
**Assessing the Impact of social media on Mainstream Media: A Study of Jay
FM 101.9 Jos**

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of social media on mainstream broadcasting, using Jay FM 101.9 Jos as a case study. The primary objective is to examine how social media platforms have influenced audience engagement practices and the station's overall business model. A survey research design was employed, utilizing an online questionnaire administered to all 42 staff members of Jay FM 101.9, who constituted the study population. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions and percentage tables. Findings reveal that social media has significantly reshaped audience interaction, content dissemination, and feedback mechanisms, leading to both challenges and opportunities for traditional broadcast operations. The study concludes that while social media has partially contributed to the station's business sustainability, its integration remains limited by resource constraints and strategic adaptation. Therefore, the study recommends the development of diversified digital business models to strengthen operational efficiency and ensure long-term competitiveness within Nigeria's evolving media landscape.

Keywords: *Audience Engagement; Broadcasting; Convergence; Mainstream Media; Social Media*

Introduction

Many studied literatures have it that social media had been the most embraced platform for news dissemination in various societies across the globe. Mutsvairo, Columbus & Leijendekker (2017) affirm the statement when they state that, “the rise of digitally networked technologies is reshaping reporting across the African continent with social media platforms enabling new forms of publishing, receiving, and discussing stories”. This technology was and is restructuring the flow of information in the media space with the newer tools of communication. Greenwood and Thomas (2017) contend that the proliferation of cameras on cell phones and access to high-quality cameras has increased the ability of average citizens to capture and share photographs and video aligning to the fore of citizen journalism. This advanced technology thence avail every individual who owns the tool to disseminate information (verified or unverified) to the masses at the speed of a click.

However, this advance in technology further lend credence to Hatcher, (2017) statement when he notes that “social media has several positive impacts on society through diverse social space such as Messaging on social media sites which can lead to face-to-face interactions when plans are made via the sites”. To this end, Politicians, celebrity or public figure have employed the service of the social space through public relations (licensed or unlicensed) officers to reach out to followers and to maintain popularity and acceptance. It has also blurred the gap of loneliness of citizens who are socially isolated. Social media allows for quick diffusion of public health and safety information during events. Social media can help disarm social stigmas like anxiety or depression. Crowd sourcing on social media allows people to attain a goal, empowering users to achieve positive change. Social media provides academic research to a wider audience, which allows people to get previously inaccessible educational resources. Social media sites also help to improve quality well-being by providing users with a large social group creating an irresistible effect.

According to Coe (2016), “the way people absorb and communicate information and news online has drastically changed since the birth of social media. However, traditional media is no longer a one-way avenue of communication, as long as, readers, viewers and consumers can participate in the conversation and contribute to the influence of news in the society”. Social media also allows news to be accessed in real time. If something very important happens, the news picks it up with utmost immediacy. In total, social media have meditated the world into one small circle when connectedness is the value for its use.

Mutsvairo, Columbus, & Leijendekker (2014) assert that “the spread of Internet and mobile telephony has led to the current form of journalism referred to as citizen journalism”. This term, according to these scholars, it is used to denote non-

professional, amateur news to the public where reporters are 'incidental journalists' who happen to witness and capture recent events and capture as it happens as against the mainstream media.

The mainstream media, which was the centre page of dissemination of verified information has undergone transformation with social media taking the lead. Downing (2023) affirms the statement when he posits that “the use of traditional media to communicate and interact with citizens is undergoing a change. With the dominant use of mainstream media such as television, radio, newspapers, and other print publications, governments can design “communication packages” to portray their positive sides. This statement further explains the major setbacks and reasons why social media has an advantage over the mainstream media. With the coming of social media, almost everyone can disseminate information with evidence about public officials or celebrities who act in an inhuman manner. This emergence of social media has taken not just the government by surprise, but all personalities as it struggles to “design” its “communication packages” consistently in both mainstream and [new media](#) channels. Public officials and personalities have pledged to listen to all different views from all media channels. They now need to develop stronger communication and interpersonal skills, as they must articulate their own thoughts and views directly through social media channels, without the protection of censorship. Ministers, politicians, and government officials to be precise are now facing a situation where they need to answer citizens' questions directly and face their scrutiny though not limited to the ones mentioned alone.

Statement of the Problem

The rapid evolution of communication technology has fundamentally transformed the dynamics of media production, distribution, and audience engagement, posing significant challenges to conventional broadcasting in Nigeria. For stations like Jay FM 101.9 Jos, the rise of social media platforms has redefined the competitive landscape, compelling traditional media to rethink their operational strategies and audience relations. Despite its growing popularity in the North-Central region, Jay FM faces increasing pressure to sustain audience attention and advertising revenue in a media environment dominated by real-time online content and user-generated narratives. While social media has created new opportunities for immediacy, participation, and feedback, it has also blurred the boundaries between professional journalism and citizen reporting. This shift has eroded the traditional gatekeeping role of journalists, allowing unverified information and trending hashtags to shape public discourse ahead of mainstream coverage. Yet, empirical evidence on how these changes specifically affect Jay FM's audience engagement, content strategy, and business sustainability remains limited. The absence of systematic data on changes in listenership patterns, digital audience behavior, or revenue shifts creates a gap in understanding the extent to which social media has disrupted or enhanced Jay FM's operations. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate

the impact of social media on Jay FM 101.9 Jos, examining how digital platforms influence its communication practices, audience interaction, and long-term viability within Nigeria's rapidly converging media ecosystem.

Research questions

1. How has the rise of social media affect the operation of Jay FM S101.9 Jos?
2. To what extent has social media influenced the way Jay FM 101.9 Jos engages with its audience?
3. What is the implication of social media on the business model and revenue streams of Jay FM 101.9 Jos?

Literature Review

The literature on media convergence and digital communication underscores a profound transformation in how journalists and audiences interact within contemporary news ecosystems. This section reviews key scholarly perspectives on the intersection between social media and mainstream journalism, emphasising how these platforms reshape audience engagement, professional practices, and institutional credibility. By situating these debates within the Nigerian media context, the review identifies theoretical and empirical gaps that justify the present study.

Conceptualizing Convergence, Audience Engagement, and Mainstream Media

The increasing fusion of digital and traditional media, known as media convergence, has redefined the operations of journalism and audience engagement in the 21st century. Convergence refers to the blending of media platforms, technologies, and content practices, enabling audiences to consume, interact with, and even co-create information across multiple channels (Jenkins, 2020). Audience engagement, in this context, extends beyond passive consumption to include sharing, commenting, remixing, and producing content that shapes public discourse (Napoli, 2019). Meanwhile, mainstream media, encompassing established outlets such as radio, television, and newspapers, now coexist with participatory digital spaces that challenge their traditional role as information gatekeepers.

Social Media and the Transformation of Journalism

The proliferation of social media platforms such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and TikTok has fundamentally altered the relationship between journalists and their audiences. Once characterised by a one-way flow of information, journalism is now embedded in a participatory communication environment where users actively influence news agendas (Hermida, 2016; Greh, 2023). This transformation has been accelerated by real-time information flows,

user-generated content, and algorithmic curation that determine visibility and virality (Tandoc & Maitra, 2022).

Within the Nigerian context, this digital shift has reconfigured newsroom practices and audience interactions. Media organizations, including Jay FM 101.9 Jos, now rely on social media to distribute breaking news, crowdsource information, and sustain audience loyalty amid heightened competition. However, this convergence has also introduced challenges, particularly the spread of misinformation, loss of editorial control, and the struggle to maintain credibility in an attention-driven ecosystem (Ojebode & Adegbola, 2021).

The Role of Journalists in the Social Media Ecosystem

Although the core journalistic functions of information gathering, verification, and dissemination remain constant, the tools and expectations surrounding these practices have evolved. Social media provides journalists with broader access to sources, instant feedback, and new storytelling formats that integrate text, visuals, and multimedia (Dowdell, 2013; Ayish & Mellor, 2015). Yet, these same affordances increase the pressure to publish quickly, often at the expense of accuracy and ethical standards. Bull (2016) observes that many prominent figures now use social platforms as their primary channels for breaking news, forcing journalists to adapt to a cycle where stories are often first reported online and only later verified by mainstream outlets.

In Nigeria, journalists increasingly navigate this dual landscape, using social media to complement traditional reporting while competing with citizen journalists and influencers who shape narratives outside professional norms. This blurring of boundaries complicates trust and accountability, especially during crises when viral voices can both inform and mislead (Chiluwa & Adegbola, 2022).

Theoretical Framework

This study draws on the Uses and Gratifications Theory to interpret how both journalists and audiences engage with social and mainstream media. Originating from the works of Katz and Blumler (1974), the theory posits that media users are active participants who select channels and content to satisfy specific psychological and social needs. In this context, journalists turn to social media to fulfill professional gratifications such as sourcing information, self-promotion, and expanding audience reach, while audiences use it to seek immediacy, interactivity, and a sense of community (Ruggiero, 2019).

By applying Uses and Gratifications Theory, this study frames convergence not merely as a technological shift but as a reflection of evolving user motivations and institutional adaptations. It underscores how Jay FM's digital practices are shaped by the dual need to remain relevant to its audience and sustain its business model within Nigeria's hybrid media environment. Existing scholarship agrees that social media has revolutionised journalism, yet key tensions remain unresolved.

Scholars debate whether convergence enhances journalistic accountability through audience participation or undermines it through misinformation and content dilution (Hermida, 2016; Tandoc et al., 2021). In Nigeria, empirical studies on how local radio stations integrate social media into their operations remain sparse, particularly concerning audience engagement metrics, business sustainability, and editorial autonomy. Thus, there is a pressing need for localized research on how media organisations like Jay FM 101.9 Jos navigate these transformations, balancing immediacy with accuracy, engagement with ethics, and innovation with institutional integrity.

Methodology

The survey research design was used as the method of data collection on practicing journalist at Jay 101.9 FM Jos with the use of Google online questionnaire (due to the non-availability of staff at a go and the economic basis of the researcher to fully fund the study) as its instrument for data collection. Based on the nature of the research and low number of fully employed staff in JAY FM Jos, the population of the study involves all fully employed staff of staff of JAY FM Jos, which constitute the sample size from the six department (Engineering, News, Programs, Administrative/Accounting, ICT and Production) in Jay 101.9 FM. Data collated were analysed through descriptive statistics which involves simple percentages and tables of summary to ease summation of the research outcome.

Result and Analysis

The results and analysis section examines how the rise of social media has impacted Jay FM, focusing on three key themes: its effects on the station's operations, the extent to which it influences audience engagement, and the implications for the business model and revenue streams. By exploring these areas, the study highlights both the opportunities and challenges social media presents for the station's performance and sustainability.

Table 1: Effects of the Rise of Social Media on the Operations of Jay FM

Response category	Count	Percent
Expanded audience reach / increased engagement	14	33.3%
Improved news gathering / faster reporting	12	28.6%
Increased misinformation / verification burden	10	23.8%
No significant operational change	4	9.5%
Other (e.g., staff workload increase, need for new skills)	2	4.8%
Total	42	100%

The table indicates that most staff of Jay FM 101.9 (61.9%) perceives social media as having a positive operational effect (expanded reach or improved reporting). However, nearly a quarter (23.8%) report a negative operational

pressure, chiefly increased misinformation and verification workload, indicating mixed operational consequences. The significance of this data is that social media offers clear benefits, greater audience engagement and faster reporting, making it valuable for operational and strategic goals. However, the substantial concern about misinformation and verification (nearly a quarter of respondents) implies that adopting it without safeguards could compromise accuracy and credibility. In practice, this means Jay FM 101.9, Jos should leverage the efficiency and reach benefits while implementing strong verification processes, staff training, or editorial oversight to mitigate the risks.

Table 2: Extent of Social Media Influence on Audience Engagement at Jay FM

Likert response	Count	Percent
1 — Not at all	1	2.4%
2 — Small extent	4	9.5%
3 — Moderate extent	10	23.8%
4 — Significant	15	35.7%
5 — Very significant	12	28.6%
Total	42	100%

The Likert mean score: 3.79 (on 1–5 scale) indicates on average a between moderate and significant influence. Mode: 4 (Significant) showing that Jay FM 101.9 staff responses indicate that social media has substantially altered audience engagement practices at Jay FM; roughly 64.3% judge the influence to be significant or very significant, while only 11.9% see little or no influence. The data shows that most respondents perceive a meaningful impact, with 64% rating the influence as significant or very significant and a mean score of 3.79 indicating an overall effect between moderate and significant. Only a small minority (12%) felt the influence was minimal. This suggests that social media has a substantial effect on the respondents' context, implying that Jay FM 101.9 should recognise its importance and consider integrating or responding to it strategically, while still monitoring for variability in individual experiences.

Table 3: Implications of Social Media on the Business Model/Revenue Streams of Jay FM

Response category	Count	Percent
Increased costs (digital production, staffing, platform management)	11	26.2%
Revenue decreased (competition for attention; ad fragmentation)	9	21.4%
Revenue diversified (sponsorships, promos, digital campaigns)	10	23.8%
Revenue increased (successful digital monetization / online ads)	8	19.0%
No clear impact / still uncertain	4	9.5%
Total	42	100%

Responses in Table 3 point to a complex business picture; while about 42.8% report positive monetization/diversification outcomes, the largest single response (26.2%) highlights increased operational costs related to digital work. Together, these results suggest social media has created both new revenue channels and new cost centers, producing mixed net effects on sustainability. The data indicates that social media has notable implications for Jay FM 101.9 Jos's business model, with respondents highlighting both costs and revenue effects: 26% report increased operational costs, while 64% note impacts on revenue, 21% seeing decreases, 24% diversification, and 19% increases. A small portion (10%) remains uncertain. This suggests that social media significantly reshapes the station's financial landscape, presenting both opportunities for new revenue streams and risks of higher costs or fragmented income, implying that strategic investment, careful monetization, and cost management are essential for maximising benefits.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study reveal that social media has had a significant and multifaceted impact on Jay FM 101.9 Jos, corroborating insights from the literature on media convergence, digital communication, and the transformation of journalism. Most respondents (61.9%) reported positive operational effects such as expanded audience reach and faster news gathering, which aligns with studies emphasising how social media facilitates real-time news dissemination and enhances audience interaction (Baruah, 2012; Greenwood & Thomas, 2017; Muria, 2019). At the same time, nearly a quarter of respondents (23.8%) highlighted challenges related to misinformation and verification workload, reflecting concerns in the literature about the speed of digital news and the increased risk of inaccuracies in online reporting (Mwongela, 2015; Baker-Dowdell, 2013; Mutsvairo, Columbus, & Leijendekker, 2016). This demonstrates the dual nature of social media in journalism: offering operational efficiency while also introducing editorial and verification pressures.

Regarding audience engagement, the Likert-scale results (mean = 3.79; mode = 4) indicate a moderate-to-significant influence, with 64% of respondents rating the impact as significant or very significant. This supports the theoretical

framework of Uses and Gratifications Theory, which posits that audiences actively seek media to satisfy informational, social, and participatory needs (Katz & Blumler, 1974). The results suggest that Jay FM staff strategically use social media to enhance audience interaction, consistent with literature emphasizing interactivity, participatory engagement, and the reconfiguration of traditional top-down media models in the digital era (Coe, 2016; Heese & Pacelli, 2024; Ward, 2019). The survey methodology provided quantifiable evidence of these perceptions, complementing prior qualitative studies on audience-centered engagement practices in newsrooms (Mwongela, 2015; Muria, 2019).

The findings also reveal a complex picture for Jay FM's business model and revenue streams. While 42.8% of respondents reported positive outcomes such as revenue diversification through sponsorships, promotions, and digital campaigns, 26.2% cited increased operational costs, and 21% noted revenue decreases. This mirrors the literature on social media's transformative yet disruptive effects on traditional media economics (Swastiningsih, Aziz & Dharta, 2024; MCK, 2016; Prindle, 2020). These results suggest that while social media creates new monetization opportunities, it also imposes additional financial and resource pressures, underscoring the need for strategic planning, careful digital investment, and cost management to ensure sustainability.

Findings of the study confirms that social media significantly reshapes operations, audience engagement, and revenue at Jay FM 101.9 Jos. The findings both corroborate and extend existing literature, highlighting the dual benefits and challenges of digital media adoption (Baruah, 2012; Muria, 2019; Greenwood & Thomas, 2017). Interpreted through Uses and Gratifications Theory, the results demonstrate that both audiences and staff actively interact with social media to meet distinct informational and participatory needs, while the survey methodology effectively quantified these impacts, linking empirical evidence with theoretical and literature-based insights.

Conclusion

The study concludes that social media has significantly reshaped Jay FM 101.9 Jos, enhancing operations, audience engagement, and revenue opportunities while also introducing challenges such as misinformation, verification burdens, and increased costs. The findings, interpreted through Uses and Gratifications Theory, show that both staff and audiences actively use social media to meet informational and participatory needs, confirming insights from the literature on media convergence and digital journalism. While the station benefits from faster reporting, broader reach, and diversified monetization, strategic management, editorial oversight, and careful resource allocation are essential to mitigate risks. Overall, social media presents both opportunities and challenges, requiring a balanced approach to ensure sustainable growth and audience satisfaction.

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