

Preferred Platforms for User-Generated Content Participation among University Undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria

YUSUF, Abdulrazaq Laro
Kwara State University, Malete, Ilorin
Abdulrazaq.laroyusuf@kwasu.edu.ng,
08035778715

Plateau State University Journal of
Communication Studies (PLASUJOCS)
2026, Vol. 3(1)
©2026 by the Department of Mass
Communication, Plateau State University
Bokkos, Nigeria.
<http://journals.plasu.edu.ng/index.php/pjcs>

Abstract

The rapid expansion of digital technologies has reshaped communication and content creation, enabling widespread user-generated content (UGC) participation among young people. Anchored in the Uses and Gratification Theory, this study examined the preferred platforms for UGC participation among university undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was adopted, drawing a sample of 660 respondents from four purposively selected universities in Kwara State through a multistage sampling procedure combining stratified, purposive, and simple random sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analysed using descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, and rankings). Findings revealed that Instagram ($M = .89$) ranked as the most preferred platform for UGC participation, followed by blogs ($M = .84$), Twitter ($M = .82$), and websites ($M = .81$), while Facebook, email, podcasts, Wikipedia, and YouTube recorded comparatively lower preference scores, with YouTube ranking lowest ($M = .23$). The study concludes that undergraduates in Kwara State gravitate toward visually oriented, interactive platforms that offer immediacy, self-expression, and social feedback, consistent with the assumptions of the Uses and Gratification Theory. It recommends that higher education institutions integrate high-preference platforms into instructional and engagement strategies while promoting digital literacy to encourage more diversified platform use, including currently underutilised platforms such as YouTube and podcasts.

Keywords: user-generated content, social media platforms, platform preference, undergraduates, uses and gratification theory, Kwara State, Nigeria

Introduction

The structure of contemporary media has been turned upside down. While in the twentieth century, the audience was passive, seated on the receiving end of one-way media

broadcasting chain, in today's world, the internet user is in a completely different position: not only viewer, but commentator, editor, and, oftentimes, the author himself. This is the essence of user-generated content (UGC) — the large and unruly body of videos, pictures, blog posts, reviews, memes, podcasts, livestreaming and other content generated not by professionals who work within media organizations, but by ordinary people who have nothing more than smartphone and a data pack to tell the world. After reviewing two decades of converging definitions, Santos (2022) suggests considering UGC to be any text, data or action performed by digital users and disseminated through channels controlled by users themselves, having expressive or communicative function regardless of any professional gatekeepers. Drawing on media-environment and participatory-culture theories, Li (2025) describes the essential feature of the change in the way as the

reduction by the internet of technical and economic barriers that used to separate a small number of professional media content producers from all the rest, resulting in disappearance of the line dividing media producers from media consumers.

An idea which started as marginal activity of early bloggers and amateur videographers has, within just a couple of decades, developed into a characteristic feature of global communication process. Today, billions of people regularly share their stories, opinions, and creativity through numerous platforms — Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, X (formerly known as Twitter), Snapchat, and newcomers in constant rotation, each one being created to provide distinct features for participation. A platform optimized for production of fifteen second looping videos facilitates different creative processes than one which is based on long threads and photo galleries. This disparity in the design logic lies at the bottom of the phenomenon of platform preference: tendency of users to choose particular application for particular expressive purpose rather than evenly distribute their participation across the whole digital environment.

The Nigerian telecommunication infrastructure, historically plagued by poor power supply and inadequate coverage of rural areas, saw impressive improvements over last years. According to figures provided by the Nigerian Communications Commission, broadband penetration reached the half-a-century mark in November 2025, reaching 50.58 percent or almost 109.7 million active subscribers, as compared to 44.43 percent of a year ago (Techpoint Africa, 2025). At the same time, consumption of internet data by Nigerians increased significantly, with in excess of 1.24 million terabytes consumed in November 2025, surpassing the total amount of data consumed by the market three years ago (Techpoint Africa, 2025). Even earlier, industry experts considered Nigeria one of the most digitally active countries of the continent with tens of millions of active profiles on WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram (Statista, 2023; Techeconomy, 2023). This is the context within which Nigeria's youth, and university undergraduates in particular, became one of the continent's most prolific digital participants.

Empirical interest towards this population has increased accordingly to their prominence. Tambuwal, Haliru, and Al-

Ameen (2025), conducting survey among undergraduates from different tertiary institutions of Sokoto Metropolis, revealed WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram to be the most popular platforms, used for purposes of communication, entertainment and information gathering, and many students spend more than three hours of daily time using them. Egielewa, Unegbu, and Ekele (2021) confirm WhatsApp to be the most consistently preferred platform among Nigerian youth, including informal collaboration in academic activities, while Ogunlade and Fasae (2020), studying undergraduates from Obafemi Awolowo University, showed almost universal adoption of social media among undergraduates for socialization, information seeking and academic purposes. Synthesis of researches conducted within the framework of Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) by Du, Hashim, and Kamarudin (2023) demonstrates a crucial aspect of the current research: audiences are not accidental consumers of whatever media content they can access, but make purposeful and selective choices in order to satisfy their psychological, social and creative needs, an idea traced in the theory from its foundations to modern-day application to platforms like TikTok.

The appearance of short-form video platforms complicated the situation even further. An increasing popularity of TikTok among Nigerian youth has already attracted scholarly interest, with Adekoya (2021) describing ways in which Nigerian university students use the platform for identity development and self-representation, and Adeleke (2021) revealing impact of TikTok on university campus culture and youth trends in Nigeria. Internationally, Vizcaíno-Verdú and Abidin (2022) show how unique language of storytelling developed by TikTok challenges music challenges rewards participatory remixing rather than passive consumption, while Byers and Nansen (2024) remind that content creation is always a social, technical and increasingly professionalized activity. These international developments inevitably affect the situation in Nigeria, changing what it means to be online and, more specifically, which platform a particular undergraduate uses to participate in content creation process.

Kwara State, located on the border between Nigeria's northern and southern cultural regions and hosting federal, state and private universities, represents a favorable environment for study of these processes. Previous research conducted within the state

have already outlined the main patterns of undergraduate digital participation. According to Haroon-Sulyman (2020), conducting survey among lecturers and students from University of Ilorin and Al-Hikmah University, WhatsApp is the most used and trusted tool for teaching-and-learning communication, with almost all the respondents reporting their daily use of the platform for social and course-related communication. In similar research of Na'Allah and Malik (2026), involving over three thousand undergraduates from University of Ilorin and Kwara State University, participants were shown to be constantly exposed to the content circulating on these platforms, while their ability to critically evaluate it lags far behind. These local studies clearly demonstrate that Kwara State undergraduates are well-integrated into the culture of digital media, but not yet examined in detail is their platform preference for user-generated content participation.

This exact gap, between generalized social media usage and more deliberate and creative process of UGC participation, is the field which the current study is meant to fill. By focusing on the specific issue of platform preference for UGC participation, this

research will try to provide a more detailed and theoretically grounded view of the way in which Kwara State undergraduates navigate increasingly diverse and competitive digital environment.

Despite the abundance of researches on Nigerian undergraduates' social media habits, a puzzling vagueness still characterizes much of this literature: studies usually fail to distinguish between the general platform usage — logging in, scrolling, chatting, consuming news — and much more specific practice of content creation and participatory contribution. While WhatsApp is dominant as a messaging platform, and Facebook maintains its recognition rate, neither fact tells a researcher, an educator or policymaker which platform an undergraduate uses to upload her video essay, publish photo collection about campus life, livestream cultural event, post a review, blog article or piece of citizen journalism. The distinction is important because the practices of consumption and creation have different motivations, involve different skill sets, and have vastly different implications for positioning of young people within the digital public sphere.

This lack of distinction is aggravated by the spatial imbalance of the existing evidence

base. Studies focused on Kwara State mentioned above, valuable as they are, were devoted to broader questions of media and digital adoption for teaching and learning or media literacy and did not specifically target the problem of UGC participation. Moreover, several of them were conducted before the short-form video and livestreaming platforms which have redefined youth digital culture in the recent years gained their popularity. In addition, general statistics of platform popularity in Nigeria (Statista, 2023; Techeconomy, 2023; Techpoint Africa, 2025) are useful for market trends, but too coarse-grained to allow any meaningful conclusions regarding specific undergraduate population living in specific state. The result is a well-studied but poorly-understood study population — Kwara State university undergraduates.

Importance of filling this gap goes beyond purely academic considerations. Recent evidence shows that there are certain consequences, good and bad, associated with the way young Nigerians participate in digital platforms. Heavy social media engagement among students in Sokoto has been linked to disrupted sleep patterns by Aliyu, Musa, and Sani (2023); Ejoh, Okafor, and Nwankwo (2022) describe impact of social media use on

academic performance of Nigerian students. In a large-scale study conducted in Kwara State itself, Na'Allah and Malik (2026) show that undergraduates of Kwara State University and University of Ilorin are regularly exposed to disinformation, sensationalized and manipulated content circulating in the very platforms which they use daily, an observation linked to undeveloped digital media literacy skills. If platform preference defines not only consumption but also motivation to generate and share the content, then the knowledge of the preference becomes a necessary condition for any attempt to intervene in the process of youth participation in the digital public life.

Another challenge comes from the theoretical perspective offered by the U&G tradition. If, according to synthesis of Du, Hashim, and Kamarudin (2023), media users are goal-oriented agents selecting channels for satisfying certain needs rather than passive receivers of whatever reaches them, then it is likely — in fact, highly probable — that the preference of undergraduates for particular UGC platform is not random and uniform. Preference varies systematically across institutions, gender, academic discipline and level of study, aspects which have scarcely been studied by the Kwara State literature

concerned with broader questions. Without such a disaggregation, generalized claims about "preference of Kwara State undergraduates" risk simplifying a genuinely heterogeneous population.

This is the context of conceptual vagueness, geographic and temporal gaps in the evidence base and practical necessity of understanding youth digital participation in which the current study is formulated. Therefore, the main problem addressed in this research is the lack of focused empirical study of particular platforms preferred for user-generated content participation by university undergraduates of Kwara State, Nigeria and determinants of this preference.

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the preferred platforms for user-generated content participation among university undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Methodology

This study investigated the preferred platforms for user-generated content (UGC) participation among university undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria, adopting a descriptive survey design. This

design was considered appropriate because the study sought to describe an existing pattern of behaviour; platform preference rather than to manipulate or test the effect of any variable, and because it permitted the collection of standardised, quantifiable data from a large and dispersed student population (Siedlecki, 2020).

The population comprised undergraduates enrolled in universities across Kwara State, which currently hosts ten institutions spanning federal, state, and private ownership. Given the impracticality of surveying all ten institutions, the study was delimited to four universities purposively selected to preserve representation across each ownership category. From this delimited population, a sample of 660 respondents was drawn using a multistage sampling procedure: the ten universities were first stratified by ownership type; four institutions were then purposively selected as broadly representative of their respective categories; and individual respondents were finally selected within each institution using simple random sampling, giving every student an equal chance of inclusion.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher — the Uses and Gratifications of User-

Generated Content on Social Media Questionnaire (UGUGC-Q) — comprising sections on respondents' demographic characteristics, the UGC platforms accessible to them, their most preferred platform, the gratifications underlying that preference, the forms of content they most frequently produce, and the challenges they encounter. The instrument's face and content validity were established through expert review by specialists in communication and media studies, whose feedback informed revisions prior to final administration. Reliability was established through a pilot test administered to a sample with characteristics similar to the main study population; internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with a coefficient of 0.70 or above adopted as the threshold of acceptability (Zakariya, 2022).

The finalised questionnaire was administered directly to respondents with the assistance of trained research assistants, who guided participants through the instrument and clarified items where necessary. Participation was voluntary, and respondent anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout.

Data were analysed using descriptive statistics; frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations to summarise

platform accessibility, preference, content forms, and challenges, and inferential statistics, at a 0.05 significance level, to test relationships between platform preference, underlying gratifications, and demographic variables such as institution, gender, discipline, and level of study.

3.0 Literature Review

User-Generated Content in the Contemporary Digital Environment

User-generated content (UGC) has become a central component of contemporary digital communication because the expansion of interactive platforms has transformed ordinary internet users from predominantly content consumers into active participants in content production, circulation and interpretation. Unlike the traditional media environment in which professional journalists, broadcasters and media organisations exercised substantial control over content production and distribution, contemporary digital platforms enable individuals to produce and circulate text, photographs, videos, audio materials, reviews, comments and other forms of communicative content with relatively limited technological expertise. Santos and Duff (2022) argue that the concept of UGC

requires renewed conceptual attention because its meaning has expanded alongside the consolidation of social media and other participatory digital environments. Their multidisciplinary review demonstrates that UGC is not simply any material appearing online but involves content created through the active participation of users within digital environments.

The contemporary significance of UGC lies particularly in the participatory character of digital communication. Social networking platforms have substantially lowered the technical and economic barriers associated with content production, thereby allowing users to communicate with potentially large audiences without relying on traditional media gatekeepers. UGC may therefore include original posts, photographs, short-form videos, blogs, podcasts, comments, reviews, reposts with modifications, discussions and other forms of material produced or substantially contributed to by ordinary users. Pereira et al. (2021) similarly emphasise the participatory and collaborative character of user-generated material, noting that social-networking environments enable users to express themselves and interact through multiple content formats.

The relevance of UGC to university students is particularly important because undergraduates constitute a highly connected population whose everyday communication increasingly occurs within digital environments. Their participation may extend beyond interpersonal communication to include academic discussions, entertainment, personal expression, social commentary, advocacy, knowledge sharing and creative production. A study of ICT students at Kwara State University found widespread awareness of social networking and reported that students used social networks for purposes including academic activities, self-expression and establishing social connections (Moustapha, 2022). This suggests that UGC participation among university students should not be conceptualised exclusively as entertainment; rather, it encompasses diverse communicative and social practices.

The concept is therefore particularly relevant to the present study because the study is concerned not merely with whether undergraduates use social media but with where they prefer to participate in UGC activities. This distinction is important. Social-media use and UGC participation are related but conceptually different

phenomena. A student may use a platform primarily to consume content without producing or contributing to it. Conversely, a student may actively create posts, photographs, videos, comments, reviews or other materials on a particular platform. Consequently, understanding the preferred platforms for UGC participation requires attention to the relationship between users and the specific affordances of the platforms through which their content-creation activities occur.

User-Generated Content Participation and Digital Platforms

The emergence of multiple digital platforms has made platform selection an important dimension of UGC participation. Digital platforms differ considerably in their technical architecture, content formats, audience structures, interaction mechanisms, visibility systems and opportunities for user participation. These differences influence what users can create, how they can distribute it and how other users can respond. Xiang et al. (2022), for example, demonstrate that UGC within online communities is highly diverse in topic and form, reflecting the heterogeneous environments in which users create and exchange content.

Platform characteristics are consequently important to understanding user preference. A platform that makes visual production, rapid sharing and immediate interaction relatively easy may appeal to users whose primary interest is visual expression. Another platform may be more appropriate for users interested in extended written communication, professional networking, audio production or knowledge sharing. Zhang et al. (2022) similarly demonstrate that the design and social mechanisms of content-sharing platforms can influence users' contributions to UGC. Their study of social nudges shows that platform-level interventions can affect the production of user-generated material, reinforcing the proposition that participation is shaped not only by individual intentions but also by the environments in which participation takes place.

For the purpose of this study, platform preference refers to the degree to which university undergraduates favour particular digital platforms as channels for creating, posting, sharing or otherwise contributing user-generated material. Preference is therefore distinguished from simple awareness or access. A student may be aware of several platforms and have access to them

but still demonstrate a stronger preference for one platform because it provides greater convenience, familiarity, perceived audience reach, interaction, entertainment value or opportunities for self-expression.

This distinction is important because the proliferation of platforms does not necessarily produce uniform patterns of participation. The availability of several platforms creates a competitive digital environment in which users select platforms according to their perceived suitability for particular communicative purposes. Thus, the present study conceptualises preferred UGC platforms as a measurable dimension of undergraduate digital behaviour rather than treating all social-media platforms as functionally equivalent.

Platform Preference among University Undergraduates

University undergraduates constitute an important population for investigating platform preference because digital communication is deeply integrated into their social and academic lives. Research conducted in Nigeria has demonstrated that university students actively utilise social-media technologies for educational, social and communicative purposes. Aladesusi et al.

(2021), in their study of University of Ilorin undergraduates, found that social-media platforms were available to students and were frequently used to facilitate learning. The study further reported positive perceptions of social media as an instructional resource.

Similarly, Yahya et al. (2023) examined social-media utilisation among undergraduates at the University of Ilorin and demonstrated that social media had become an important component of students' everyday activities. Their study is particularly relevant to the present research because it provides empirical evidence from the same geographical setting while establishing that undergraduate students in Kwara State are active users of social-media technologies. However, the study focused broadly on social-media utilisation rather than specifically examining which platforms undergraduates prefer for UGC participation.

Evidence from Kwara State University also reinforces the importance of investigating the digital behaviour of students within the local context. Moustapha (2022) reported that the majority of ICT students studied at Kwara State University were familiar with social networks, had internet access and regularly used mobile phones for social networking. The study further identified academic

purposes, self-expression and social connection among the reasons students intentionally used social networks. The findings demonstrate the relevance of social platforms to students in Kwara State but do not establish whether particular platforms are preferred specifically for UGC activities.

The geographical scope of the present study is therefore important. Kwara State has a heterogeneous university environment comprising federal, state and private institutions. Current institutional listings identify universities including the University of Ilorin, Kwara State University, Al-Hikmah University, Landmark University, Summit University, Crown Hill University, Thomas Adewumi University, Ahman Pategi University, University of Offa and Muhammed Kamalud-Deen University. The inclusion of students across different university ownership structures provides an opportunity to examine platform preference beyond the experience of students from a single institution.

The relevance of the Kwara State context is further strengthened by the increasing penetration of internet-enabled communication in Nigeria. DataReportal (2025) reported approximately 107 million internet users in Nigeria at the beginning of

2025, representing an internet penetration rate of 45.4%, alongside 38.7 million social-media user identities. Although national figures should not be interpreted as direct measures of university-student behaviour, they provide evidence of the broader digital environment within which Nigerian undergraduates participate.

Consequently, the present study addresses a more specific question than whether university students use social media. It focuses on the platforms that undergraduates in Kwara State prefer for participating in UGC activities. This focus is necessary because a general measure of social-media use cannot adequately explain platform-specific participation.

Forms and Dimensions of UGC Participation among Undergraduates

UGC participation among university undergraduates may occur through several interconnected activities. These include creating original posts, uploading photographs and videos, writing blog entries, commenting on other users' content, sharing information, producing audio materials, contributing to online discussions and responding to other users' posts. Such participation reflects different levels of user

involvement. At the most basic level, a user may react to existing content; at a more active level, the user may create original material and distribute it to an audience.

The distinction between consumption and participation is particularly important when investigating platform preference. A student may spend considerable time watching videos on a platform without producing any content. Conversely, another student may use a platform less frequently but actively create posts, write articles, upload photographs or participate in discussions. Consequently, frequency of platform use alone cannot adequately establish preference for UGC participation.

The technical characteristics of platforms also influence the types of UGC that users can conveniently produce. Pereira et al. (2021) observe that contemporary social-networking environments support multiple forms of user-generated media, including visual and interactive formats. Xiang et al. (2022) similarly show that the diversity of UGC reflects the multiplicity of topics and forms available within online communities. Thus, platform preference can reasonably be understood as emerging from the interaction between individual motives and the

functional possibilities offered by different platforms.

For university undergraduates, these possibilities may include academic expression, peer communication, entertainment, identity construction, creativity and information dissemination. The platform that best accommodates a particular combination of these purposes may consequently become the student's preferred environment for UGC participation.

Uses and Gratifications as an Analytical Framework for Understanding Platform Preference

The present study is anchored in the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) because the theory provides an appropriate explanatory framework for understanding why users actively select particular media channels to satisfy specific communication and social needs. Rather than treating audiences as passive recipients of media messages, the uses-and-gratifications tradition conceptualises media users as active participants who make choices based on anticipated and experienced gratifications.

Contemporary research continues to demonstrate the relevance of this perspective to social-media studies. Owusu-Ansah et al.

(2021), for instance, applied a uses-and-gratifications perspective to examine social-media use among first-year university students in Ghana. Their study demonstrates the continuing usefulness of the framework for examining students' motivations and patterns of social-media use within higher education. Similarly, Abanyam et al. (2022) applied the uses-and-gratifications perspective to investigate social-media use among business-education students in Nigerian universities, demonstrating its applicability within the Nigerian higher-education environment.

The value of UGT to the present study lies not in treating the theory as a catalogue of media motives but in using it to explain platform choice. Undergraduate students encounter several competing platforms, each offering different possibilities for communication, entertainment, information exchange, self-expression and social interaction. From a uses-and-gratifications perspective, students are expected to favour platforms that they perceive as capable of satisfying their particular needs.

For example, a student whose primary gratification is visual self-expression may favour a platform that facilitates photographs and short videos, while a student seeking

extended intellectual expression may prefer blogging or other text-oriented environments. Similarly, students seeking rapid interaction may prefer platforms that provide immediate responses and high levels of social connectivity. The theory therefore provides a logical basis for examining the relationship between students' perceived needs and their preferred platforms for UGC participation.

Importantly, the theory is employed in this study as an interpretive framework rather than as an independent variable requiring separate measurement. The empirical focus remains the preferred platforms for UGC participation among university undergraduates. UGT helps explain why differences in platform preference may emerge, particularly where platforms provide different forms of gratification. This approach responds directly to the methodological concern that a theoretical framework should support interpretation and analysis rather than be presented as a detached classroom-style exposition.

Empirical Studies on Social-Media Use and UGC Participation among University Students

Recent empirical studies provide useful evidence concerning students' social-media

behaviour but also reveal the specificity of the research gap addressed by the present study. Owusu-Ansah et al. (2021) examined social-media use among first-year student groups at a Ghanaian public university through the lens of uses and gratifications. The study is relevant because it establishes that students' social-media behaviour can be examined in terms of the purposes and gratifications associated with particular digital practices.

In Nigeria, Abanyam et al. (2022) examined the uses and gratifications of social media among business-education students across Nigerian universities. Their findings demonstrate the continuing relevance of social media to Nigerian university students and provide evidence that students' use of these platforms can be understood through different gratification dimensions. Nevertheless, the study concentrated on the relationship between social-media gratifications and students' moral conduct rather than on their preferred platforms for UGC participation.

At the local level, Aladesusi et al. (2021) investigated the utilisation of social media to enhance learning among University of Ilorin undergraduates. The study found that social media was available and frequently used for

learning, indicating the embeddedness of social-media technologies in the university environment. Yahya et al. (2023) similarly investigated social-media utilisation among University of Ilorin undergraduates and recommended greater use of social media for educational purposes.

Moustapha (2022) provides another important local study by examining ICT students at Kwara State University. The findings showed high awareness of social networks, internet access and regular mobile-phone-based social networking. The study also identified academic use, self-expression and global friendship as important dimensions of students' social-network behaviour. While these findings establish the prevalence and purposes of social-media use among students in Kwara State, they do not specifically determine the ranking of platforms according to students' preference for UGC participation.

This distinction reveals an important empirical gap. Existing studies in the local context have largely examined social-media awareness, general utilisation, educational use, motivations or broader effects, whereas comparatively limited attention has been devoted to the specific platform preference of university undergraduates when engaging in

UGC activities. The present study therefore moves beyond the general question of whether students use social media to investigate where they prefer to create and participate in user-generated content.

Gap in the Literature

The reviewed literature demonstrates three major points. First, UGC has become an important component of contemporary digital communication because technological developments have enabled ordinary users to create, circulate and interact with digital content (Santos & Duff, 2022). Second, university students constitute an important population for examining digital participation because empirical studies have established substantial social-media engagement among students in Nigeria and other African higher-education contexts (Abanyam et al., 2022; Owusu-Ansah et al., 2021). Third, studies conducted in Kwara State, including research at the University of Ilorin and Kwara State University, confirm that university students actively use social-media technologies for educational, social and expressive purposes (Aladesusi et al., 2021; Moustapha, 2022; Yahya et al., 2023).

However, an important gap remains. The available local studies do not sufficiently

establish which specific digital platforms university undergraduates in Kwara State prefer for UGC participation. General social-media utilisation does not necessarily indicate platform preference, while studies of educational social-media use do not necessarily explain students' broader content-creation behaviour. Moreover, the rapid transformation of digital platforms makes platform-specific investigation particularly necessary because the communicative affordances and patterns of participation associated with platforms can change over time.

The present study therefore addresses this gap by examining preferred platforms for UGC participation among university undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria. In doing so, it contributes a geographically specific empirical perspective to the growing literature on UGC, social-media participation and student digital behaviour. The study is

particularly relevant because it considers undergraduates across different university contexts within Kwara State rather than restricting the investigation to a single institution.

Results and Data Analysis

RESULTS

Research Question One: What digital platforms are preferred by university undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria, for participating in user-generated content activities?

To answer the research question, respondents' preferences for different platforms for participating in user-generated content (UGC) activities were analysed using mean scores and standard deviations. The platforms were subsequently ranked according to their mean scores. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: *Preferred Platforms for User-Generated Content Participation among University Undergraduates in Kwara State*

Preferred Platform	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank
Instagram	582	0.8935	0.30878	1st
Blog	582	0.8351	0.37145	2nd
Twitter	576	0.8247	0.38059	3rd
Website	582	0.8144	0.38909	4th
Facebook	582	0.5412	0.49873	5th
Email	582	0.4502	0.49794	6th
Podcast	582	0.4467	0.49758	7th
Wikipedia	582	0.3522	0.47808	8th
YouTube	576	0.2274	0.41954	9th
Valid N (listwise)	570			

Source: Fieldwork, 2023.

The results in Table 1 show differences in respondents' preferences for platforms used for UGC participation. Instagram ranked first, recording the highest mean score of 0.8935 (SD = 0.30878). Blog ranked second with a mean score of 0.8351 (SD = 0.37145), followed by Twitter, which recorded a mean score of 0.8247 (SD = 0.38059). Website ranked fourth with a mean score of 0.8144 (SD = 0.38909).

The remaining platforms recorded lower mean scores. Facebook ranked fifth with a mean score of 0.5412 (SD = 0.49873), while Email ranked sixth with a mean score of

0.4502 (SD = 0.49794). Podcast ranked seventh with a mean score of 0.4467 (SD = 0.49758). Wikipedia ranked eighth with a mean score of 0.3522 (SD = 0.47808), while YouTube recorded the lowest mean score of 0.2274 (SD = 0.41954), ranking ninth.

The results indicate that Instagram had the highest level of preference among the platforms examined, whereas YouTube had the lowest. The ranking further shows that Instagram, blogs, Twitter and websites occupied the first four positions, while Facebook, email, podcasts, Wikipedia and

YouTube occupied the fifth to ninth positions, respectively.

Discussion

The finding that Instagram ranked first among the platforms preferred by university undergraduates in Kwara State for UGC participation indicates a strong orientation towards platforms that facilitate active and multimedia-based participation. The finding is consistent with the contemporary understanding of UGC as a form of digital participation in which users create, circulate and interact with different forms of content. Santos and Duff (2022) explain that the meaning of UGC has expanded alongside the development of social-media environments, where ordinary users increasingly participate in the production and circulation of digital content.

The high ranking of Instagram may be understood in relation to the platform's emphasis on visual and interactive content. Contemporary UGC increasingly incorporates photographs, videos and other multimedia forms, and social networking environments provide users with opportunities to produce and distribute such material. Pereira et al. (2021) similarly emphasise the participatory nature of social-

media environments and their capacity to facilitate user interaction and content creation. However, the present finding should be interpreted as an observed preference rather than evidence that Instagram's visual features directly caused the preference, since the study did not statistically examine the individual factors responsible for platform selection.

The second position occupied by blogs is also significant. It indicates that respondents' UGC participation was not restricted to highly visual social-networking platforms. Blogs provide opportunities for users to produce comparatively extended written material, express opinions, share experiences and disseminate information. The relatively high ranking of blogs therefore suggests that some undergraduates value platforms that provide opportunities for more elaborate forms of content production. This finding is compatible with the broader conceptualisation of UGC as encompassing diverse forms of user-created material rather than only short social-media posts (Santos & Duff, 2022).

Twitter and websites occupied the third and fourth positions, respectively. Their relatively high rankings suggest that respondents preferred a range of platforms

for UGC participation rather than a single platform type. Twitter provides opportunities for concise and rapidly distributed contributions, while websites can provide greater control over the organisation and presentation of content. Zhang et al. (2022) demonstrate that characteristics of social-network environments can influence users' contributions to online content. This provides support for considering platform characteristics when interpreting differences in UGC participation.

The fifth position occupied by Facebook is noteworthy because the platform recorded a substantially lower mean than Instagram, blogs, Twitter and websites. The finding should not, however, be interpreted as evidence that Facebook is generally unpopular among Nigerian university students. Rather, it indicates that Facebook was less preferred than the four higher-ranked platforms for UGC participation among the respondents in this study. This distinction is important because general social-media usage and preference for creating UGC are not necessarily the same phenomenon.

This finding is particularly relevant to empirical studies conducted in Kwara State. Yahya et al. (2023), in their study of

University of Ilorin undergraduates, found that students actively utilised social media for different purposes, including educational activities, entertainment and socialisation. Similarly, Moustapha (2022) found widespread awareness and use of social networks among ICT students at Kwara State University, with academic activities, self-expression and social connection identified among the purposes of social-network use. The present study extends these findings by focusing specifically on platform preference for UGC participation, rather than social-media utilisation generally.

Email and podcasts ranked sixth and seventh, respectively. Their relatively low positions suggest that respondents were less likely to identify these channels as preferred environments for the UGC activities examined. This may be related to differences in the primary communicative functions of these media. Email is largely oriented towards interpersonal and institutional communication, while podcasting generally requires a more specialised approach to audio content production. Nevertheless, the present study did not directly investigate the reasons for their lower rankings; therefore, such explanations should be regarded as possible

interpretations rather than established causal factors.

Wikipedia ranked eighth, with a mean of 0.3522, while YouTube ranked ninth with a mean of 0.2274. The low ranking of Wikipedia may be associated with its predominantly collaborative knowledge-production orientation, which differs from the personal expression and social interaction commonly associated with social-networking platforms. The low ranking of YouTube is particularly noteworthy because video-sharing platforms are important environments for contemporary UGC. Nevertheless, the result only demonstrates that YouTube was the least preferred of the nine platforms examined by these respondents. It should not be generalised to mean that Nigerian undergraduates generally do not use YouTube.

The findings can also be interpreted through the Uses and Gratifications perspective adopted in the study. The perspective regards media users as active participants who select media channels according to the needs and gratifications they expect from those channels. Owusu-Ansah et al. (2021) demonstrated the continuing usefulness of this perspective for understanding social-media use among university students, while

Abanyam et al. (2022) applied the perspective to social-media use among university students in Nigeria.

From this perspective, the variation in platform preference observed in the present study suggests that respondents may perceive different platforms as providing different opportunities for satisfying their communication, information, entertainment, interaction and self-expression needs. The prominence of Instagram may therefore reflect its perceived suitability for particular forms of participation, while the relatively high ranking of blogs, Twitter and websites may reflect different forms of communicative utility. However, because the present research question measured platform preference rather than individual motivations, the results cannot establish which specific gratification was responsible for each respondent's choice.

Overall, the finding contributes to the growing body of research on digital participation among university students by demonstrating that UGC participation should not be treated as a uniform social-media behaviour. Students may use several platforms, but their preference for participating in UGC varies substantially across platforms. The result also provides

local evidence from Kwara State, complementing previous research that has established the widespread use of social media among students at the University of Ilorin and Kwara State University (Moustapha, 2022; Yahya et al., 2023).

Conclusion

The study examined the preferred platforms for user-generated content participation among university undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria. The findings demonstrate a clear variation in platform preference among the respondents. Instagram emerged as the most preferred platform, followed by blogs, Twitter and websites. Facebook occupied the fifth position, while email, podcasts, Wikipedia and YouTube recorded comparatively lower levels of preference, with YouTube ranking last among the platforms examined.

The findings indicate that UGC participation among university undergraduates is characterised by differentiated platform preferences rather than uniform use of digital platforms. The result particularly highlights the prominence of Instagram and other platforms that provide opportunities for active content creation, communication and interaction.

The study therefore concludes that understanding undergraduate UGC participation requires attention not only to whether students use social media but also to which platforms they prefer for creating and participating in digital content. The findings provide context-specific evidence from universities in Kwara State and contribute to the understanding of changing patterns of digital participation among Nigerian undergraduates. They also provide empirical support for using the Uses and Gratifications perspective as an interpretive framework for understanding why users may favour particular digital environments for their communicative activities.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that:

1. Academic institutions should therefore respond to these demonstrated preferences while developing students' capacity to participate responsibly and effectively across multiple digital platforms.

References

- Adekoya, A. O. (2021). Exploring identity formation and expression on TikTok: A study of Nigerian university students. *Journal of Media and Communication Studies*, 13(4), 76–88.
- Adeleke, T. A. (2021). TikTok and youth culture: An examination of trends and influences on Nigerian university campuses. *Journal of African Studies and Development*, 13(2), 35–50.
- Adzovie, D. E., & Jibril, A. B. (2021). Social media and collaborative learning: Evidence from Nigerian universities. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 18(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-021-00245-6>
- Ainin, S., Jaafar, N. I., Parveen, F., & Moghavvemi, S. (2022). Factors influencing the use of social media by university students for academic purposes. *Computers & Education*, 178, Article 104395. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2021.104395>
- Aliyu, I. A., Musa, M. I., & Sani, U. A. (2023). Prevalence and effect of social media on sleep among students of higher institutions in Sokoto Metropolis, Sokoto State, Nigeria. *Annals of Medical and Health Sciences Research*. <https://www.amhsr.org/articles/prevalence-and-effect-of-social-media-on-sleep-among-students-of-higher-institutions-in-sokoto-metropolis-sokoto-state-nigeria>
- Byers, T., & Nansen, B. (2024). Understanding content creation: An exploration of the social, technical, and professional elements of video game content creation. In *Proceedings of the DiGRA 2024 Conference: Playgrounds*. Digital Games Research Association.
- Du, S., Hashim, N., & Kamarudin, S. (2023). Unraveling the social media experience: A captivating exploration of Uses and Gratifications Theory. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 13(12), 855–874. <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v13-i12/19895>

- Egielewa, P., Unegbu, V., & Ekele, R. (2021). WhatsApp usage and academic engagement among tertiary students in Edo State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*, 9(6), 1–14.
- Ejoh, N., Okafor, C., & Nwankwo, C. (2022). Effects of student's use of social media on academic performance: A case study of secondary school students in Onitsha. *Journal of Education, Society & Multiculturalism*, 3(1), 17–33. <https://doi.org/10.2478/jesm-2022-0002>
- Gerri, A. (2021). Social media and communication practices. [Publication details incomplete in the original source — journal/publisher name, volume, and page numbers to be supplied by the author.]
- Haroon-Sulyman, S. O. (2020). Adoption and use of social media for teaching and learning in two universities in North Central Nigeria. *African Journal of Management Information System*, 2(3), 1–15.
- Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons*, 53(1), 59–68. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003>
- Katz, E., Blumler, J. G., & Gurevitch, M. (1974). Uses and gratifications research. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 37(4), 509–523.
- Katz, E., Haas, H., & Gurevitch, M. (1973). On the use of the mass media for important things. *American Sociological Review*, 38(2), 164–181. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2094393>
- Krejcie, R. V., & Morgan, D. W. (1970). Determining sample size for research activities. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 30(3), 607–610.
- Kumar, V. (2016). User-generated content and social media: A review.
- Lesha, E. (2017). User-generated content on social networking sites and consumer-based brand equity.
- Leung, L. (2009). User-generated content on the internet: An examination of gratifications, civic engagement and

- psychological empowerment. *New Media & Society*, 11(8), 1327–1347. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444809341264>
- Li, H. (2025). UGC and participatory culture: The impact of internet content creation on the expression and dissemination of individual ideas. *Communications in Humanities Research*, 85, 114–122. <https://doi.org/10.54254/2753-7064/85/2025.19898>
- Muhammad, S., & Sebastian, K. (2019). User-generated content and consumer brand engagement in the 21st century.
- Na'Allah, H. B., & Malik, F. O. (2026). Media literacy and digital awareness as tools for combating disinformation among undergraduate students in Kwara State University and University of Ilorin. *International Journal of Sub-Saharan African Research*, 4(1), 528–544. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19147768>
- Nunnally, J. C. (1978). *Psychometric theory* (2nd ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- Ogunlade, O. O., & Fasae, J. K. (2020). Social media usage among undergraduates in Nigerian universities: A case study of Obafemi Awolowo University. *Academia.edu*. <https://www.academia.edu/43043771>
- Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2007). *Participative web and user-created content: Web 2.0, wikis and social networking*. OECD Publishing.
- Ozuem, W., Howell, K. E., & Lancaster, G. (2016). The impact of digital media on consumer behavior.
- Santos, M. L. B. dos. (2022). The "so-called" UGC: An updated definition of user-generated content in the age of social media. *Online Information Review*, 46(1), 95–113. <https://doi.org/10.1108/OIR-06-2020-0258>
- Shneiderman, B., Preece, J., & Pirolli, P. (2011). Realizing the promise of the social web: Enhancing user-generated content.
- Statista. (2023). *Number of active social media users in Nigeria from 2017 to 2023*.

- https://www.statista.com/statistics/1176096/number-of-social-media-users-nigeria/
- Tambuwal, A. A., Haliru, S., & Al-Ameen, S. (2025). Assessing social media usage patterns among undergraduate students in Sokoto Metropolis. *International Journal of Innovative Information Systems & Technology Research*, 13(2), 42–46. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15342305>
- Techconomy. (2023, July 17). *Social media trends in Nigeria half year 2023*. <https://techconomy.ng/social-storytelling-videos>. *International Journal of Communication*, 16, 1–20.
- media-trends-in-nigeria-half-year-2023/
- Techpoint Africa. (2025, December). *Nigeria's internet market rebounds as broadband subscriptions hit 109.7 million*. <https://techpoint.africa/news/nigeria-broadband-penetration-2025/>
- Teresa, T., & Annik, A. (2018). User-generated content: A systematic review.
- Vizcaíno-Verdú, A., & Abidin, C. (2022). Music challenge memes on TikTok: Understanding in-group