball-Rokeach and Defleur (1976) people will depend more on the media for information in times of crisis or conflicts or social change where they have to make new choices and reconsider their beliefs and practices (Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur, 1976). In times like this, audience dependency on the media dramatically increases because they need more information, support and advice. While in time of stability audience will not be as reliant on media information as such (Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur, 1976). This implies that since University of Jos is based in the Northern zone and has had its own share of social, religious, political and economic crisis, this theory seemed best suitable for this study to understand the usage and dependence of online news channels by the Undergraduate students of this prestigious institution.

Media dependency theory helps to examine the interrelationship among audiences, mass media, and society (Ball-Rokeach, 1985). The theory also argued that the more an audience depends on the mass media to fulfill her/his needs and reach her/his goals, the more the mass media will be important to the audience and the more effects the mass media will have on the audience (Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur, 1976).

The audiences developed dependency on mass media in several ways, such as: (1) dependency on mass media to understand their social world; (2) dependency on mass media to learn how to act meaningfully and effectively in the social world; and (3) dependency on mass media to escape their daily problems and tensions in the social world. It is also argued that the media dependency model help explain the when, why, and how audiences develop dependency on the mass media system. Audiences select different mass media to fulfill their different needs and reach their different goals Ball-Rokeach (1985). A typology was developed to understand the relationship between audiences and their mass media (DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach, 1989). They argued that audiences depended on the media to achieve three goals: understanding, orientation, and play.

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Table   1:   Typology   of   Individual   system   dependency   Relations.

	mediaUnderstanding	Orientation	Play
Personal	Self-understanding e.g., learning about oneself and growing as a person	Action orientation e.g., deciding what to buy, how to dress, or how to stay slim	Solitary play e.g., relaxing when alone or having something to do by oneself
Social	Social understanding	Interaction orientation	Social play

e.g., knowing about and interpreting the world or community	e.g., getting hints on how to handle new or difficult situations	e.g., going to a movie or listening to music with family or friends

Figure I: typology by DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach in 1989 cited by Schrock (2006, p. 10).

Audiences have the desire to understand themselves and societies. They use that understanding in orienting their behaviors and interactions with others. Finally, play was another important goal for mass media use. Besides escaping realities and "killing time," people also played to learn social norms, rules, and values (DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach, 1989).

Additionally, reliance on media is greater in times of social instability. This can create greater dependencies especially for those who see online news sources as their only outlet for news and finally, the circumstances in an individual's life such as health, mobility, life satisfaction, income, loneliness and education can lead to different pattern of media use and differences in dependencies (Ruggiero, 2000).

This study drawn from the research areas reviewed (online news source uses and gratifications) to explore news use in new online media. The study was based on the uses and gratifications assumption of an active, goal-seeking audience selecting from various news media in order to achieve desired gratifications. The focus of this research investigated the activity of users of online news channels viewing in the theoretical framework of media dependency; uses and gratifications.

Critique of the theory

Media dependency theory is relatively scientific in nature. It predicts a correlation between media dependence and importance and influence of the media but each person uses the

media in different ways and the media affect each person differently. According to Chaffee and Berger (1997) criteria for scientific theory, this theory is a pretty good one as it has explanatory power but more of predictive power because according to them, it predicts how dependency on media correlate with importance of the media to a certain person. It is relatively simple to understand, so it is parsimonious; it can be proven false if the person is not dependent on the media, it will not be of great importance to that individual and it is internally consistent with meta-theoretical assumption on the same side of the continuum.

2.8   Summary of the Chapter

This chapter discusses the concepts of media dependency in relation to online news channels, news gratifications on online news channels; various online news channels as revealed by scholars such as social networking services, Mobile news apps, search engines, websites of media outfit and others noting that such channels will only be used if its users find it more satisfactory to their needs. Owing to advancement in technology and fragmentation across the world today, people can now access news and information from various sources or channels. The medium of preference of online news has changed and young people now prefer news via online news channels such as social media platform, search engines, downloaded news app and online news websites than news from traditional news outlets. They are also actively pursuing information from various channels based on different point of views, confirmations for reasons best known to them. Users of online news channels use them based on their needs, goals and the ability of such channels in fulfilling those needs that are salient to them.

Media dependency, gratifications of online news channels by its users varies across societal system be it political, economic, cultural, or educational. Similarly, dependency of online news channels could be dependent on the circumstances in the society a user belongs to. Moreover,

users depend on online news channels to understand their world, learn to act meaningfully and effectively or escape daily problems and tension in social world.

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CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1   Research Design

Research design is "a plan or blue print which specifies how data relating to a given problem should be collected and analyzed" (Adesina and Nwanyanwu2005, p.31). In other words, it provides the procedural for the conduct of any given investigation. Research design also identifies the research instrument used, course of study and types of analysis to be employed. It shows the sample size, method and procedure. Hence makes it easier for the

researcher to clarify research method, enable objective evaluation of the appropriateness of the forth coming result of the study.

For the purpose of this study, survey method was used as the research design. Survey is a method that is used to study both large and small populations by selecting and studying samples chosen from the populations to discover relative incidence, distribution and interrelations of sociological and psychological variables (Osuala, 2005). Survey research is also "one in which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group" Nworgu (1991) cited in Leman (2014, p. 82). Hence survey research method which focuses on people, the vital facts of people, and their beliefs, opinions, attitudes, motivations and behaviours was used for the purpose of this study.

Survey research method is widely used in social sciences and especially communication research because they entail excellent validity and reliability (Buddenbaum and Novak, 2001). Survey methodology also matches elements in the review of related literature that guided media dependency theory. Skumanich and Kintsfather (1998) pointed out that throughout the years, branches of media dependency theory emerge focusing on individual's media use and dependency that comes about through fulfilling various need. Furthermore, Grant, Guthrie and Ball-Rokeach (1991) and Berger (2000) also noted that survey is most successful and reliable when asking respondents about themselves. In addition since media needs of play, orientation and understanding are all acquired for personal gratification on an individual basis, survey research was more fitting because individual would be more likely to respond in a way that represent their own viewpoint rather than experiencing the chance of a group think in a focus group.

3.2 Area of Study

The area to be studied is University of Jos, Nigeria. The faculties of the University are Agriculture, Arts, Education, Engineering, Environmental Sciences, Law, Management Sciences, Medical Sciences, Natural Sciences, Pharmaceutical Sciences, Social Sciences, and Veterinary Medicine.

3.3   Research Population

Population for a study refers to all those persons or things that fall under the umbrella of the topic or that can be examined to address the research problems or meet the research objectives (Osuala, 2005). Here we are making references to objects and subjects to be used for the research work. Population can also be described as all of any specified groups of human beings or non-human entities such as: objects, time units, geographical areas, methods, tests or schools(Dalen, 1973). These are variables that possessed the features the researcher underscored. In order to achieve the aim of this study, the University of Jos undergraduate students are the population studied.

3.4   Sampling Technique

Sampling technique is the process or procedure a researcher adopts to gather people or items to be studied. In other words, it is the way and manner a sample is selected from a population for the purpose of determining the characteristics of the whole population. Sampling technique is also seen as "the process of selecting a number of individuals for a study in such a way that the individuals represent the larger group from which they have selected"(Adesina and Nwanyanwu2005, p.34).For the purpose of this study, stratified-purposive sampling technique

will be employed. The researcher divided the entire population into different sub groups or strata then purposively and proportionally selected the final subjects from the different strata.

3.5 Sample Size

A sampling frame is a list of all members of the population under investigation and is used to select the sample(Osuala, 2005). It represents the total number of human, objects or subject to be examined or studied. According to the ICT Directorate of the University of Jos, the Undergraduate students' population of University for 2014/2015 session is 22,449 comprising of 12,825 males and 9624 females across 87 Departments of the University (See appendix I).

For the purpose of this study, the sample size was Three hundred and seventy eight (378) drawn from the total population of 22,449 of which questionnaires were distributed to users of online news channels proportionately and purposively. Appendix II represented the formula utilized to derive the sample size with assumed standard error of .05. In order to acquire proportionate representation from the population to be studied, the population was divided into strata which are the twelve faculties and the questionnaires divided proportionately to each stratum (See appendix III) and purposively to users of online news channels.

3.6 Instrument of Data Collection

This refers to the tools for gathering data. The collection of facts and figures relating to the population in the census will provide primary data. For the purpose of this research work, questionnaires were used as the instrument for data collection to assess the respondents' uses, dependency and gratification of online news source. The questions in the instruments were constructed in simple language in order to elicit responses the researcher intended to learn from respondents. The questions were both close-ended and open-ended. For the close ended

questions, the aim was to elicit specific responses from the respondents, while the open-ended questions was targeted at allowing the respondents the freedom to express their personal opinions which the former may not have given the chance to.

3.7   Method of Data Analysis

The data gotten from the field exercise was analysed and interpreted based on the type of data gotten that is quantitative and qualitative in form of open ended and close ended questions. Simple percentage distribution, count frequency was used to determine the frequency of occurrence of particular responses in relation to the salient questions raised in the research. While for qualitative analysis, a summary of the data was presented based on the response of the respondents.

3.7.1   Validation of Instrument

Validity is a measure of how well an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). The validity of research instrument in any research work can be simply described as its success in probing or assessing what its sets to measure. It is simply the degree of its accuracy. Every measuring instrument according to Kombo and Tromp (2006) is designed for a specific measurement. If it is correctly designed, it measures what it is supposed to measure. In an attempt to ensure the validity of the instrument, the researcher took various steps. First and foremost, the items of the instruments were drawn after the researcher had gone through the various existing and related literature. Secondly, a pilot study was carried out to give the researcher insight to the items used in this instrument. This was done so as to be sure that the items were from the variables of study. Thirdly, the items were also discussed with lecturers who

vetted them and in turn submitted to the supervisor for the main purpose ascertaining their validity.

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CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0   Introduction

This chapter focuses on the presentation and analysis of data obtained from research questionnaire. A description of the respondents who took part in the survey was given. The results from the questionnaire was presented, analysed and discussed. The study employed the use of questionnaire as the instrument for data collection which was designed in various segments namely Demographic data, News channels used and accessed via what medium, goals for online news channels use and media repertoire of interest to Undergraduate students of University of Jos were identified.

The questionnaires comprised of questions that cut across the three research questions in which twenty two items consisting of both close ended and open ended questions aimed at eliciting certain responses were posed. Three hundred and seventy- eight (378) questionnaires were issued by the researcher to the respondents using enumeration method of distribution of which three hundred and fifty (350) questionnaires which translate to ninety three percent (93%) of the respondents were retrieved.

4.1 PRESENTATION OF DATA

4.1.1 SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Table 1: Distribution of Survey Respondents According to Gender

GENDER	FREQUENCY	%
Male	232	66.3
Female	118	33.7
Total	350	100

The above table, shows the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents' sex. Two hundred and thirty- two (232) respondents representing 66.3% of the entire sample population are males while one hundred and eighteen (118) respondents representing 33.7% are females. Hence this implies that more males responded to the questions than their female counterparts. This may be explained by the fact that male students were more cooperative in agreeing to become respondents, while many female students who were approached by the researcher declined.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents According to Age Range

AGE GROUP	FREQUENCY	%
15-20	46	13.1
21-25	191	54.6
26-30	93	26.6
31-35	16	4.6
36 & Above	4	1.1
Total	350	100

The above table, outlines the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents' age range. Forty-six (46) representing 13.1% of the respondents are between the ages of 15 to 20. One hundred and ninety one (191) respondents representing 54.6% fall within the age bracket of 21 to 25. Respondents within the age range of 26 to 30 had ninety-three (93) representing 26.6 % of

the total respondents; sixteen (16) respondents representing 4.6% are within the age of 31-35 while 4 representing 1.1% fall within the age range of 36 & above. Hence this implies that more of the respondents fall within 21 to 25 years of age.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents According to Faculties in the University of Jos

FACULTY	NO. OF QUESTIONNAIRES DISTRIBUTED		NO. OF QUESTIONNAIRES RETRIEVED	
		%		%
Agriculture	1	0.3	1	0.3
Arts	52	14.9	52	14.9
Education	67	17.7	58	16.6
Engineering	2	0.6	2	0.6
Environmental Science	21	6.0	21	6.0
Law	29	8.3	29	8.3
Management Sciences	30	7.9	28	8.0
Medical Sciences	45	11.9	44	12.6
Natural Sciences	63	16.6	51	14.6
Pharmaceutical Sciences	12	3.4	12	3.4
Social Sciences	55	14.5	51	14.6
Veterinary Sciences	1	0.3	1	0.3
Total	378	100	350	100

The table above, reveals the frequency and percentage of the respondents' Faculty in the University of Jos. One (1) respondent representing 0.3% is from the Faculty of Agriculture; Fifty-two (52) respondents representing 14.9 % are undergraduate students of the Faculty of Arts; Fifty-eight (58) respondents representing 16.6% are from the Faculty of Education; Two (2) respondents representing 0.6% are from the Faculty of Engineering; Twenty-one (21)

respondents representing 6.0% are from Environmental Sciences Faculty; Twenty-nine (29) respondents representing 8.3% are from the Faculty of Law; Twenty-eight (28) respondents representing 8.0% are from the Faculty of Management Sciences; Forty-four (44) respondents representing 12.6% are from the Faculty of Medical Sciences; Fifty-one (51) respondents representing 14.6% are from the Faculty of Natural Sciences; Twelve (12) respondents representing 3.4% are undergraduate students of the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences; Fifty-one (51) respondents representing 14.6% are from the Faculty of Social Sciences while one (1) representing .3% is from the Veterinary Faculty.

4.1.2 SECTION B: USAGE PATTERN OF ONLINE NEWS CHANNELS BY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF UNIVERSITY OF JOS

Table 4: Respondents Use of Online News Channels

USE OF ONLINE NEWS	FREQUENCY	%
Regularly	245	70.0
Only Occasionally	105	30.0
Never	0	0
Total	350	100

The above table, outlines the frequency and percentage of the degree to which respondents use online news channels. Two hundred and forty-five (245) respondents representing 70% affirm to reading news online regularly while one hundred and five (105) respondents representing 30% responded to reading news online occasionally. Hence this implies that most of the respondents studied read news online regularly.

Table 5: Respondents' Usage Pattern in Terms of Devices for Online News Access

		DESKTOP	LAPTOP	TABLET	SMARTPHONES
VERY OFTEN	Freq.	16	25	41	192
	%	4.6%	7.1%	11.7%	54.7%
OFTEN	Freq.	29	65	56	92
	%	8.3%	18.6%	16%	26.3%
RARELY	Freq.	134	122	72	36
	%	38.3%	34.9%	20.6%	10.3%
NEVER	Freq.	171	138	181	30
	%	48.9%	39.4%	51.7%	8.6%
TOTAL	Freq.	350	350	350	350
	%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The table above, shows the frequency, percentage on the information obtained from the respondents' response on the degree to which they accessed online news on these devices. One hundred and seventy-one (171) respondents representing 48.9% do not access news online via Desktop Computer; One hundred and thirty-four (134) respondents representing 38.3% rarely use Desktop Computer to access news online; Twenty-nine (29) respondents representing 8.3% affirm they often used Desktop Computer to access news online while Sixteen (16) respondents representing 4.6% use Desktop Computer to access news online very often. This implies that majority of the respondents did not use Desktop Computer to access news online.On the other hand, One hundred and thirty-eight (138) respondents representing 39.4% respond negatively to the use of Laptop to access news online; One hundred and twenty –two (122) respondents representing 34.9% affirm to rarely using Laptop to access news online; Sixty-five (65) respondents representing 18.6% often use Laptop to access news online while Twenty-five (25)

respondents representing 7.1% access news online via Laptop very often. This implies that majority of the sampled population never access news online on the Laptop.Also, One hundred and eighty-one (181) respondents representing 51.7% do not use Tablets to access news online; Seventy- two (72) respondents representing 20.6% rarely use Tablets to access news online; Fifty-six (56) respondents representing 16% often access news online using their Tablets while Forty-one (41) respondents representing 11.7% very often access news online on their Tablets. This implies also that majority of the population studied never access news online on their Tablets. Similarly, One hundred and ninety-two (192) respondents representing 54.9% access news online on their Smartphones very often; Ninety-two (92) respondents representing 26.3% affirm using Smartphones to access news online often; Thirty-six (36) respondents representing 10.3% rarely use Smartphones to access news online while only Thirty (30) respondents never use Smartphones to access news online. The data retrieved above reveals that majority of the respondents accessed news online, very often on their Smartphones compared to other devices such as tablets, laptops and Desktop computer.

Table 6: Time Spent Daily Using Online News Channels

TIME SPENT ONLINE	FREQUENCY	%
Less than one Hour	202	57.7
1-3 Hrs	115	32.9
4-6 Hrs	22	6.3
Above 6 Hrs	11	3.1
Total	350	100

The table above, outlines the frequency and percentage of the Time spent accessing online news channels on devices. Two hundred and two (202) respondents representing 57.7% spend less than one hour accessing online news channels via the devices mentioned above. One hundred and fifteen (115) respondents representing 32.9% spend about1 to 3 hours; Twenty-two (22) respondents representing 6.3% spend between 4 to 6 hours while eleven (11) respondents representing 3.1% spend above 6 hours. This implies that most of the respondents spend less than one hour online accessing online news channels while some spend between 1-3 hrs but few of the respondents spend between 4-6 hrs and above 6hrs accessing news online.

Table 7: Respondents' Access to News Through News Websites

DIRECT ACCESS	FREQUENCY	%
Yes	253	72.3
No	97	27.7
Total	350	100

The above table, outlines and reveals the frequency and percentage of respondents who access news directly from news websites. Two hundred and fifty-three (253) respondents representing 72.3% affirm that they access online news directly from news websites while ninety-seven (97) respondents representing responded negatively to accessing news directly from news websites. This implies that most of the respondents access online news directly from news websites.

Table 8: Respondents' Usage Pattern of Social Media Platforms for Online News Access

		Facebook	Blog	Whatsapp	Twitter	Instagram	Google +
Use	**Freq.**	281	129	93	177	84	182
platform	**%**	80.3%	36.9%	26.6%	50.6%	24%	52%

Do not use platform	**Freq.**	69	221	257	173	266	168
	%	19.7%	63.1%	73.4%	49.4%	76%	48%
Total	**Freq.**	350	350	350	350	350	350
	%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The above table shows the respondents' usage pattern of social media platforms for online news access. Two hundred and eighty-one (281) representing 80.3% constitute respondents who access online news via Facebook while sixty-nine (69) representing 19.7% do not access news via Facebook. Also, One hundred and twenty nine (129) representing 36.9% constitute respondents who affirm that they access news via Blogs while two hundred and twenty-one (221) representing 63.1% did not access news on Blogs. Two hundred and fifty-seven (257) representing 73.4% respond negatively to accessing news via Twitter while ninety-three (93) representing 26.6% respond positively to accessing online news via Twitter. One hundred and seventy-seven (177) respondents representing 50.6% affirm positively to accessing online news via WhatsApp while one hundred and seventy-three (173) representing 49.4% respond negatively. Two hundred and sixty-six (266) respondents representing 76% respond negatively to accessing online news via Instagram while eighty-four (84) representing 24% respond positively while One hundred and eighty-two(182) representing 52% of the entire sample population respond positively to accessing news online via Google+, one hundred and sixty-eight (168) representing 48% respond negatively to using Google+ to access news online.

Based on the above data, it reveals that majority of the undergraduate students of University of Jos use more of Facebook among other social media platforms to read news online based on their

goals or media repertoire. This is followed by Google+ and WhatsApp while Instagram is the
social media platform least used by Respondents followed by Twitter.

Table 9: Crosstabulationof Respondents' Genderand FacebookUse to Access Online News

		MALE	FEMALE
Use Facebook to access online news	Freq.	190	91
	%	81.9	77.1
Do not use Facebook to access online news	Freq.	42	27
	%	18.1	22.9
Total	Freq.	232	118
	%	66.3%	33.7%
Grand Total	Freq.	350	
	%	100%	

The above table is a cross tabulation of Respondents' Gender in relation to their use of Facebook
as a social media platform to access news online. This was done because Table 8 revealed that
Facebook was the most used social media platform. Table 9 therefore reveals that one hundred
and ninety respondents representing 81.9% are males while ninety-one respondents representing
77.1% are Females. This implies that males use Facebook more than their female counterpart to
access news online.

Table 10: Use of Email News Subscription by Respondents

USE OF EMAIL NEWS SUBSCRIPTION	FREQUENCY	%
Very often	62	17.7
Often	89	25.4
Rarely	83	23.7
Never	116	33.1

| Total | 350 | 100 |

The table above, outlines the frequency and percentage of respondents' response to the degree to which they get news via email through subscription to newsletters. One hundred and sixteen (116) respondents representing 33.1% said they never get news via email through subscription to newsletters; eighty-three (83) respondents representing 23.7% said they rarely get news via such online news channel; eighty-nine (89) respondents representing 25.4% said they often get news via such online news channel while sixty-two (62) representing 17.7% said they get news via email through subscription to newsletters very often. This implies that majority of the respondents do not get news via their email through subscription to newsletters.

Table 11:Respondents Use of Search Engines like Google Search, Yahoo News

USE OF SEARCH ENGINES	FREQUENCY	%
Very often	156	44.6
Often	126	36.0
Rarely	48	13.7
Never	20	5.7
Total	350	100

The above table, outlines the frequency and percentage of respondents' response to the degree to which they use search engines like Google search, Yahoo news to get news online. One hundred and fifty-six (156) respondents representing 44.6% of the entire sample population studied use search engines like Google search and Yahoo news to get online news very often; one hundred and twenty-six (126) respondents representing 36% get news from such online channels often; forty-eight (48) respondents representing 13.7% said they rarely use search engines while twenty (20) respondents representing 5.7% never use search engines to access news online. This implies that majority of the respondents very often use search engines to get news online.

Table 12: Respondents Use of Downloaded News Apps on Smart Phones, Tablets

USE OF DOWNLOADED NEWS APPS	FREQUENCY	%
Very Often	75	21.4
Often	134	38.3
Rarely	79	22.6
Never	62	17.7
Total	350	100

The above table outlines the frequency and percentage of the respondents' response toward the degree to which they use Downloaded News Apps on Smart phones, tablets in accessing online news. One hundred and thirty-four (134) respondents representing 38.3% of the population studied often access news online using downloaded news apps on their Smartphone and Tablets while seventy-nine (79) respondents representing 22.6% say they rarely use such online news channels to access new; seventy- five (75) respondents representing 21.4% get news through Downloaded news apps on their tablets and Smart phones while sixty-two (62) respondents representing 17.7% never used such Apps on their Smart phones and Tablets to access news online. Hence, this implies that majority of the respondents often use Downloaded news Apps to access news online.

4.1.3 SECTION C: MEDIA REPERTOIRE OF INTEREST TO UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF UNIVERSITY OF JOS THAT GUIDE THEIR SELECTION OF ONLINE NEWS CHANNELS

Table 13: Respondents' Preference of News Categories

NEWS	VERY OFTEN	OFTEN	RARELY	NEVER	TOTAL

CATEGORIES									
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
International news	95	27.1%	147	42%	103	29.4%	5	1.4%	350
National news	151	43.1%	153	43.7%	46	13.1%	0	0%	350
Local news	121	34.6%	152	43.4%	67	19.1%	10	2.9%	350
Political news	132	37.7%	125	35.7%	76	21.7%	17	4.9%	350
Sports	124	35.4%	75	21.4%	108	30.9%	43	12.3%	350
Business	51	14.6%	117	33.4%	153	43.7%	29	8.3%	350
Science and Technology	74	21.1%	120	34.3%	131	37.4%	21	7.1%	350
Entertainment	146	41.7%	123	35.1%	73	20.9%	8	2.3%	350
Features and opinion columns	47	13.4%	110	31.4%	148	42.3%	45	12.9%	350
Advertisements	60	17.1%	123	35.1%	137	39.1%	30	8.6%	350
Health	0	0	1	.3%	0	0	349	99.7%	350
Fashion	4	1.1%	1	.3%	0	0	345	98.6%	350
Religion	2	.6%	1	.3%	0	0	347	99.1%	350
Lifestyle	1	.3%	0	0	0	0	349	99.7%	350

The table above, shows the response of the respondents' response toward the degree to which they read the listed news categories or media repertoire. The first row reveals that in terms of reading international news via online news channels. Ninety-five (95) respondents representing 27.1% said they read international news very often; one hundred and forty-seven (147) respondents representing 42% often read international news; one hundred and three (103) respondents representing 29.4% rarely read international news while five (5) respondents

representing 1.4% said they do not read international news. This implies that the respondents often read international news when they access online news channels.

The second row showcases the frequency and percentage of respondents' responses base on the degree to which they read national news when they access online news channels. One hundred and fifty-one (151) respondents representing 43.1% said they read national news very often on online news channels; one hundred and fifty-three (153) respondents representing 43.7% said they read national news often while forty-six (46) respondents representing 13.1% said they rarely read national news when accessing online news channels. This implies that the respondents often read national news when they access online news channels.

The third row outlines the frequency and percentage of respondents' response based on the degree to which they read local news online when they access online news channels. One hundred and twenty-one (121) respondents representing 34.6% said they read local news when they access online news channels very often; one hundred and fifty-two (152) respondents representing 43.4% said they often read local news via online news channels; sixty-seven (67) respondents representing 19.1% rarely read local news while ten (10) representing 2.9% do not read local news when they access online news channels. This implies that majority of the respondents often read local news via online news channels.

The fourth row reveals the frequency and percentage of respondents' response base on the degree to which they read political news when they access online news channels. One hundred and thirty-two (132) respondents representing 37.7% of the population studied said they read political news very often via online news channels; one hundred and twenty-five (125) respondents representing 35.7% said they often read political news; seventy-six (76) respondents representing 21.7% rarely read political news while seventeen (17) respondents representing 4.9% do not read political news via online news channels. This implies that majority of the

respondents read political news via online news channels. While the fifth row outlines the frequency and percentage of respondents' response based on the degree to which they read sport news when they access online news channels. One hundred and twenty-four (124) respondents representing 35.4% read sport news very often when they access online news channels; seventy-five (75) respondents representing 21.4% often read sport news while one hundred and eight (108) respondents representing 30.9% rarely read sport news via online news channels and forty-three (43) respondents representing 12.3% do not read sport news via online news channels. This therefore implies that majority of the respondents read sport news via online news channels very often.

The sixth row also outlines the frequency and percentage of the respondents' response base on the degree to which they read business news via online news channels. Fifty one (51) respondents representing 14.6% read business news very often while one hundred and seventeen (117) respondents representing 33.4% often read business news via online news channels. One hundred and fifty-three (153) respondents representing 43.7% rarely read business news while twenty-nine (29) representing 8.3% do not read business news via online news channels. Hence this implies that majority of the respondents rarely read business news via online news channels. The seventh row showcases the frequency and percentage of respondents' response base on the degree to which they read news on science and technology via online news channels. Seventy-four (74) respondents representing 21.1% read science and technology new via online news channels very often; one hundred and twenty (120) respondents representing 34.3% often read science and technology news while one hundred and thirty-one (131) respondents representing 37.4% rarely read such news and twenty five (25) respondents representing 7.1% do not read science and technology news via online news channels. This implies that majority of the respondents do not read science and technology news when they access online news channels.

The eighth row outlines the frequency and percentage of respondents' response base on the degree to which they read entertainment news when they access online news channels. one hundred and forty-six (146) respondents representing 41.7% read entertainment news very often via online news channels while one hundred and twenty-three (123) respondents representing 35.1% often read entertainment news but seventy-three (73) respondents representing 20.9% say they rarely read entertainment news via online news channels while eight (8) respondents representing 2.3% have never read entertainment news via online news channels. This implies that majority of the respondents very often read entertainment news when they access online news channels.

The ninth row reveals the frequency and percentage of respondents' response toward the degree to which they read features and opinion column when they access online news channels. one hundred and forty eight (148) respondents representing 42.3% of the sample population studied, rarely read features and opinion column while forty-five (45) respondents representing 12.9% never read such but one hundred and ten (110) respondents representing 31.4% of the sample population often read features and opinion column while forty-seven (47) respondents representing 13.4% read features and opinion column very often via online news channels. This therefore implies that majority of the respondents rarely read features and opinion columns when they access online news channels. The tenth row outlines the frequency and percentage of respondents' response based on the degree to which they read advertisements when access online news channels. One hundred and thirty-seven(137) respondents representing 39.1% of the population studied rarely read advertisement while thirty (30) respondents representing 8.6% have never read advertisement via online news channels but one hundred and twenty-three (123) respondents representing 35.1% often reads advertisement and sixty (60) respondent representing 17.1% read advertisement very often whenever they access online news channels.

The eleventh row represents the frequency and percentage of respondents' response base on the degree to which they read health news when they access online news channels. Three hundred and forty-nine (349) respondents representing 99.7% have never read health news via online news channels while one (1) respondent representing 0.3% often read health news when they access online news channels. This implies that majority of the respondents do not read health news when they access online news channels. The twelfth row outlines the frequency and percentage of respondents' response to the degree with which they read fashion news when they access online news channels. Three hundred and forty-five(345) respondents representing 98.6% of the population studied have never read news on fashion via online news channels while four (4) respondents representing 1.1% read news on fashion very often while one (1) respondent representing 0.3% often read fashion news when they access online news channels. This implies that majority of the respondents have never read fashion news via online news channels. While the thirteenth row represents the frequency and percentage of respondents' response toward the degree to which they read religious news when they access online news channels. Three hundred and forty-seven (347) respondents representing 99.1% of the sample population have never read religious news while two (2) respondents representing 0.6% read religious news very often and one (1) respondent representing 0.3% often read religious news. This implies that most of the population studied do not read religious news when they access online news channels.

The fourteenth row also outlines the frequency and percentage of respondents' response base on the degree to which they read news on lifestyle when they access online news channels. Three hundred and forty- nine (349) respondents representing 99.7% do not read news on lifestyle while one (1) respondents representing .3% read news on lifestyle when they access online news channels. This implies that majority of respondents have never read news on lifestyle when they access online news channels.

Overall, the data reveals that majority of the respondents read more of National news via online news channels, followed by entertainment news, political news, sport news, local news, international news, science and technology news, advertisement, business and features and opinion columns while fashion, religion, lifestyle and health news are the least read by respondents.

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4.1.4 SECTION D: GOALS OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF UNIVERSITY OF JOS THAT GUIDE THEIR SELECTION, USE AND DEPENDENCE OF ONLINE NEWS CHANNELS

Table 14: Respondents' Motivation for Use of Online News Channels

S/N	REASONS FOR USING ONLINE NEWS CHANNELS	STRONGLY AGREE		AGREE		UNDECIDED		DISAGREE		STRONGLY DISAGREE	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%

1	To stay informed and updated	187	53.4%	144	41.1%	15	4.3%	3	0.9%	1	0.3%
2	To forget work, study and escape daily problem	21	6.0%	76	21.7%	65	18.6%	99	28.3%	89	25.4%
3	To follow links to specific new stories	110	31.4%	198	56.6%	27	7.7%	11	3.1%	4	1.1%
4	To share news, videos to raise awareness or promote a cause I believe in	107	30.6%	167	47.7%	47	13.4%	22	6.3%	7	2.0%
5	It is inexpensive and easily accessible	140	40%	140	40%	34	9.7%	23	6.6%	13	3.7%
6	To follow the list of news headlines only	63	18%	128	36.6%	58	16.6%	77	22%	24	6.9%
7	To look at the sequence of pictures or stories that supports my view	67	19.1%	139	39.7%	69	19.7%	53	15.1%	22	6.3%
8	To follow links to specific news stories from emails and search engines	70	20%	164	46.9%	66	18.9%	37	10.6%	13	3.7%

The table above, outlines the frequency and percentage of respondents' response base on the degree to which they agree or disagree on the reasons for online news channels use. The first row reveals the degree to which they agree or disagree to using online news channels because they wanted to stay updated and informed on a range of topics. One hundred and eighty-seven (187) respondents representing 53.4% strongly agreed to the use of online news channels for staying updated and informed about topics of interest to them; one hundred and forty-four (144) respondents representing 41.1% of the population studied agreed to this also while three (3) respondents representing .9% and one respondent (1) representing .3% disagreed and strongly

disagreed respectively to using online news channels for updating and being informed on range of topics nevertheless fifteen (15) respondents representing 4.3% were undecided about this. This implies that majority of the respondents use online news channels because they want to be updated and informed on various topic of interest to them.

The second row shows the frequency and percentage of the degree to which respondents agree or disagree to the use of online news channels to forget work, study and escape daily problems. Ninety- nine (99) respondents representing 28.3% and eighty-nine (89) respondents representing 25.4% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively to the use of online news channels to forget work, study and escape problems while seventy-six (76) respondents representing 21.7% and twenty-one (21) representing 6% agreed and strongly agreed to its use to forget work, study and escape problems while sixty-five (65) respondents representing 28.3% were undecided in their decision about this. Hence this implies that most of the respondents do not use online news channels to forget work, study and escape problems. The third row outlines the frequency and percentage of the degree to which respondents agree or disagree to the use of online news channels to follow links to specific news stories. OOne hundred and ninety-eight (198) respondents representing 56.6% and one hundred and ten (110) respondents representing 31.4% respectively agreed and strongly agreed to the use of online news channels to follow links to specific news stories that are of interest to the while eleven (11) respondents representing 3.1% and four (4) respondents representing 1.1% disagreed and strongly disagreed on the use of online news channels to follow links to specific news stories but twenty-seven (27) respondents representing 7.7% were undecided about this. This implies that majority of the population studied actually use online news channels because they want to follow links to specific news stories.

The fourth row reveals the frequency and percentage of the degree to which respondents agree or disagree to the use of online news channels to share news, videos that raise awareness or promote a cause they believe in. one hundred and sixty-seven (167) respondents representing 47.7% and one hundred and seven (107) respondents representing 30.6% of the total population studied respectively agreed and strongly agreed to the use of online news channels to share news, videos that raised awareness and promote a cause they believed in while twenty-two(22) respondents representing 6.3% and seven (7) respondents representing 2% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively to its use for such goals while forty-seven (47) respondents representing 13.4% were undecided on the use of online channels for such goals. This implies that majority of the respondents do use online news channels to share news, videos that raised awareness and promote cause they believed in.

The fifth row outlines the frequency and percentage of the degree to which the respondents agree or disagree to the use of online news channels because of its inexpensiveness and easy accessibility. One hundred and forty (140) respondents representing 40% strongly agreed to this. One hundred and forty (140) respondents representing 40% also agreed to its use because it is inexpensive and easily accessible but twenty-three(23) respondents representing 6.6% disagreed to this reasons and thirteen (13) respondents representing 3.7% also strongly disagreed to this while thirty-four (34) respondents representing 9.7% of the entire population studied were undecided about this. This implies that majority of the respondents actually use online news channels because it is inexpensive and easily accessible.

The sixth row showcases the frequency and percentage of the degree to which respondents agree or disagree to the use of online news channels to follow the list of news headline only. One hundred and twenty-eight (128) respondents representing 36.6% agreed to this reason while sixty-three (63) respondents representing 18% strongly agreed to this but

seventy-seven (77) respondents representing 22% and twenty-four (24) respondents representing 6.9% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively to online news channels' use follow the list of news headline only while fifty-eight (58) respondents representing 16.6% were undecided about this. This implies that respondents use online news channels because they want to follow the list of news headline only while the seventh row outlines the frequency and percentage of the degree to which respondents agree or disagree to the use of online news channels to look at sequence of pictures or stories that supports their view. One hundred and thirty-nine (139) respondents representing 39.7% agreed to this reason while sixty-seven (67) respondents representing 19.1% strongly agreed to this but fifty-three (53) respondents representing 15.1% and twenty-two (22) respondents representing 6.3% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively to online news channels' use for looking at sequence of pictures, videos and stories that supports their view while sixty-nine (69) respondents representing 19.7% were undecided about this. This implies that respondents use online news channels because they want to look at pictures, videos, stories that support their view.

The eighth row showed the frequency and percentage responses of respondents to toward the degree to which they agree or disagree with following links to specific news stories from emails and search engines. One hundred and sixty-four (164) respondents representing 46.9% agreed to using online news channels to follow links to specific news stories from emails and search engines; seventy (70) respondents representing 20% strongly agreed to using online channels for such use nevertheless, sixty-six (66) respondents representing 18.9% were undecided in their decision; still thirty-seven (37) respondents representing 10.6% disagreed to such use while thirteen (13) representing 3.7% strongly disagreed. This implies that majority of respondents follow links to specific news stories from emails and search engines.

Overall, the data above reveals that majority of respondents use online news channels because they want to stay updated and informed on various issues; follow links to specific stories; share news, videos to raise awareness or promote a cause they believed in; follow links to specific news stories from emails and search engines; because it is inexpensive and easily accessible and follow list of news headlines only. While majority do not use online news channels because they wanted to forget work, study and escape daily problem.

Question 22: Respondents were asked to explain in their own word why they use or do not use online news sources or channels. One hundred and seventy-eight (174) respondents confirm that they use online news channels because they are quick, easily accessible and affordable while one hundred and twenty-four (124) respondents are of the view that they use online news channels because it keeps them updated and informed per time as they can get news instantly anytime and anywhere. However, fifty-four (54) respondents were of the view that online news channels are convenient to use on any devices that are of the users' choice while forty-three (43) respondents said online news channels give them the opportunity to follow current and specific news of interest. Nevertheless, twenty-six (26) respondents were of the view that the ability to comment, share, post views and get feedback on news published via online news channels with friends inspire them to use online news sources while twenty-three (23) respondents said it is because they had access to variety of perspectives of current issues in the society via multiple links to online news channels. Similarly, twenty (20) respondents said they use online news channels because of the reliability of such news channels to them and three (3) respondents say they use online news channels to supplement news gotten via traditional news outlets while seventeen (18) respondents said they occasionally use online news channels because of the questionable credibility of sources of news stories posted online and accessed via online news channels. Nevertheless, two (2) respondents were of the view that although news via online news channels

are questionable, there is also an iota of truth in every rumour. Also seven (7) respondents

noted that online news channels help in reducing the cost of knowledge as they get ideas for

research from online news channels use while thirteen (13) respondents argued that owing to

busy schedules, poor electricity supply in the country and network issues they use online news

channels occasionally and only access news headlines. Ten (10) respondents also pointed out

that news via online news channels are filled with horrifying pictures, pornography that are

usually detrimental to users; advertisement pops up when they try to access news stories thereby

redirecting them to unsolicited pages and making the process boring while eleven (11)

respondents said using online news channels help them to lessen boredom. This results show that

majority of undergraduate students of the University of Jos use online news channels because of

its easy access, affordability and their need to be updated and informed.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

The following findings were gotten from the data gathered and analysed. Response to

research question one on the usage pattern of online news channels among Undergraduate

students of the University of Jos reveals that usage pattern of respondents was in two ways: those

who used online news channels regularly and those who used it occasionally. This is reflected in

Table 4 where 70% of the respondents affirmed to using it regularly while 30% said they used it

occasionally. Also, findings revealed that majority of undergraduate students of the University of

Jos mostly use Smartphone as a device compared to other devices for accessing news via online

news channels. This was reflected in Table 5 where 192 respondents which translate to 54.9%

said they use Smartphone while tablets was the least used followed by Desktop and Laptop. This

is also reflected in Table 5 where 181 respondents representing 51.7%, 171 respondents

representing 48.9% and 138 respondents representing 39.4% of the total population studied

confirmed this. This implies that online news channels are accessed by undergraduate students of the University of Jos basically from Smartphone.

Similarly, majority of the population studied spent at least less than one hour every time they accessed online news channels while others spent between 1-3 hours. Less response from the respondents was spending above 6 hours on online news channels. This is reflected in Table 6. Also, most undergraduate students of the University of Jos use Facebook as a social media platform and online news channels more to access online news compared to other social media platform. This is followed by Google+ and WhatsApp while Instagram is the least used followed by Twitter and Blogs. This is reflected in Table 8. Also, a cross tabulation of gender in relation to Facebook use for online news reveals that males use Facebook more their female counterpart. This is reflected in Table 9 where one hundred and ninety (190) males which translate to 81.9% of the total sampled population outweighs that of their female counterparts who are ninety-one (91) respondents which translate to 77.1% of the total sampled population.

Furthermore, findings reveal that the least online news channels used is via email through subscription to newsletters. This is reflected in Table 10 where 33.1% say they never access news via this channel. The most used online news channel is news accessed directly from news websites followed by search engines through Google search and Yahoo news and downloaded news apps. This was reflected in Table 7, 11 and 12 where 72.3% of the population, 44.6% and 38.3% respectively agreed to this.

Research question two is based on the kind of media repertoire that are of interest to Undergraduate students of the University of Jos that guides their selection of use of online news channels. Findings, here reveal that majority of the respondents affirm to reading more of National news compared to other. This is reflected in Table 13 where 151 respondents representing 43.1 affirm to reading National news very often. This is followed by Entertainment

news, Political news, Sport news, Local news, International news, Science and Technology news, Advertisement, Business news and Feature and Opinion column while majority do not read much of Health, Lifestyle, Religion and Fashion news. This implies that the kind of news categories majority of Undergraduate students of the University of Jos read are more of National news and Entertainment news.

Research question three deals with the goals of undergraduate students of the University of Jos that guide their selection, use and dependence of online news channels. This could also be seen as motivation, reasons for online news channels use. Data gathered and analysed revealed that respondents use online news channels for various reasons which could invariably lead to their dependence on such channel. It was revealed that majority of the respondents used it because they wanted to stay informed and updated on range of topic that are of interest to them. This was reflected in Table 14 where 187 respondents representing 53.4% of the population understudied strongly agreed to this. Other reasons or goals are to follow links to specific news stories; share news, videos to raise awareness or promote a cause they believed in; follow list of news headlines only; links to specific news stories from emails and search engines; look at sequence of pictures, stories that support their views and because it was inexpensive and easily accessible while majority disagreed and strongly disagreed to using online news channels because they wanted to forget work, study and escape daily problem.

Similarly, while respondents were asked to state in their own words why they do or do not use online news channels or sources. Majority affirmed to using it because they are quick, easily accessible and affordable. This was revealed when 174 respondents confirmed this. 124 respondents also said they used it to keep updated and informed. Others said it was because of device convenience of use; ability to online news channels to give them the opportunity to follow current, specific news of interest; comment, share, post views and get feedbacks from

friends. Some said it was because they got access to variety of perspectives of current issues in the society via multiple links; online news channels' reliability and ability to serve as supplement to news gotten from traditional news outlets.

Nevertheless, those who do not like using online news channels always said it was because of their busy schedules; poor electricity supply in the country and network issues. Others said online news channels are filled with horrifying pictures, pornography content that are detrimental to users; advertisement pop up when they try to access news link thereby directing them to unsolicited pages making the process boring.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary

The researcher drew these findings based on the data retrieved. Majority of the Respondents that fall within the age of 21-25 use online news channels. This was reflected in table 2 where 54.6% attested to this fact. Similarly, majority of Respondents use online news

channels always while few use it occasionally. This is reflected in table 4 where 70% and 30% of the respondents attested to this.

Most of the respondents very often access online news channels via Smartphone as compared to other devices such as desktop, laptops and tablets. This was reflected in table 5 where 54.9% and 26.3% attested to this. Moreover, majority of the Respondents spend at least less than one hour when they access online news channels while 32.9% spend 1-3 hours. This was revealed in table 6 where the percentage of both (less than one hour and 1 to 3 hours) outweighs those of 4-6 hours and above 6 hours.

It was concluded that majority of Respondents access news directly via news sites. This was revealed in Table 7 where 72.3% attested to this while in table 11, 44.6% and 36% attested to using search engines like Google search and yahoo news very often and often. Also majority agreed to use downloaded news App often. This was also revealed in table 12 where 38.3% attested to this. Also, Facebook is the social media platform mostly used by the Respondents while Instagram is the least used followed by twitter. This is reflected in Table 8. Also more males use Facebook as a social media platform and online news channels to access online news. This was reflected in Table 9 where a cross tabulation was carried out to ascertain the difference in gender use of such platform for online news access.

Among all the online news channels, news via email through subscription to newsletter is the least used by the Respondents. This is reflected in table 10 when one hundred and six (116) respondents replied to never user it as news channels. In response to news categories or media repertoire that are of most interest to Respondents and which in turn guide their selection of online news channels, majority read national news followed by entertainment news, political, sport news, local news, international news, science technology news, advertisements, business,

features and opinion column while majority do not read health news, lifestyles among others as reflected in table 13.

Similarly, majority of the respondents use online news channels because they wanted to be informed and updated while others use it because they want to follow links to specific news stories; share news, videos that raised awareness and promote a cause they believed in. Some said it was because they wanted to follow links to specific news stories from email and search engines; look at sequence of pictures of stories that supported their view and because online news channels usage is inexpensive and easily accessible while others rejected the idea that they used online news channels because they wanted to forget work, study and escape daily problems. This was reflected in Table 14.

Furthermore, when the respondents were asked to explain in their own words why they used or do not use online news channels, as this could serve as complementary effort to discern their dependence level, it was revealed that majority of the respondents were dependent on online news channels because it is easily accessible and affordable; its convenience of use; ability to follow current and specific news of interest, comment, share, post views and get feedbacks from friends. They are also dependent on online news channels because they wanted to be informed and updated on issues; reliability of the channels and its ability to serve as supplement to news gotten via traditional news outlets. They could also get variety of perspectives of current issues in the society via multiple links.

Moreover, the respondents were of the view that they use online news channels only occasionally because of their busy schedules; poor electricity supply; network issues. They also complained of post on these channels that were horrifying such as pictures and pornographic materials or content that are detrimental to users. Few of them were of the view that advertisement pop up when they try to access these channels making the process boring.

5.2 Conclusion

The findings above correlate with other researchers who had also studied usage of online news and reasons for its use. This is in view of the fact that people use online news channels because of technological evolution in today's high-tech environment and youngster changing lifestyle. Young people use online news channels because they want to find ways in which is more appealing (Costera Meijer, 2007; Raeymaker, 2007; Beekhoven and Van Wel, 1998 and Huang, 2009). This study agrees with the findings of Costera Meijer(2007) and Huang(2009) that News was a means by which people experience the world around them; monitor their environment; gave meaning to their lives; identified personal values for truth and got a sense of belonging. This study however disagree with the finding of Newman and Dutton(2011) that search engines are being partly replaced by social media as portals to news and other information. Nevertheless, this study agrees with Cauwenberge,d'Haenensand Beentjes (2010) that online news sites are the online news channels with the highest increase in use. This study also align with Akoh et al (2012) that Facebook is the most used social media platform by internet users. This study also agree with Oyero (2013) that majority of the students use social networks as their primary sources of news information due to convenience and portability of devices for assessing it such as smart phones.This study also agrees with Dunu, et al (2015) that each medium or channel serves its audience in different manner within different context and students who are active users usually select the particular online news channel that best gratify their needs. Moreover, this study agrees with the findings of Saleeman, et al (2015) that the relative advantage of online news channels or sources is the quick update which makes them faster news sources. Also their findings indicated that online news websites was the most online news channels used which this study findings also correlate with.

Similarly, undergraduate students of the University of Jos were discovered to be choosy in terms of devices as majority were found to use Smartphones more in accessing online news probably because of the fact that such devices were portable and affordable compared to others. Time also was of essence in online news access owing to the academic environment in which they found themselves as undergraduate students of the University of Jos only access online news when it was convenient for them and majority spent at least between less than 1 hour and 1-3 hours online doing so. It was also concluded that usage pattern differs in terms of gender, age and marital status as more males tend to access online news via online news channels as compared to their female counterparts. Also majority of undergraduate students of the University of Jos were single and tend to use online news channel regularly compared to their married counterparts who used online news channels occasionally. Undergraduate students within the age range of 21- 25 mostly accessed online news via online channels followed by those within the age of 26-30.

Furthermore, it was concluded that undergraduate students of the University of Jos used Facebook as a social media platform in accessing online news followed by Google+ and WhatsApp. Instagram, Twitter and Blogs were the least used. It was also concluded that of all the online news channels studied, news via email through subscription to newsletter was the least used by undergraduate students of the University of Jos.

Similarly, undergraduate students of the University of Jos tend to read more of national news compared to others and they used online news channels because they wanted to stay informed and updated on issues around them.

5.5 Recommendations

The increased use of digital news platforms or channels illustrate the demand for selected, customized information with each individual deciding what news or information should be made

available and at what moment(Althaus and Tewksbury 2002; CosteraMeijera, 2007 and Huang, 2009).

1.   Media content producer and practitioners should therefore take cognizance of this and try to better know this millennial generation and what they desire and the online channels used in order to repackage and re-strategize to accommodate them.

2.   Government and other stake holders in the power sector have a crucial role to play and it is high time all their empty promises are brought to reality.

3.   The management of University of Jos should also try and expand the bandwidth of her wireless connection so that students can cut down on private internet charges and maximize efficiently the social, economic and academic benefit of online news channels.

4.   Overall, as online news channels experiment go on, a better understanding of consumer behavior should rely more on rational analysis as opposed to guess work or wishful thinking. Service providers should also strive to improve their network so as to reduce the frustration experienced by online users in trying to access online news channels.

5.6   Suggestion for Further Research

Online news use and consumption is still a relatively news are of research especially in relation to online news channels and the proposed models for this study are by no means definitive.

1. Nevertheless, the proposed theories can serve as starting point for future reassessment or exploration in online news channels use and online news consumption studies.

2. Future research could also focus on platform or channels specific features, functions and other population.

3. Similarly, other factors such as trust in media, education could be placed in the study to see if there is a significant relationship between trust in media and the use of online news channels.

4. Also future research agenda could consider using mixed approaches and methods preferably aiming for cross-cultural comparison.

5. Furthermore, future studies could also do a comparison in terms of understanding the usage of online news channels and its uniqueness to its users.

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Appendix I: Distribution of students by Departments and Faculties 2014/2015 Session

S/N	Faculties	Department	UG. Male	UG. Female	New Male	New Female	Total
1	Agric	3			31	23	54
2	Arts	10	930	1391	298	467	3086
3	Education	5	1764	1307	472	421	3964
4	Engineering	4			74	23	97
5	Environmental Science	7	570	379	232	63	1244
6	Law	5	898	598	123	120	1739
7	Medical Science	22	1375	915	210	187	2687
8	Management Science	6	745	490	321	221	1777
9	Natural Science	9	1931	1291	339	198	3759
10	Pharmaceutical Science	5	351	234	72	42	699
11	Social Science	4	1594	1063	463	174	3294
12	Veterinary Science	7			32	17	49
Total	12	87	10158	7668	2667	1956	22449

Source: ICT Directorate of the University of Jos.

FORMULAE FOR DETERMINING NEEDED SAMPLE SIZES

POPULATION SIZE UNKNOWN:

$$\text{SAMPLE SIZE} = \frac{\left(\dfrac{\text{RANGE}}{2}\right)^2}{\left(\dfrac{\text{ACCURACY LEVEL}}{\text{CONFIDENCE LEVEL}}\right)^2}$$

Confidence Levels:

	α	$\alpha/2$
.10 level =	1.28	1.64
.05 level =	1.64	1.96
.01 level =	2.33	2.58
.001 level =	3.09	3.29

Accuracy Levels:

Range X Desired Level of Accuracy (expressed as a proportion)

- -

POPULATION SIZE KNOWN:

$$\text{SIZE} = \frac{X^2 N P (1-P)}{d^2 (N-1) + X^2 P (1-P)}$$

X^2 = table value of Chi-Square @ $d.f. = 1$ for desired confidence level
    .10 = 2.71   .05 = 3.84   .01 = 6.64   .001 = 10.83
N = population size
P = population proportion (assumed to be .50)
d = degree of accuracy (expressed as a proportion)

Appendix II: Small sample Techniques by Krejcie and Morgan (1960)

APPENDIX III: Sample Size for each Faculty

TOTAL POPULATION	NO OF SAMPLE	SAMPLE FRACTION	FACULTIES	FACULTY TOTAL	SAMPLE FOR EACH FACULTY
22449	378	59.38888889	AGRIC	54	1
			ARTS	3086	52
			EDUCATION	3964	67
			ENGINEERING	97	2
			ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES	1244	21
			LAW	1739	29
			MEDICAL SCIENCES	2687	45
			MANAGEMENT SCIENCES	1777	30
			NATURAL SCIENCES	3759	63
			PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES	699	12
			SOCIAL SCIENCES	3294	55
			VETERINERY SCIENCES	49	1
				TOTAL	378

Department of Mass Communication,

Faculty of Arts,

School of Postgraduate Studies,

University of Jos,

P.M.B 2084,

Jos, Plateau state.

TO WHOSOEVER IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Respondent,

REQUEST FOR THE COMPLETION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a student of the above named institution conducting a research on the usage ofonline news channels by undergraduate students of the University Of Jos as part of my Master of Arts (M.A.) course in Mass Communication.

This exercise is purely academic and your answers and comments as a respondent will be treated confidentially.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours' faithfully,

Kehinde F. Mefolere.

IJSER

Section A- DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1. Gender – Male ☐ Female ☐

2. Marital status- Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ ,Widowed ☐

3. Age- 15-20 ☐ 21-25 ☐ 26-30 ☐ 31-35 ☐ 36 & Above ☐

4. Which Faculty do you belong to?

	Y Please TICK only one.			
Agriculture		Environmental Science		Natural Sciences	
Arts		Law		Pharmaceutical Science	
Education		Management Sciences		Social Sciences	
Engineering		Medical Sciences		Veterinary Science	

Section B- News channels used by undergraduate students of the University of Jos

5. How often do you read news online? Regularly ☐ Only Occasionally ☐

   Never ☐ (If Never, skip to Question 22)

6. How often do you access online news on these devices

	VERY OFTEN	OFTEN	RARELY	NEVER
DeskTopComputer (PC)				
Laptop				
Tablets				
Smartphones				

7. Time spent daily using these devices to access online news channels

   Less than One Hour ☐ 1-3hrs ☐ 4-6 hrs ☐ Above 6 hrs ☐

8. Do you access online news directly from news websites? Yes ☐ No ☐

9. Do you use the following social platforms to access online news? (You may tick more than one if appropriate.)
   Facebook ☐ Blogs ☐ Twitter ☐ WhatsApp ☐ Instagram ☐

   ☐ ☐

Google+   Others   (Specify)_____

10. Do you get news via email through subscription to newsletters

Very Often [   ] Often [   ] Rarely [   ] Never [   ]

11. Do you use search engines like Google search, Yahoo news

Very Often [   ] Often [   ] Rarely, [   ] Never [   ]

12. Do you use downloaded News Apps on SmartPhones, Tablets.

Very Often [   ] Often [   ] Rarely [   ] Never [   ]

Do you agree/disagree with these reasons given by undergraduate students of University of Jos for using online news channels?
(SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; UD = Undecided; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree)

		SA	A	UD	D	SD
13	I use it to stay informed and updated about a range of topics					
14	I use it to forget work, study and escape daily problem.					
15	I use it to follow links to specific news stories					
16	I use it to share news, videos that raise awareness, promote a cause I believe in					
17	I use it because it is inexpensive and easily accessible					
18	I use it to follow the list of news headlines only					
19	I use it to look at the sequence of pictures or stories that supports my view					
20	I follow links to specific news stories from emails and search engines					

21. Please rank the following news categories according to how much you read them when you access online news channels:

NEWS CATEGORIES	VERY OFTEN	OFTEN	RARELY	NEVER
International News				
National News				
Local News				
Political News				
Sports				

Business				
Science & Technology				
Entertainment				
Features & Opinion Columns				
Advertisements				
Others (Please, specify below.) _____				

22. Please use the following space to explain in your own words why you use or do not use online news sources:

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Thank You.