

**INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON INFORMATION  
SEEKING ATTITUDE OF UNDERGRADUATES OF SELECT  
UNIVERSITIES IN EDO STATE**

**BY**

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**BEING A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF  
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**DECLARATION**

I, **LINDA DOOSHIMA KUKU**, PG/ART2015171 do hereby declare that this dissertation entitled *Influence of Social Media on the Information Seeking Attitude of Undergraduates of Select Universities in Edo State* is my original work and not a duplicate of someone else's. All materials used therein are adequately acknowledged by way of reference.

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**LINDA DOOSHIMA KUKU**

**CERTIFICATION**

We, the undersigned, certify that **LINDA DOOSHIMA KUKU, PG/ART 2015171** carried out this study. It is, therefore, approved as meeting the standards and requirements for the award of Master of Arts (M.A.) Degree in Mass Communication, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria.

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### **DEDICATION**

Dedicated to my brother, sister uncle, aunt, friend, etc

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My profound gratitude goes to Almighty God for his grace and knowledge given to me to complete this work. The thoughts and strengths come from Him. To Him be all the glory and honour forever.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study focused on the influence of social media on the information seeking attitudes of undergraduates in select universities in Edo State, Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to find out the social media platforms used by undergraduates of University of Benin and Glorious Vision University in Edo State, Nigeria; to evaluate the usage of social media for information purpose among undergraduates of these universities; to ascertain how social media influences the desire of undergraduates of these universities to seek information and to finally determine the attitudes of undergraduates of these universities towards information seeking as a result of social media usage. In terms of the theoretical Framework, the information behaviour theory and two step. Flow theory were adopted, while the methodology used by the researcher was the survey research methods. A sample size of 397 respondents was used to gather data for the study. Findings of the study revealed that social media makes it easy for undergraduates of the University of Benin and Glorious University to seek information on topics that interest them. Findings also revealed that undergraduates of these universities seek more entertainment and personal development information than other types of information on social media. Based on the findings, the researcher concluded that the social media has influenced and will continue to influence the attitudes and behaviour of undergraduates towards seeking information. The researcher therefore recommended, among others, that undergraduates and youths should use social media for activities that are productive and will contribute to their academic knowledge, personally, mentally and to social development. The researcher also recommended that lecturers should encourage students to use social media platforms like Quora and Reddit when seeking for information.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

Before the advent of social media, otherwise known as the dot.com media, the media through which information was sourced were limited to traditional media like the newspaper, magazines, radio and television. According to Davis (2016), social media are collections of interactive internet apps that enable the creation, curation and sharing of user-generated materials either individually or collaboratively. The different types of social media types are Facebook, Friendster, Wikipedia, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, Reddit, Quora, Telegram, etc. The phrase social media is frequently used to describe contemporary types of media that encourage interactive engagement (Manning, 2014). These social media help connect people together, among other things. According to Barnes (2005), social media are applications that enable people to interact with each other and build social networks that increase social capital. Social media platforms are tools used in connecting people and also seeking information of different sorts.

Over the years, social media have been known to be one of the fastest and easiest forms of communication. There has been a significant shift in the use of social media platforms which has tremendously given a new narrative to the way people seek information online. Social media platforms, like Facebook, Instagram and instant messenger like WhatsApp have become platforms where ideas, knowledge and information are exchanged.

Information seeking is an integral part of people, especially students because this avails them the knowledge to get insight on information being sourced. Before now, libraries were important places where students particularly source for information, but with the advent of social media, information demand of students can be met irrespective of where they are in space or time (Ishimura & Bartlett, 2014; Liu & Winn, 2009). Liu and Winn (2009) argued that the lack of satisfaction from students especially the undergraduates brought about the seeking of information using other means like the social media; this is because social media platforms like Facebook and twitter are very common among younger generations which in this context are undergraduate students of Nigerian universities (Duggan and Brenner 2013). Social media has become a viable tool for research work as students now consult social media as their online library rather than going to the physical one. Thus Gupta, Gautam & Khare (2014) describe social media as applications that are “powerful tools for libraries”, it is because of this reason that social media can be perceived as a searchable tool for information. According to Robson & Robinson (2013), the networked information system and the world wide web (www), have brought forth new and improved potent tools for directions for the storing, seeking, retrieving and sharing of information. The need for information seeking arises when students need to satisfy the quest for certain kinds of information, it is in this process that they begin to find means to get such information. Willson (2000) proposed that the source of an information is determined by the sources of information available at a particular time. Notably, undergraduate students of universities are open to different sources of information

which could be the social media and other media like the print and broadcast media. However, social media are tools that are used by different people especially the youth in the 21st century who are mostly found in the university environment.

Social media facilitate communication of information which could be sensitive, political, informative and so on (Osatuyi, 2019). Information can easily be received and shared using different social media platforms like Facebook, twitter, tiktok, Pinterest and instant messenger like WhatsApp. These platforms ease the information seeking process because these are tools that are commonly used by people. Unarguably, for the past ten years social media has had an impact on how college students use social networking sites and platforms with much emphasis on interaction (i.e dialogue and conversations), user generated content and the development of online relationship and communities, (Turban, King & Lang 2011).

In contemporary times, media scholars like Asemah (2021) and Nwabueze (2015) have argued that social media have become a ubiquitous aspect of undergraduate lives in Nigeria, with platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, WhatsApp and Instagram playing increasingly important roles in shaping information-seeking attitudes. While there is debate surrounding the impact of social media on academic achievement, there is little doubt that it has affected how students seek and consume information. It is based on the above statement that this study seeks to find out the influence of social media on information seeking attitude of undergraduates using the University of Benin and Glorious Vision University, Edo state as a study.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Social media have become popular tools which are used by many students to communicate, seek information and interact. Today, it has the capacity of becoming the most essential tool for interacting and communicating because it is widely acceptable. In the past, other means of sourcing for information common to students was the library, which gave them the opportunity of going to a physical library to get information for different purposes. However, with the invention of social media platforms, the attitudes toward information seeking among university students may have changed either positively or negatively (Christopher, 2010)

Kumar & Kumar (2013) contended that social media provides a quick and easy way of accessing information on a wide range of topics, from academics to entertainment. With the ease and convenience of mobile devices, students can access social media platforms even as they move around campus. Kumar and Kumar(2013) further argued that social media provide a platform for peer-to-peer communication, where students can exchange information and ideas with their thereby fostering a sense of community, with themselves being part of a larger conversation that goes beyond the boundaries of the classroom. However, despite the benefits associated with social media, Ndaku (2013) opined that there are also concerns regarding its impact on information-seeking among undergraduates. Some of the most-cited concerns are the social media being a source of misinformation and distraction from academics, over reliance on the social media, limited research skills, amongst others. Consequently, it is important to note that researchers like Eke, Omekwu & Odoh(2014); Kumar & Kumar ( 2013);

Christopher (2010); Virkuss (2010) Wang, Cheng & Liang (2011); Ndaku (2013) have carried out studies on the use of social media among undergraduates in Nigeria. However little or no research has been carried out on the use, desire of students when seeking information and the influence of social media on the information seeking attitudes of undergraduates. Thus, this study seeks to bridge this gap in knowledge by investigating the influence of social media on the information seeking attitudes of undergraduates in select universities in Edo state, Nigeria.

### **1.3. Research objectives**

The objectives of the study were:

1. To evaluate the usage of social media for information purposes among undergraduates of University of Benin, Benin City and Glorious Vision University, Ogwa.
2. To find out the social media platforms used by undergraduates of these universities.
3. Ascertain how social media influences the desire of undergraduates of the select universities to seek information.
4. Determine the attitudes undergraduate of the select universities towards information seeking as a result of social media usage.

#### **1.4. Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide this study:

1. To what extent do undergraduates of University of Benin and Glorious Vision University use social media for information purposes?
2. To find out social media platforms used by undergraduates of these universities.
3. How does social media influence the desire of undergraduates of these universities to seek information?
4. What attitudes do undergraduates of select universities have towards information seeking as a result of social media usage?

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The study will be beneficial to management of both schools because it will help them understand available means of disseminating information to students effectively and efficiently. Furthermore, the study will add to the few existing literatures on the topic and will serve as a point of reference to other researchers who may also intend to carry out studies on similar areas of interest.

#### **1.6. Scope of the Study**

The study focused on undergraduates of University of Benin and Glorious Vision University both of Edo State Nigeria. The subjects in studying them are information seeking attitudes and social media.

#### **1.7 Limitation of the Study**

In the course of conducting this study, the researcher encountered a few challenges which almost disrupted the research process. The respondents were unsure of the researcher mission as they were skeptical about the purpose of the

research. However, upon explanation that the research is purely an academic exercise they responded to the questionnaire.

### **1.8. Operational Definition of Terms**

The following terms were defined in the context of this study:

**Attitude:** Attitude in this study refers to the manner and way which students believe and how their emotions affect their information seeking on different social media platforms. The manner students use to surf the net(the social media platforms) can be either positive or negative and can be affected by social media influence or personal experiences.

- **Information:** Information in this study means the facts or responses gotten by a student when searching for details on a particular subject matter using social media.
- **Influence:** This is the effect of social media on the attitudes or behaviour of undergraduate students. The influence can be conscious or unconscious.
- **Seeking:** In this context, seeking refers to the act of searching or looking for things on social media with the intention of finding or acquiring information, knowledge, or resources. It can be done through various means, such as asking questions, conducting research, or seeking advice or feedback from others.
- **Students:** These are individuals enrolled in a course of study at the University of Benin and Glorious Vision University.

- **Social Media:** In this context, social media means web connections that help students interact with each other and seek information as well as post information for the purpose of achieving an action or reaction. Social media in this context also mean different social platforms used in communicating like the Facebook, WhatsApp, pinterest, Quora, Reddit, tiktok, LinkedIn as well as social networking site.
- **Usage:** In this context, Usage refers to the manner in which social media is used to meet a specific need.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Preamble**

This chapter previews existing concepts, workable definitions, previous researches and theories related to the current study. It is accurately dissected using the following subhead

#### 2.2. Review of Concepts

##### 2.2.1. Information Seeking

##### 2.2.2 Social media

##### 2.2.3. Attitude

#### 2.3. Opinion Review

##### 2.3.1. Information function of the social media

##### 2.3.2. Social media and attitude formation

##### 2.3.3. Influence of social media on information seeking attitude of students

#### 2.4. Review of Empirical studies

#### 2.5. Theoretical Framework

## **2.2. Review of Concepts**

### **2.2.1. Information Seeking**

Information is a fundamental concept that plays a vital role in our daily lives. It is the cornerstone of communication, decision-making, and problem-solving. As explained by Nwabueze (2015), in its simplest form, information can be defined as knowledge that is communicated or received concerning a particular fact or circumstance. Nwabueze (2015) further noted that in today's digital age, information has become more widespread and accessible than ever before, with the internet providing a vast repository of data that can be accessed at the touch of a button. As a concept, information has been studied and analyzed by various fields of study, including information theory, computer science, and philosophy. Information theory, in particular, deals with the quantification, storage, and communication of information. It seeks to understand how information can be efficiently transmitted and processed, and how it can be protected from noise and interference (French, 2015).

Ebisine and Uverueh (2003) stated that in computer science, information is treated as data that can be manipulated, stored, and transmitted using various technologies such as databases, networks, and the internet. The ability to process and analyze large amounts of data has led to the development of artificial intelligence and machine learning algorithms that can identify patterns and make predictions based on information. Ashworth (2019) contended that in philosophy, information is viewed as a fundamental concept that underlies our understanding

of reality. It is seen as a bridge between the observer and the observed, allowing us to make sense of the world around us. Some philosophers argue that information is a fundamental property of the universe, like space and time, and that it plays a central role in the evolution of the cosmos.

In the context of media, Sergreev (2011) posited that information refers to the news, facts, and data that are communicated to the public through various channels such as television, radio, newspapers, internet and the social media. Asemah (2019) noted that the media plays a crucial role in disseminating information to the public, shaping public opinion, and influencing decision-making. The concept of information in the media can be analyzed in terms of its sources, content, and delivery. The sources of information in mass media include news agencies, journalists, experts, and other stakeholders. The content of information can vary depending on the type of media, the audience, and the context. For example, news media typically focuses on current events, politics, and social issues, while entertainment media focuses on celebrity gossip, music, and movies.

Agba (2012) argued that seeking information is essential for making informed decisions, solving problems, and communicating with others. He noted that several factors can influence the manner in which information is sought for. The information-seeking behaviour of an individual can be influenced by age, gender, education level, occupation, motivation, and personality traits. As emphasized by Agba (2012) the information-seeking behaviour of an individual can be categorized into two types: active and passive.

- i. **Active information:** This is the deliberate and purposeful search for information. Individuals who engage in active information seeking put in a considerable amount of effort to find what they are looking for, often by searching through books, websites, library databases, and other sources. This type of information seeking is usually adopted when individuals have a clear goal in mind, such as learning something new, solving a problem, or making a decision.
- ii. **Passive information** seeking, on the other hand, is less deliberate and less purposeful. Individuals who engage in passive information seeking are more inclined to come across information by chance or accidental encounters. This type of information seeking is often used when individuals do not have a specific goal in mind and are simply browsing through blogs or social media posts.

Nweke (2001) argued that apart from these types, information-seeking behavior can also be influenced by two specific styles: monitoring and searching. Monitoring involves keeping a lookout for new information, while searching is a more active and purposeful approach that involves looking for information on specific topics. The manner which people seek for information can also be influenced by various external factors such as technology, accessibility, and trust. With the advent of technology and the Internet, it has become easier for individuals to access information at their fingertips. However, this overload of information can create difficulties in determining what is credible and trustworthy.

Individuals must be aware of the sources they use and the accuracy of the information (Nwabueze, 2015).

### **2.2.2. Social Media**

According to Mandaville and James (2010), Social media has become an integral part of modern-day communication, allowing people all over the world to connect and create, share and consume content. It is a platform that has enabled individuals, businesses, and organizations to communicate, collaborate, and engage with others in ways that were previously not possible. Nwabueze (2015) explained that the basic concept of social media is to provide a platform for people to share information, ideas, and opinions. It is a platform designed to be interactive, allowing users to create personal profiles, share content, and engage with others through comments, likes, and shares.

McQuail (2006) noted that what makes social media distinct from the old media is its interconnectedness, accessibility to individual users as senders and receivers interactivity, multiplicity and ubiquity. What social media has done is to allow users create both personal and professional connections, building networks and communities around shared interests. Mugira (2009) described social media as communication activities made possible by the digital revolution and distinguished from the traditional mass media. It is a media that has widened the horizon of the mainstream media. Asemah (2011) contends that the social media are products of ICT feats which tends to converge media activities and activities. He noted that the

social media like the mainstream media informs, educates and entertains using textual, video and audio contents.

As explained by Asemah (2011), the functions of social media can be broadly categorized into three main areas:

- i. Communication - Social media platforms allow users to communicate with each other in real-time, regardless of geographical location. Through text posts, images, videos, and live chat, social media platforms enable people to connect seamlessly with others.
- ii. Content sharing - Social media platforms allow users to share text, images, videos, and other multimedia content easily. This content can be viewed, liked, and shared by others, creating a viral effect, and helping to amplify the reach and impact of the content.
- iii. Collaboration - Social media platforms enable users to collaborate with each other on a global scale, removing the barriers of time and distance. From project collaboration to event planning, social media has transformed the way we work together.

Akpoveta (2019) explained that aside from informing and sharing contents, social media is also used for marketing and advertising purposes. With businesses using social media platforms to reach their target audience, build brand awareness, and promote products and services, social media users use the platforms to promote branded content and products to their followers, creating new forms of influencer marketing. Akpoveta(2019) also stated that social media platforms have

become an essential tool for activism, social change, and political engagement. It allows individuals and groups to raise awareness on important causes, gather support, advocate for change, and hold those in power accountable. Conclusively, social media is a powerful tool that has revolutionized communication and connectedness. With its functions ranging from communication, content sharing to collaboration, social media has become an integral part of modern-day life.

There are different types of social media platforms and it can be overwhelming to choose the right one. However, understanding what each platform offers and how it can best serve one's needs can help in making the right decision. As explained by Asemah (2022), the following are some of the most popular forms of social media:

- i. Social Networking sites:** These sites are designed to connect individuals with others who have similar interests, backgrounds, or social statuses. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Google+ are just a few examples of popular social networking sites. Users can create a profile, share information about themselves, and connect with others by adding them as friends.
- ii. Microblogs:** These are social platforms that allow users to share short and concise messages with their followers. The most popular microblogging site is Twitter, where users can send out tweets that are limited to 280 characters. Other microblogs include Tumblr and Plurk.
- iii. Photo and Video-sharing platforms:** These platforms are used to share visual content, such as photos and videos. Instagram, Snapchat, and YouTube are some

popular examples of photo and video-sharing platforms. On these platforms, users can follow others, like, and comment on their posts.

- iv. **Discussion forums and message boards:** These are online platforms where users can discuss a particular topic, share information, and engage in conversations. Reddit and Quora are two popular platforms where users can ask and answer questions, and engage in discussions with others who share their interests.
- v. **Blogging platforms:** These platforms have been around a long time, and they are often used by individuals or businesses to share long-form content on a regular basis. WordPress, Blogger, and Medium are just a few examples of popular blogging platforms.
- vi. **Social Commerce:** Social commerce is a form of social media that involves buying and selling products through social media platforms. Examples of social commerce sites include Etsy, Depop, and Facebook Marketplace.

### 2.2.3. Attitude

Attitude is a complex concept that plays a crucial role in shaping our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. It refers to our overall evaluation or opinion of a particular person, object, or situation, and can be positive, negative, or neutral. It is influenced by various factors such as our beliefs, values, experiences, and social norms (Sanga, 2017).

The concept of attitude has been studied and analyzed by various fields of study, including psychology, sociology, and communication. As explained by

Ukeji (2005) in psychology, attitude is viewed as a learned behavior that is shaped by our experiences and interactions with the environment. It is seen as a way of organizing and categorizing information, and can influence our perception, motivation, and behavior. In sociology, Ukeji (2015) noted that attitude is viewed as a social construct that is shaped by cultural norms and values. It is seen as a way of expressing and reinforcing social identity and belonging, and can influence our interactions with others and our social roles and responsibilities.

In communication, Hassan (2017) explained that attitude is viewed as a key factor in persuasive messaging and behavior change. It is seen as a way of framing and presenting information in a way that is appealing and convincing to the audience, and can influence their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. The importance of attitude in our daily lives cannot be overstated. It can influence our relationships, our decision-making, and our overall well-being. Positive attitudes can lead to better mental and physical health, improved relationships, and greater success in personal and professional endeavors. Negative attitudes, on the other hand, can lead to stress, conflict, and poor outcomes.

Unarguably, the attitude of a person plays a crucial role in their personal and professional life. It is the way a person perceives the world around them and how they respond to it. Attitude can be positive, negative or neutral, and it can have a significant impact on a person's success, happiness, and relationships. Hence, understanding the different types of attitude is essential to helping individuals maintain a positive and successful life. As outlined by Williams (2011), there are six main types of attitude that people pose:

- i. Positive Attitude:** A positive attitude is the most desirable and sought-after type of attitude. It involves having a hopeful, optimistic, and confident outlook towards life. Those with positive attitudes believe that they can overcome any challenge, and see opportunities in every situation.
- ii. Negative Attitude:** This type of attitude is quite the opposite of positive attitude, and it involves having a pessimistic, cynical, and defeatist outlook towards life. Those with negative attitudes see distasteful words and situations everywhere and believe that there is no hope and no point in trying.
- iii. Open-minded Attitude:** An open-minded attitude allows people to be receptive to new ideas, opinions, and perspectives. It is the state of being willing to learn and grow, and it enables individuals to be flexible and adaptable to change.
- iv. Closed-minded Attitude:** A closed-minded attitude is the opposite of an open-minded attitude, where an individual is rigid in their beliefs and unwilling to explore new ideas, opinions, or perspectives. It can lead to stagnation and the inability to adapt to change.
- v. Indifferent Attitude:** Indifferent attitude, also known as ‘whatever’ attitude, is characterized as a neutral or apathetic response to life situations. This type of attitude does not express any strong emotion or feeling and can be detrimental to relationships and progress.
- vi. Confused Attitude:** A confused attitude is when an individual is indecisive, uncertain or unclear about their feelings, opinions or beliefs. Such individuals can be easily led, have difficulty making decisions and are in a state of discomfort.

Wilson (2003) emphasized that overall, attitude shapes our perception of the world, and it can determine our ability to reach our goals, be happy, and have successful relationships. By understanding these different types of attitudes and recognizing them within ourselves, we can take steps to adopt a positive and open-minded attitude, leading us to success and happiness.

### **2.3. Opinion Review**

#### **2.3.1. Information Function of the Social Media**

Social media has revolutionized the way people interact, communicate, and share information in the digital age. With platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn, people can connect, share news, pictures, videos, and other media in real-time, and reach a global audience. Social media has become an essential tool for information sharing and gathering, enabling individuals, organizations, and businesses to stay informed, engaged, and connected (Mugira, 2019).

Dykeman (2008) contended that one of the primary ways social media promotes information sharing and gathering is by making news and updates readily available to a vast audience. With traditional media, it could take hours or even days for breaking news to reach people; but with social media, news travel at lightning speed. Individuals and news outlets can share updates instantly, making it easier for people to stay aware of current events. Through social media, individuals can access a wealth of information from various sources, making it easier to stay informed and educated about various topics. People can follow

experts, thought leaders, and organizations on social media, and receive updates on the latest news on a particular topic. For instance, if people are interested in technology or finance news, they can follow tech giants like Apple, Google, or Facebook, or financial news outlets like Bloomberg or The Wall Street Journal, and get the latest news, reports, and analysis.

Osatuyi (2013) stated that another way social media promotes information sharing is through the use of hashtags (#). Hashtags are a popular way of organizing content on social media, making it easier to find related posts, updates, and discussions. Users can search for hashtags related to their interests, follow specific topics, and join conversations on social media. For instance, if you are interested in environmental issues, you can search for #climateaction, or #sustainability on Twitter, and find posts and updates related to those topics. Social media also enables individuals to share their opinions, views, and experiences on various topics. Through social media, people can express their thoughts, ask questions, and engage in debates with others, making it a valuable tool for gathering information and perspectives from different people. Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Reddit also have communities and groups focused on specific topics, enabling users to join discussions, share information, and connect with like-minded individuals (Osatuyi, 2013).

Inyang and Offem (2014) emphasized that the information function of social media can be categorized into two main areas: the creation and sharing of information, and the consumption of information.

- **Creation and sharing of information:** The creation and sharing of information on social media has become increasingly common. Social media platforms have made it possible for anyone to become a content creator, whether they are individuals, businesses, or organizations. Users can create and share text posts, images, videos, and other multimedia content with their followers or the wider public. Through social media, people are better informed than ever before on issues such as politics, social justice, and health. Social media enables individuals and organizations to share important information with a vast audience, allowing them to engage with people in real-time. Social media also allows for targeted information sharing. Social media algorithms can be tailored to match specific interests or target demographics, making it possible to share information with specific groups of people. This customization is particularly useful for businesses and organizations to engage with their target audience more effectively.
- **Consumption of information:** The consumption of information on social media is also an important function. Social media is a source of news, entertainment, and educational content for many people. Users consume a variety of content ranging from short-form videos, memes, or news articles, all of which contribute to shaping their opinions and beliefs. Social media users can also engage in discussions on a variety of topics with other users, creating virtual communities around shared interests. Social media platforms provide a space for people to come together, share information,

and debate important issues. However, the information function of social media also comes with challenges. The sheer volume of information available on social media can make it difficult to distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources of information. The lack of gatekeeping mechanisms and accountability for content creators means that misinformation, disinformation, and fake news can spread rapidly.

Conclusively, the information function of social media has transformed the way we access and share information, bringing people from different parts of the world closer together. While social media presents unique opportunities for communication and information exchange, users should be cautious and take responsibility for the information they create and consume. Technologies such as fact-checking tools, and systems for labeling or removing misinformation, should be developed and widely used to mitigate the challenges of the information function of social media (Edegoh, Asemah and Ekanem, 2013).

### **2.3.2. Social Media and Attitude Formation**

The social platforms used by people to communicate thoughts and feelings have emerged as powerful tools of influence. They have transformed the way people think, feel, and behave by introducing new information, ideas and perspectives that would otherwise have remained inaccessible (Sezer, 2015).

Hasan (2017) explains that one of the most significant ways that social media shapes attitudes is through its ability to disseminate information quickly and easily. With just a few clicks, users can share articles, videos, and other content

with their networks, shaping the opinions of a broad audience. This has led to the rise of “viral” content that has the potential to reach millions of people within hours, with potentially significant implications for public opinion and policy. Another key way that social media influences attitudes is through its ability to facilitate conversations and discussions on a wide variety of topics. Users can engage in real-time debates with others from around the world, sharing their perspectives and exchanging ideas in a way that was once impossible. This has the potential to bring together people from diverse backgrounds and viewpoints, fostering dialogue and understanding while breaking down barriers and stereotypes.

Tess (2013) contended that another way through which social media influences attitudes is through the power of social proof. This refers to the tendency of people to follow the actions of others when they are not sure of what to do themselves. When people see their friends or family members posting opinions, content or products that they support, they are more likely to adopt a similar attitude. This is especially true in relation to products, brands, and services. When a product or service is seen to be popular or endorsed by people they know, they are more likely to believe in it and adopt it themselves. Another way social media influences attitudes is through its capacity to narrow one’s focus on specific topics. When people interact with social media, we are often exposed to a narrow selection of content and opinions that becomes our source of information. This can lead to the development of an attitude that is shaped by the information we engage with the most. For example, if a social media feed consistently presents people

with information about climate change, they might develop a stronger and more supportive attitude towards environmentalism (Agba, 2012).

Furthermore, another manner through which social media influences attitudes is through creating filter bubbles. Filter bubbles are the result of algorithms that tailor the content a user sees based on their past behavior and preferences. This means that when we engage with social media we are presented with a highly curated experience that reinforces our existing beliefs and attitudes. This can lead to the development of an "echo chamber" effect where our perspective is reinforced by exposure to a limited range of opinions and thoughts. Social media also invites comparison and competition between users. Users who have a large number of likes, followers or shares may elicit feelings of envy or resentment in those with fewer. This can lead to a negative attitude towards those users, or towards social media in general. Conversely, seeing others achieve success or happiness can have an uplifting influence on our attitudes (Edegoh, Asemah and Ekanem, 2013).

### **2.3.3. Influence of Social Media on Information Seeking Attitude of Students**

According to Edegoh, Asemah and Ekanem (2013), Social media has become an essential part of the undergraduate's life. It has become a platform where students can express themselves, seek information, and connect with others. Social media has changed the way the undergraduate perceives, searches, and analyses information.

Al-Gafri and Al-Badi (2016) argued that the first way social media has influenced the information seeking attitude of an undergraduate is the ease of access to information. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have simplified the process of searching for information. Students can now search for information on social media platforms instead of traditional sources such as textbooks and journals. Oliseh (2016) noted that social media has also made information seeking interactive as undergraduates can connect with experts, peers, and influencers for advice, recommendations, and opinions. Social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and Quora connect students to experts in their field of study. Interactive searching enhances the undergraduate's understanding of the information and its implications.

Balakrisnan and Gan (2016) emphasized that social media has made it possible for undergraduates to view diverse opinions about an issue. Traditional sources such as news articles and academic journals are not always unbiased. Social media platforms, on the other hand, provide an avenue for students to view multiple opinions and perspectives about an issue. Students can view opinions from their friends, family, and influencers without any intermediaries. Akpoveta (2016) pinpoints that social media has democratized information acquisition by breaking down barriers to information access. Undergraduates from developing countries can now access the same information as their peers from developed countries. Social media has become a tool for promoting inclusivity and equity in information access.

As explained by Bigot and Croutte (2014), while social media has many advantages, it is essential to note that not all information on social media platforms are accurate and reliable. Most undergraduates are unable to evaluate information critically to ensure that they acquire accurate and reliable information. Hence, their approach to learning and research, and how they consume and interpret information has been influenced negatively. The following, as explained by Bigot and Croutte (2014 )are some of the ways in which social media has negatively influenced the information seeking attitude of students.

- i. **Over-reliance on Social Media for Information:** The ease of access to information is one of the main reasons why social media has become such a popular source of information for students. However, relying too heavily on social media for information can lead to an incomplete or inaccurate understanding of a subject. Social media platforms are not always reliable, as anyone can post anything they want without verifying the accuracy of the information.
- ii. **Limited Research Skills:** Social media platforms are not designed for research purposes. They are designed for communication and information sharing. Therefore, students who rely on social media for research purposes may not develop the necessary research skills required for academic success. Research skills, such as critical thinking, analytical skills, and the ability to evaluate sources of information are critical in any academic setting.
- iii. **Echo Chamber Effect:** Social media platforms use algorithms to display content based on users' past behaviour, interests, and engagement. As a result, students

may be exposed to a limited perspective or a biased point of view. This creates an echo chamber effect, where students are only exposed to information that reinforces their pre-existing beliefs, and they may not be open to alternative viewpoints or new ideas.

- iv. **Distraction:** Social media platforms are designed to be addictive, and students who spend too much time on social media may be distracted from their academic work. Students may find themselves spending more time scrolling through their timelines, watching videos, or engaging in online debates, rather than focusing on their studies.

#### 2.4. Empirical Studies

Lawal, Bankole and Olalekan (2022) examined the influence of the use of social media on information seeking behaviour of undergraduates in Nigeria universities. The objective of the study was to find out the effect and impacts of social media on the information seeking behavior of students. The uses and gratification theory was adopted for the study. While in terms of the research method used, the survey research method was employed and copies of questionnaires were distributed to collect data for the study. As regards area of similarity, this current study of Lawal, Bankole and Olalekan (2022) adopted the survey research method and questionnaire to elicit responses from the respondents. Also, the scope of both studies are delimited to undergraduates of select universities in Nigeria. However, both this study and Lawal, Bankole and Olalekan (2022) differ in general objectives and theoretical framework. While the objectives

of this current study are to find out the social media platforms commonly used by students, their attitude towards the use of social media in seeking information and the purpose of social media usage, Lawal et al (2022) study specifically sought to investigate the impact and influence of social media use on the information seeking behavior of Nigeria students. In addition, this present study adopted the two step and information behaviour theory, while Lawal *et al's* (2022) study employed the uses and gratification theory. Findings of the study revealed that students often use social media to search for information and they do so because it tends to be a reliable source of information. Hence, the researcher recommended that efforts should be put in place to improve the information literacy level of students so as to prevent unconfirmed information they come across.

Hamid, Bukhari, Ravana and Norman (2016) examined the role of social media in information seeking behaviour of international students. The objectives of the study were to ascertain the information seeking behavior of foreign students, the functions of the social media and the information needs of foreign students. In terms of its theoretical framework, the information behavior theory was adopted, while the survey research design was used to gather data for the study. It is pertinent to note that this present study differs from Hamid *et al* in specific objectives. The specific objective of this study was to investigate the influence of social media on the information seeking attitudes of selected universities in Nigeria, while the specific objective of Hamid *et al* (2016) were to identify the role of social media on the information seeking behaviour of international students. Irrespective of the differences highlighted, both studies are similar in terms of the

theoretical framework adopted. Hamid *et al* (2016) and this current study adopted the information behavior theory as the theoretical framework to explain the information seeking behaviour of students on social media. In addition, both studies sought to elicit responses from undergraduates using the survey research design and questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. Findings of the study revealed that social media has forced a paradigm shift from using the library as a source of information as students now turn to social media to search for information. The findings of the study also revealed that social media has influenced the information seeking behavior of students. The researchers therefore recommended that social media should be used more by foreign students as it has helped them in overcoming academic challenges.

Uslu and Durak (2022) investigated the relationships between university student's information seeking strategies, social media specific epistemological beliefs, information literacy and personality traits. The objectives of the study were to ascertain the accuracy and reliability of social media and to evaluate the perception of students who use social media as a source of information. The survey research method was adopted and responses were gathered from 190 students using questionnaires. This present study and Uslu and Durak (2022) study differ in general objectives. Unlike the general objectives of this study which focuses on the influence of the social media on the desires of undergraduates, the usage of social media for information purposes and the attitudes of students towards information seeking on social media, Uslu and Durak (2022) study focus on the epistemological beliefs, perception and reliability of the social media as an

information seeking source. However, in terms of similarity, both this study and Uslu and Durak (2022) study adopted the survey research design and questionnaire as instruments to collect responses from the respondents. In addition, Uslu and Durak (2022) study is closely associated with this present study as they both adopted the two step flow theory. Findings of the study revealed that there is an existing relationship between epistemological beliefs and information seeking behavior of students. Findings also revealed that the opinion and personality traits of students influences the form of information they search on social media. The researchers therefore concluded that social media has played a major role in the e-learning environment and serves as a major source of information for students.

Based on the analysis done so far, it is important to state that there are gaps in knowledge and it is these gaps that this study seeks to cover. Hence, the social media platform used by students, the purpose for which the social media is used, influence and attitude of students towards the use of social media information seeking are areas of concern this study seeks to cover.

## **2.5. Theoretical Framework**

The media theory that is most suitable to explain the influence of social media on the information seeking attitude of students is the Two-Step Flow theory and Information behaviour theory.

The Two-Step Flow theory of mass communication was first proposed by sociologists Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet in the 1940s. This theory argues that mass media messages reach individuals indirectly through

opinion leaders who influence the attitudes and behaviours of their followers. The opinion leaders are individuals who are more informed and active in certain areas than the general population, and they are seen as more trustworthy and influential by their followers. This theory suggests that interpersonal communication plays a crucial role in the dissemination of information and the formation of attitudes and behaviors. The Two-Step Flow theory suggests that media messages first reach opinion leaders who then influence the attitudes and behaviors of their followers. In the context of social media, this theory suggests that students who are active on social media may serve as opinion leaders, sharing and disseminating information about topics they are interested in with their peers. Through this process, social media has the potential to influence how students seek and evaluate information. For example, if one student shares a news article on social media that is biased or contains inaccurate information, it may be taken as fact by others who trust their opinion. Alternatively, if a student shares information from a credible source, such as a scientific journal or reputable news outlet, it may lead others to seek out information from similar sources.

Thus, the Two-Step Flow theory was adopted in this study to show how social media allows students to engage in real-time conversations about topics they are interested in, which can be influential in shaping attitudes and behaviors. Overall, this theory is important in this study as it indicates how social media has the potential to influence the information seeking attitudes of students through the Two-Step Flow process, as they are both receivers and transmitters of information.

The Information Behaviour Theory (IBT) on the other hand was formulated by Thomas D. Wilson in 1981. The theory holds that individuals seek, use, and share information in their daily lives. According to Wilson (1981), information behaviour is a process in which individuals identify a need or a problem, seek information to address it, evaluate the information, select the appropriate information, use it, and finally, reflect on its effectiveness. The process of acquiring information is not linear and iterative, because one's experiences and learning may lead to a re-evaluation of the information need or problem.

McQuail (2010) in explaining IBT contends that social networks, interpersonal relationships, and other social contexts can influence the information-seeking process. As explained by McQuail (2010), information sharing can provide benefits for individuals and communities by creating a shared understanding of issues and discovering new solutions. McQuail (2010) held the opinion that information-seeking behaviour is influenced by a variety of personal, situational, and environmental factors. The personal factors include one's goals, values, attitudes, and abilities. Situational factors are the context in which the information is sought, including time constraints, available resources, and social norms. Environmental factors include the information sources available, the information systems, the information policies and regulations, and the information culture.

The Information Behaviour Theory (IBT) is applied in this study to to explain the information seeking behaviour of students on social media behaviour of students. Notably, Social media has become a popular source of information for

students, and understanding their behaviour in this context is critical for educators and librarians. Hence, this theory is suitable in this study as it reveals how personal factors such as the student's goals, values, attitudes, and abilities influence their information-seeking behaviour on social media. For instance, a student who values convenience may tend to use social media sources more often than traditional sources because it is easily accessible using their smartphones while, a student who values research and analysis may tend to use social media sources to gather different perspectives on a topic. Similarly, IBT is appropriate for this study as it indicates how situational and environmental factors like time constraints, available resources, information culture and social norms influence the information-seeking behavior of students on social media. A student may use social media to gather information quickly in a time-constrained environment, such as during an exam period. On the other hand, if social norms favour the use of traditional sources, such as academic journals, a student may be compelled to use those sources instead of social media.

In conclusion, IBT is relevant to this study as it helps in providing a valid understanding of students' information needs, their decision-making processes, the effectiveness of the sources they use, and how they interact with others online. This understanding can guide the development of effective information literacy programs and policies to help students and staff navigate the excessive flow of information on social media.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Preamble**

This chapter examines the research method employed in conducting this study. It is examined as such: Research Design, Population of the Study, Sample Size, Sampling Techniques, Instrument for Data Collection, Validity of Instrument, Reliability of Instrument, Method of Data collection and Method of Data analysis.

#### **3.2. Research Design**

The research design adopted in this study was the survey research design. Wimmer and Dominick (2004), explains that the survey research design is a type of research methodology used to collect data from individuals, communities or groups of people to understand their opinions, attitudes, behaviours, and experiences. It is an effective methodological approach used in collecting data that can be quantified and used to assess the relationship between variables. Thus, survey was used in evaluating the influence of social media on the information seeking attitude of undergraduate select universities in Edo State, Nigeria. The survey research design was used in this study because of its ability to elicit responses from respondents as it facilitates the findings and ensures that those chosen for the study represent the population.

The survey research is often conducted on a large scale, whereby the statistical analysis of the collected data can be generalized to a larger population.

Hence, it was more appropriate for this study since it can be used to collect data from the study participants.

### 3.3 Population of the Study

The population of the study was 60,350 which comprised of undergraduates of the University of Benin: 60,000 (estimated) 2021/2022 academic session and Glorious Vision University: 350 students, according to information obtained from the official website of UNIBEN Central Record Processing Unit and by the research assistant from the registry of Glorious Vision University, in the just concluded 2022/2023 academic session.

### 3.4. Sample Size

The sample size of this study was determined using the Taro Yamane formula. According to Asemah, Gujbawa, Ehareafo & Okpanachi (2022), to determine a sample from a population:

$$n = \frac{N}{[1 + N(e)^2]}$$

Where n = Sample

N = Population size

e = Error limit.

= 0.05

n = 60,350

N = 60,350

e<sup>2</sup> = 0.0025

= 60,350

- + (60,350 x 0.0025)

$$\frac{60,350}{[1 + 60,350 (0.0025)]}$$

$$n = \frac{60,350}{152} = 397$$

The sample size for this study is therefore 397

### **3.5. Sampling Technique**

The Multi stage sampling technique was used to select samples for the study. The procedure was appropriate for this study because the respondents were chosen in four stages using the simple random, stratified and systematic sampling procedure. The first stage involved a random sample of three faculties (Arts, Management sciences and social sciences) which are present in the University of Benin and Glorious Vision University. In the second stage, four departments: Mass communication, Business administration, Accounting and Public Administration were chosen from the selected faculties in UNIBEN and Glorious Vision University using the purposive sampling procedure. Mass communication and Accounting were chosen from the faculty of Arts and Management sciences and Social sciences in UNIBEN, while Public Administration and Business administration were selected from Glorious University. In the third stage, levels in the various schools were selected using the Stratified sampling technique: 85 respondents from the total sample size were selected from level 1, 2, 3 and 4 in Glorious Vision University, while 312 respondents from level 1 – 4 were stratified in the University of Benin. Finally, the researcher then selected the respondents randomly.

### **3.6. Instrument for Data Collection**

The instrument used to collect data from the study participants was the questionnaire. A 20 item questionnaire was constructed by the researcher to determine the influence of social media on the information seeking attitude of undergraduates of the University of Benin And Glorious University. The questionnaire was divided into two parts: Section A was used to gather data about the respondent's personal information like the age, gender, school, while section B was used to gather responses needed to answer the research questions.

### **3.7. Validity of the Research Instrument**

Wimmer and Dominick (2004) explains that Validity refers to the accuracy of the research instrument in measuring what it intends to measure, and whether the instrument adequately assesses the research question. In order to ascertain the validity of the research instrument, the questionnaire was given to the researcher's supervisor, lecturers in the department of mass communication and experts in the field of media studies for a thorough scrutiny and cross checking of the instrument to ensure that the questionnaire items are relevant to the study. Corrections made were effected to prepare the final copy of the questionnaire.

### **3.8. Reliability of Instrument**

To ascertain the reliability of the research instrument, a pilot study was conducted where 30 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to students of Ekehuan campus, University of Benin. The responses of those involved helped in determining the reliability of the research instrument. Responses also helped in further adjustment of the research instrument. Using the Pearson formula, the

result obtained from the pilot study was 0.8, which implies that it is good and the questionnaire can be used in the study.

### **3.9. Method of Data Collection**

A person-person method of administering questionnaire was adopted by the researcher to gather data for the study. This helped the researcher to get the right opinion or view of the subjects or respondents.

### **3.10. Method of Analysis**

The data collected were analysed in simple percentage and table presentation, while necessary explanations were given underneath each table for simple understanding.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

## 4.1 Preamble

This chapter presents and analyses the data collated through the questionnaire. A total of 397 copies of questionnaire were distributed and filled, making the sample size 397 after administering the questionnaire which accounts for a 100% return. This was because the method of administration was face-face and the researcher and research assistant waited for the student to fill the questionnaire and return them immediately. The details of the questionnaire are analyzed below using frequencies, percentages and tables for the presentation of data.

## 4.2 Data Presentation and Analysis

### SECTION A

This section covers the demography of respondents in the study

**Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Sex**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>No of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male.	181	46%
Female	216	54%
Total	397	100%

**Source: field survey 2023**

Table 1 implies that the study comprises both male and female respondents. However, the majority of the study participants were females.

**Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Age**

<b>Age</b>	<b>No of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
18 – 20	152	38.3%
21 – 29	220	55.4%
30 - 40	25	6.3%
41 and above	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: field survey 2023**

Table 2 indicates that the study is composed of youths from different age distributions. The data presented shows that the study participants are Gen- Z and Millennials who are well inclined with trends in modern communication and use of social media.

**Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Institution**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>No of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
UNIBEN	312	79%
Glorious Vision University	85	21%
<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: field survey 2023**

Table 3 indicated that the study is composed of 312 students from UNIBEN (79%) and 85 (21%) from Glorious Vision University. However, respondents from UNIBEN were more available to participate in the study.

**Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Department**

<b>Department</b>	<b>No of Respondents.</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
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Mass communication	201	51%
Accounting	55	14%
Business Admin.	86	22%
Public Admin.	55	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field survey 2023**

Table 4 indicates that respondents from various departments participated in the study. 201 (51%) respondents are in the department of mass communication, 55 (14%) were in accounting, 86 (22%) respondents are in Business Administration, while 55 (13%) respondents are in Fine Arts. This implies that respondents from the department of mass communication were more involved in the study.

**Table 5: Distribution of Respondents by level**

<b>Academic</b>	<b>No of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
100	55	14%
200	106	27%
300	99	25%
400	137	50%
<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: field survey 2023**

From the data presented in the table, it can be deduced that 55 (14%) respondents are in 100 level, 106 (27%) were from 200 level, 99 (25%) are in 300 level, while the remaining 137 (50%) are in 400 level. This shows that a majority

of the study participants are final year students of UNIBEN and Glorious Vision University.

## **SECTION B**

This section covers questions that provided psychographic data concerning the study from the respondents.

**Table 6: Social media platform used more often to search for information**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>No of Respondents.</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Facebook	178	45%
Whatsapp	19	5%
Twitter	161	41%
Quora	9	2%
Reddit	30	7%
Total	397	100%

**Source: Field survey 2023**

Table 6 reveals that a majority of the respondents use Facebook and twitter often to search for information. This indicates that Facebook and twitter are platforms people rely on to access information.

**Table 7: Regularity of using the social media**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>No of Respondents.</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Daily	325	82%
Weekly	72	18%
Bi-weekly	0	0%
Monthly	0	0%
Yearly	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field survey 2023**

Table 7 indicates that a greater (82%) percentage of the respondents use social media daily. This shows that the participants involved in this study are regular users of social media.

**Table 8: Social media platform which makes it easier to find information on topics of interest**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>No of Respondents.</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	167	42%
Agree	201	51%
Undecided	30	7%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field survey 2023**

Table 8 shows that the majority of the respondents affirmed that social media has made it easier for them to find information on interesting topics. This is indicated in the percentage of those who agreed (51%) and strongly agreed (42%) that they find topics that interest them easily on social media.

**Table 9: Information typically sought for on social media platforms**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>No of Respondents.</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Knowledge and learning	28	7%
Personal Development	167	42%
Social Connections	3	1%
Entertainment	199	50%
Political Activism	0	0%
Total	397	100%

**Source: Field survey 2023**

Table 9 reveals that a great proportion of the respondents seek entertainment and personal development information, more than other types of information on social media. This implies that the study participants are more interested in information that will entertain, as well as develop them personally.

**Table 10: Frequency at which social media is relied on as a primary source of information**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>No of Respondents.</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very often	187	47%
Often	101	25%
Can't tell	53	13%
Less often	30	8%
Not often	26	7%
Total	397	100%

**Source: Field survey 2023**

Table 10 indicates that the majority of the respondents agreed that they rely on social media as a primary source of information. This is revealed in the

percentage of participants who affirmed that they rely very often (47%) and often (25%) on the social media to obtain information

**Table 11: Social media has improved ability to seek out relevant information**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>No of Respondents.</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	97	24%
Agree	198	50%
Undecided	56	14%
Disagree	39	10%
Strongly disagree	7	2%
Total	397	100%

**Source: Field survey 2023**

From the table 11, it can be deduced that a greater proportion of the respondents involved in the study affirmed that social media has improved their ability to seek out relevant information. This is shown in the percentage (50%) of participants who agreed that social media has improved their ability.

**Table 12: Exposure to misinformation or fake news on social media platforms while seeking information**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>No of Respondents.</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	397	100%
No	0	0%
Total	397	100%

**Source: Field survey 2023**

Table 12 reveals that all 397 (100%) respondents agreed that they have encountered misinformation on social media platforms while seeking information.

This indicates that social media users usually encounter fake news and misinformation while searching for useful information on social platforms.

**Table 13: Discernment of accurate and inaccurate information on social media platforms**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>No of Respondents.</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Looking for credible sources	127	32%
Verify the information	201	51%
Check the date	0	0%
Evaluate the evidence presented	60	15%
Run a fact check	9	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field survey 2023**

Table 13 indicates that the majority of the study participants agreed that they verify information on social media to ascertain if it is accurate or inaccurate. This is further shown in the (51%) percentage of respondents who believe that they cross check information on social media platforms to discern its accuracy.

**Table 14: Extent at which peers influence information-seeking behavior on social media**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>No of Respondents.</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very high	101	25%
High	239	60%
Can't tell	6	2%
Low	51	13%
Very low	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field survey 2023**

Data presented in table 14 shows that a large percentage of the respondents agreed that their information seeking behavior on social media is influenced by their peers to a a high extent. This is shown in the percentage (60%) of participants who believe that the influence is high.

**Table 15: Social media has made it easier to find reliable sources of information.**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>No of Respondents.</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	0	0%
Agree	49	12%
Undecided	211	53%
Disagree	86	22%
Strongly disagree	51	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field survey 2023**

Table 15 shows that the majority of the respondents held a neutral position on social media being a reliable source of information. This implies that participants involved in this study are undecided on the reliability of social media being a source of veritable and reliable information.

**Table 16: Balancing the time spent on social media and the time spent on academic pursuits is difficult.**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>No of Respondents.</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agreed	102	26%
Agreed	198	50%
Undecided	51	12%
Disagree	39	10%
Strongly disagree	7	2%
Total	397	100%

**Source: Field survey 2023**

Table 16 indicates that 76% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively, that they find it difficult to balance the time they spend on social media and the time they spend on their academics. This implies that the social media interferes with the study time of the participants involved in the study.

**Table17: Distraction from academic pursuits by social media while seeking information**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>No of Respondents.</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	397	100%
No	0	0%
Total	397	100%

**Source: Field survey 2023**

Data presented in table 17 shows that all 397 (100%) respondents agreed that they have been distracted at a point in time by social media in their academic pursuits. This indicates that social media is a distraction to undergraduate students while searching for information.

**Table 18: Social media has improved engagement with academic material and information-seeking behavior**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>No of Respondents.</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	29	7%
Agree	42	11%
Undecided	31	8%
Disagree	170	43%
Strongly disagree	125	31%
Total	397	100%

**Source: Field survey 2023**

From the data presented in table 18, it can be deduced that a majority of the respondents believe that social media has not improved their engagement with academic material and information-seeking behavior. This is revealed in the percentage of participants who disagreed (43%) and strongly disagreed (31%), respectively.

**Table 19: Measures which can be taken to ensure that social media is used responsibly for seeking information**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>No of Respondents.</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Education and awareness	65	16%
Provide guidance on credible sources	97	24%
Encourage critical thinking	46	12%
Promote research thinking	189	48%
Monitor Social Media activity	0	0%
Total	397	100%

**Source: Field survey 2023**

Table 19 indicates that a large percentage of the respondents agreed that universities can promote research thinking as a measure to ensure that social media is used responsibly when seeking for information. This implies that the respondents believe that by encouraging the use of social media for research thinking, social platforms can be used properly to seek information.

**Table 20: Social media will continue to influence the attitudes and behaviour of undergraduates towards seeking information**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>No of Respondents.</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	129	32%
Agreed	201	51%
Undecided	18	5%
Disagree	49	12%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field survey 2023**

Table 20 shows that the majority of the respondents affirmed that social media will continue to influence the attitudes and behavior of undergraduates towards seeking information. This is revealed in the percentage of those who strongly agreed (32%) and agreed (51%) respectively on the influence of social media on the information seeking attitudes of undergraduates.

### **4.3 Discussion of Findings**

#### **Research Question One: Which social media platforms are used by undergraduates of the University of Benin and Glorious Vision University?**

Based on the data that has been presented and analyzed, findings of the study revealed that students often use facebook and twitter to access information and they use it on a daily basis. The findings also showed that the respondents agreed that social media makes it easy for them to find information on topics that interest them. The findings are depicted in tables 6, 7 and 8. Table 6 indicates that 178 (45%) respondents agreed that they use facebook more often to search for information, 19 (5%) depicks it is WhatsApp, 161 (41%) believe it is twitter, while 9 (2%) agreed that they use Quora to search for information. The remaining 30 (7%) respondents believe it is Reddit. Table 7 indicates that 325 (82%) respondents affirmed that they use social media daily, while 72 (18%) says it is weekly. Furthermore, table 8 shows that 201 (51%) respondents agreed that social media have made it easier for them to find topics that interest them, 167 (42%) strongly agreed, while 30 (7%) remained neutral. The findings are in direct consonance with the study conducted by Lawal, Bankole and Olalekan (2022) which revealed that students regularly use social media platforms to search for information, because they view them as repositories for knowledge.

#### **Research Question Two: To what extent do undergraduates of select universities use social media for information purposes?**

Findings from the study revealed that undergraduates of the University of Benin and Glorious Vision University seek more entertainment and personal

development information than other types of information on social media. The findings also indicated that the participants rely on social media as a primary source of information and that it has improved their ability to seek out relevant information. Also, the findings showed that undergraduates of UNIBEN and Glorious Vision University have encountered fake news and misinformation while searching for useful information on social media platforms. However, they usually verify information they encounter to ascertain its accuracy. The findings are depicted in tables 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13. Table 9 shows that 28 (7%) respondents agreed that knowledge and learning is a type of information they seek on social media platforms, 167 (42%) agreed that it is personal development information they seek, 3 (1%) says it is social connection, while 199 (50%) agreed that it is entertainment. Table 10 indicates that 187 (47%) of the respondents say that they rely on social media as a primary source of information very often, 101 (25%) agreed that it is often, 53 (13%) can't tell, while 30 (8%) says it is less often. The remaining 26 (7%) agreed that it is not often. In addition, Table 11 shows that 97 (24%) strongly agreed that social media has improved their ability to seek out relevant information, 198 (50%) agreed that social media has improved their ability to seek out relevant information, while 56 (14%) remained neutral. 39 (10%) disagreed, while 7 (2%) strongly disagreed. Table 12 reveals that all the respondents agreed that they have encountered misinformation on social media platforms while seeking information. This indicates that social media users usually encounter fake news and misinformation while searching for useful information on social platforms. Furthermore, table 13 indicates that 201 (51%) respondents

believe that they cross check information on social media platforms to discern its accuracy, 127 (32%) agreed that they look for credible sources, 60 (15%) says that they evaluate the evidence presented, while 9 (2%) says that they run a fact check.

The findings agree with the study conducted by Hamid, Bukhari, Ravana and Norman (2016) which noted that social media has forced a paradigm shift from using the library as a source of information, as students now turn to social media to search for information. The findings also agree with Uslu and Durak (2022) study which indicates that social media has played a major role in the e-learning environment and serves as a major source of information for students

**Research Question Three: How do social media influence the desire of undergraduates of select universities to seek information?**

Social media is capable of influencing the desire of undergraduate students. The findings showed that the social media interferes with the study time of students and that the respondents have been distracted at a point in time by the social media, in their academic pursuits. Also, the findings indicated that the information seeking behavior of students on social media is influenced by their peers to a high extent and that they are undecided on the social media being a reliable source of information. The findings are further reflected in Tables 14, 15, 16, and 17. Table 14 depicts that 101 (25%) respondents agreed that their information seeking behavior on social media is influenced by their peers to a very high extent, 239 (60%) shows it is high, 6 (2%) believe the influence is average, while 51 (13%) depict that it is very low. Also, table 15 indicates that 49 (12%) respondents agreed that social media is a reliable source of information. 211 (53%)

held a neutral position, 86 (22%) disagreed, while 51 (13%) strongly disagreed. Table 16 indicates that 102 (26%) respondents agreed that they find it difficult to balance the time they spend on social media and the time they spend on their academics. 198 (50%) agreed, 51 (12%) remained neutral, while 39 (10%) disagreed. The remaining 7 (2%) strongly disagreed. Finally, table 17 shows that all 397 (100%) respondents agreed that they have been distracted at a point in time by social media in their academic pursuits.

The findings align with the study conducted by Uru and Durak (2022) which indicated that there is an existing relationship between epistemological beliefs and information seeking behavior of students. Uru and Durak(2022) also noted that the opinion students have received in the past and their personality trait influences the form of information they search on social media. The findings also agree with the Two-Step Flow theory adopted in this study which agrees that social media allows students to engage in real-time conversations about topics they are interested in, which can be influential in shaping their attitudes and behaviours.

**Research Question Four: What attitudes do undergraduates of selected universities have towards information seeking as a result of social media usage?**

The findings show that the respondents agreed that social media has not improved their engagement with academic material and information-seeking behavior. The findings also show that undergraduate students involved in the study believe that universities can promote research thinking as a measure to ensure that social media is used responsibly when seeking for information. Also, findings of

the study indicate that social media has influenced and will continue to influence the attitudes and behavior of undergraduates towards seeking information. Data presented in tables 18, 19 and 20 provided answers to this question. A cursory look at data presented in table 18 shows that 29 (7%) respondents strongly agreed that social media has improved their engagement with academic material and information-seeking behavior. 42 (11%) agreed, 31 (8%) were neutral, while 170 (43%) disagreed. The remaining 125 (31%) strongly disagreed. Table 19 indicates that 65 (16%) respondents agreed that universities can education and awareness as a measure to ensure that social media is used responsibly when seeking for information, 97 (24%) agreed that it is by providing guidance on credible sources, 46 (12%) believe it is through critical thinking, while the remaining 189 (48%) agreed that it is through the promotion of research thinking. In addition, Table 20 shows that 129 respondents strongly agreed (32%) and agreed (51%) respectively that social media will continue to influence the attitudes and behaviour of undergraduates towards seeking information. 18 (5%) were neutral, while the remaining 49 (12%) disagreed.

The findings align with the study conducted by Hamid, Bukhari, Ravana and Norman (2016) where they noted that social media should be used more by students in research as it has helped them in overcoming academic challenges. The findings also agree with the thoughts of Lawal, Bankole and Olalekan (2022) where they noted that measures should be put in place to improve the information literacy level of students while using social media. The findings also agree with the Information Behavior Theory (IBT) applied in this study, which seeks to

provide an understanding of the influence of social media on the information-seeking behaviour of students

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Summary

The study seeks to investigate the influence of Social media usage on information seeking attitudes of undergraduates in select universities of Edo State. The study was carried out using the survey research technique and the instrument used to gather data for the study was the questionnaire. The following were the findings of the study based on the data gathered:

- I. Undergraduates of University of Benin and Glorious Vision University often use facebook (45%) and twitter (41%) to access information
- II. Social media makes it easy for the respondents (93%) to find information on topics that interest them.
- III. Undergraduates of the University of Benin and Glorious Vision University seek more entertainment (50%) and personal development information (42%) than other types of information on social media.
- IV. Participants of the study (72%) rely on social media as a primary source of information and it has improved their ability to seek out relevant information.
- V. All 397 (100%) respondents of UNIBEN and Glorious Vision university have encountered fake news and misinformation while searching for useful

information on social media platforms. However, they verify information they encounter to ascertain its accuracy.

- VI. The respondents (100%) agreed that the social media interferes with their study time and they have been distracted severally by the social media in their academic pursuits.
- VII. The information seeking behavior of students on social media is influenced by their peers to a high extent (60%).
- VIII. The respondents are undecided on social media being a reliable source of information.
- IX. 83% of the respondents agreed that social media has influenced and will continue to influence the attitudes and behavior of undergraduates towards seeking information.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

We are witnessing an evolution of a universal interconnected network and social media have continued to cause massive changes and development in the world today, as it is capable of influencing attitude and behaviour. It is due to its functionality that social media can be called a useful servant or master.

From the above, this study therefore concludes that social media will continue to influence the attitudes and behavior of undergraduates toward seeking information. This is anchored on the findings which indicate that undergraduates believe the social media have improved their ability to seek out relevant

information and that they rely on it as a primary source of information. And although, fake news, misinformation and lack of students' engagement with academic materials are major issues which affect their information-seeking behavior, universities can promote research thinking as a measure to ensure that social media are used responsibly when seeking for information.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were given:

- i. Management of Universities can promote research thinking as a measure to ensure that social media are used responsibly when seeking for information.
- ii. Since it has been identified that students encounter fake news and misinformation when searching for information online, management of tertiary institutions should educate students on how to identify fake information by providing guidance.
- iii. Lecturers should encourage students to use social media platforms like Quora and Reddit when seeking information and academic materials to use in their course work.
- iv. Students and youth should use social media for things that are productive and will contribute to their knowledge, personal, mental and social development. They should not use it only for entertainment and gossip only.
- v. Since it has been noted that social media interferes with the study time of students and acts as a distraction, traditional sources of obtaining information like the library should enhance acquisition.

#### 5.4 Contribution to Knowledge and Suggestion for Further Studies

This study has contributed to knowledge by providing great insight on the influence of social media on the information seeking behaviour of undergraduates. Findings had shown that over 80% of students seek information on social media for different purposes and social media serve as a primary source of relevant information be it knowledge or entertainment.

Hence, the researcher suggests that further studies can be done on a larger scope with the following topics:

1. The impact of broadcast media on the credibility and reliability of information sources for undergraduates students of tertiary institutions.
2. Audience perception of the role of social media in shaping information seeking behaviour in southern states of Nigeria.
3. An evaluation on the relationship between social media use and critical assessment skills of students in tertiary institutions.

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**APPENDIX**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE**

Department of Mass Communication  
University of Benin,  
Benin City,  
Edo State.  
May 5<sup>th</sup> 2023

Dear Respondents,

**REQUEST FOR COMPLETION OF QUESTIONNAIRE**

I am an M.A student of Mass communication, University of Benin conducting a research titled “Influence of social media on the information seeking behavior of Undergraduates of selected universities in Edo state, Nigeria.” Kindly answer the under listed questions and be rest assured of your anonymity, since the information is strictly for academic purpose.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

**Linda Kuku**

## SECTION

### Demographic Variables of Respondents

1. Sex: Male [ ] Female [ ]
2. Age category: 18 - 20 [ ] 21 – 29 [ ]; 30 – 40 [ ]; 40 and above [ ]
3. Institution:
  - (a) University of Benin, UNIBEN [ ]
  - (b) Glorious University [ ]
4. Department (a) Mass communication (b) Theater art (c) Fine Arts,
5. Level: 100 [ ]; 200 [ ]; 300 [ ]; 400 [ ]

## SECTION B

Instruction: Please tick the most correct option that aligns with your view (√)

6. Which of this social media platform do you use more often to search for information (a) Facebook (b) WhatsApp (c) twitter (d) Quora (e) Reddit
7. Regularity of using the social media (a) daily (b) weekly (c) bi weekly (d) monthly (e) yearly
8. Social media has made it easier for me to find information on topics that interest me. Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree
9. What types of information do you typically seek on social media platforms?
  - (a) Knowledge and learning (b) personal development (c) social connections (d) entertainment (e) political activism
10. How often do you rely on social media as a primary source of information? (a) Very often (b) often (c) can't tell (d) less often (e) not often
11. Do you agree that social media has improved your ability to seek out relevant information? Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree
12. Have you ever encountered any misinformation or fake news on social media platforms while seeking information? (a) Yes (b) no
13. How do you discern between accurate and inaccurate information on social media platforms? (a) Looking for credible sources (b) verify the information (c) check the date (d) evaluate the evidence presented (e) run a fact check
14. To what extent do your peers influence your information-seeking behavior on social media? (a) Very high (b) high (c) can't tell (d) low (e) very low
15. Social media has made it easier to find reliable sources of information. Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree

16. Balancing the time spent on social media and the time spent on academic pursuits is difficult. Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree
17. Have you ever been distracted from academic pursuits by social media while seeking information? (a) Yes (b) no
18. Do you agree that social media has improved your engagement with academic material and information-seeking behavior? Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree
19. What measures do you think universities should take to ensure that social media is used responsibly for seeking information? (a) Education and awareness (b) provide guidance on credible source (c) encourage critical thinking (d) promote research thinking (e) monitor social media activity
20. Social media will continue to influence the attitudes and behavior of undergraduates towards seeking information. Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree