IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON INFORMATION SHARING WITH THE ACADEMIC EVIRONMENT AT KWARA STATE POLYTECHNIC ILORIN

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project has been read and approved in meeting the requirement for the award of national diploma (ND) in mass communication institute of communication technology (IICT) Kwara State polytechnic, Ilorin Kwara State.

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Abstract

Computer, Smartphone IPADs, Iphones, tables and other telecommunication technologies have enable students to interact and communicate frequently through social media and web browsing (Eger at al., 2020) Gottfired and Shearer (2016) estimated that 62% of American adult age 18 and above use social media to acces news. Abdalla and Qashou (2020) affirm that various social media shes, such as WhatsAPP, Twitter, Facebok, Wikis, Istagram, LinkedIn. Academia. edu Gogole+, and other are used to share information and knowledge. Fauzi et al (201(assert that compatibility of using social media along side modern technology as tools for using social media should be renewed and wholly adapted for better information and knowledge-sharing activities in Higher education institution (HEls). University students use social media for various goals such as networking enjoyement and academic tasks. They number of exchange political scholarly and personal information (Bashir et al., 2021). The number of HEls that provide disatnce2 learning has expanded because of the democratization of the educational system and the increase usage of social media technologies has made this possible (sofi-Karim et al., 2023). Students of HEls now use social media to engage with one another share knowledge and undertake assignment together (Eid& Al labri 2016). These sites have made easier for present student faculty, university stakeholders, and potential students to have information and knowledge (Murianten & Murthild, 2013). However, such a platform offers information and knowledge from memories online source, some trustworthy while other fake (Musgrove et al., 2018).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER THREE:- RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER FOUR

CHAPTER FIVE

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Social media are a big part of how people get and share information in the modern world. The phrase "Social media" refers to a web 2.0 application that enables people to create information using a constrained system and communicate with other users (Mugera, 2015). Social media rely on network and information communication tools and technologies to receive and spread information.

Computer Smartphone, IPADs, Iphones, tables and other telecommunication technologies have enable students to interact and communicate frequently, through social media and web browsing (Eger et al., 2020). Gottfried and Shearer (2016) estimated that 62% of American adult aged 18 and above use social media to access news. Abdalla and Qashou (2020) affirm that various social media sites, such as WhatsApp, Twitter, facebook, Wikis,Instagram, LinkedIn Academia, edu, google, and other are used to share information and Knowledge. Fauzi et al (2019) assert that the compatibility of using social media alongside modern technology as tools for using social media should be renewed and wholly adapted for better information and knowledge-sharing activities in Higher education institution (HELs).

University students use social media for various goals, such as networking, enjoyment and academic tasks. They also exchange political, scholarly and personal information (Bashir ete al., 2021). The number of HEls that provide distance learning has expanded because of the democratization of the educational system and the increased usage of social media technologies has made this possible (Sofi-Karim et al., 2023) Student at HEls now use social media to engage with one another, share knowledge and undertake assignments together (Eid&Al-Jabri, 2016). These sites have made it easier for present students, faculty, university stakeholders, and potential students to share information and knowledge (Murthi & Murithi, 2013). However, such as platform offers information and knowledge from numerous online sources, some trustworthy while others fake (Musgrove at al., 2018).

The first printing press was created in 1439 and news stated to spread rapidly. This marks the beginning of fake news and information. nevertheless, the word "fake new" has no accepted definition (20ll, 2021) According to Shu et al (2017) deliberately and demonstrably untrue news pieces that may misled reader fall with the restricted definition of fake news. They continued by

defining fake news as demonstrably false information produced with the evil agenda of misleading customs Silverman (2016) affirms that after the 2016 US election, false information became a problem. During the final three months of the campaign. The most widely shared information came from phony website and partisan blogs, gathering more that 8.7 million shares, commends, and likes . According to Lazer at al. (2017). Fake information spreads from creators to consumer using website and social media platforms.

Similar circumstance were observed in the India, where most social media users have encountered the same issue due to their inability to discriminate between reliable information and the first information due to their ignorance of social media self- publishing (Bhaskaran et al., 2017). according to Ghazi (2021) social media has played a significant role in South Africa's political populism against immigration and has become a platform for conspiracy theorist to spread false information more frequently than in the past. As an illustration, the xenophobic violence in May 2008 in South Africa was by fare the worst attack on foreigner. In the UK. accusation of students fabricating personal profiles for lecturer and making potentially dangerous remarks started to surface not long after the advent of Web 20.0 technologies, with online chatter evolving into nasty rumors and cyber bull. They go hand in hand with other activates like posting unauthorized images., such as images of instructors while lecturing (Davies & Lee, 2018)

The rise of social media has not only changed how people stay connected but about considerable opportunities and challenges in students information be information behavior. The changing information horizon and shifting information behavior patterns have implication for information literacy (IL) education college students are particularly active users of various social medial platforms (Dugging Ellion, Lampe,. Lenhart & Madden, 2015). They use social media for both academic and everyday life information seeking (head and Eisenberg, 2011, Kim et al., 2014b, Shao, 2009). While library and information science (LIS) processionals recognize the collaborative information seeking potential of social media, they are also cognizant of the varying quality of social information.

Social media, such a Twitter and Facebook, which are online application that facilitate the creation and exchange of user-generated content, can be a powerful, democratic, and up-to-date information source, unfortunately, misinformation defined as information that has been shown

to be inaccurate – is rampant in this medium (karlova & fisher, 2013). Catchiness, rather than truthfulness, often drives information diffusion on social media (Ratkiwwicz at al., 2010).

Given the case with which information posted and shared, mis information define as information that has been shown to be inaccurate (Karlova & Fisher, 2013) can circulate on social media quickly and widely (Mint 2012b) Misinformation can ea among the public. It can also have harmful effects on individuals well There is therefore, a pressing need to prepare students to be proficient are careful and responsible when sharing information on social media

If the message receiver is discerning, misinformation may still offer so, the extent of misinformation and the speed in which it travel through social media is troubling. This not only causes misunderstandings and negative emotion the credibility of social media. It Impedes the further effective use Content (Budak. Agrawal, & Abbadi, 2011)

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The proliferation of social media platforms has become pervasive among students at Kwara State polytechnic, raising concerns about the potential disinformation within the academic environment. This phenomenon to the integrity of information shared among students, as th information on these platforms may contribute to the unwitting propagation of misinformation. There is a pressing need to understand the extent to which social media influence the sharing of inaccurate or misleading information among students and the associated implications for academic integrity.

Additionally, the sources of types of disinformation prevalent in the academic context remain largely unplanned identifying the factor that contribute to student engaging with and sharing disinformation is crucial for developing targeted intervention. This study addresses the gap in research by investigating the pattern of social media usage. Discerning the sources and nature of disinformation and exploring the underlying the underlying factors that drive the dissemination of inaccurate information among students. By delineating these issues, the research aims to contribute valuable insights for educational institutions and policy makers to proactively address the challenges possessed by social media-driven disinformation within the academic setting.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to investigate and comprehend the impact of social media on the dissemination of disinformation among students at Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin.

The objectives include:

- ✓ To analyze the patterns of social media usage among students, identifying the types and sources disinformation prevalent in the academic context, and understanding the factors that contribute to the spread of misinformation within the student community.
- ✓ To provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges posed by social media in fostering a culture of accurate information exchange within the educational environment.
- ✓ To propose effective strategies and interventions for educational institutions to mitigate the negative consequences of social media-driven disinformation.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- ✓ How does social media usage among students of Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin contribute to the dissemination of disinformation within the academic environment?
- ✓ What factors influence the susceptibility of students to engage with and share disinformation on social media platforms in the context of their academic pursuits?
- ✓ In what ways can educational institutions effectively mitigate the impact of social media-driven disinformation?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of exploring the impact of social media on disinformation sharing among students of Kwara State Polytechnic, florin is multifaceted. Firstly, it directly addresses the issue of academic integrity by shedding light on how social media influences disinformation. contributing to a culture of trust and reliability among students. This insight is crucial for maintaining the credibility and authenticity of academic endeavors.

The research holds implications for the broader educational environment. Understanding the dynamic of st media-driven disinformation contributes to cultivating a more informed and critical-thinking student body. This, in turn, fosters a healthier educational environment where

students are equipped to engage with information responsibly, discerning the reliability of sources in an era dominated by digital platforms.

Lastly, the study's significance extends to societal and technological aspects. Insights gained can inform policies and interventions to mitigate the negative effects of misinformation, influencing both educational institutions and broader societal contexts. Additionally, it contributes to technological awareness by highlighting the need for ethical and responsible use of digital platforms, aligning student behavior with the evolving digital landscape. in essence, this research. has the potential to positively impact academic, social, and ethical dimensions of student life.

1.6 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on assessing the impact of social media on disinformation sharing among students at Kwara State Polytechnic. Ilorin. The scope encompasses an in-depth analysis of students patterns of social media usage, identification of prevalent types and sources of disinformation within the academic context, and exploration of the influencing factors contributing to the dissemination of misinformation. The study will specifically target the student population at Kwara State Polytechnic, providing a localized perspective on the challenges posed by social media in fostering a culture of accurate information exchange within the educational environment wale the research primarily centers on the dynamics within this specific institution, the findings may offer broader insights applicable to simizar academic settings facing comparable challenges associated with social media-driven disinformation.

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Social Media: Online platforms and technologies that enable users to create, share, and exchange information, ideas, and multimedia content in virtual communities.

Disinformation: False or misleading information intentionally spread to deceive or manipulate individuals, often disseminated through digital channels such as social media platforms.

Media Literacy: The ability to critically analyze and evaluate information from various media sources, including social media, to make informed judgments and distinguish between credible and unreliable information.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Boateng and Amankwaa (2016) defined social media as the application that allows users to converse and interact with each other. It is an online space that is used by people to connect share, communicate, establish or maintain connection with others for various purposes. Social media is an online platform which enables people to build social networks or relations with other people who share similar personal or career interests, activities, backgrounds or real-life connections. S I media is therefore the interaction among individuals in which they create and share information and ideas in networks. However, social media relics on many electronic devices like tablets, i-pads, laptops, and Internet-based technologies for connecting people. Thus, social media can be described as technologies that facilitate social interaction, make collaboration possible, and enable deliberation among people at the global level.

Boyed & Ellison (2007) define social medip as Internet based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within th stem. According to Ali, Iqbal & Iqbal (2016), social media is the collection of applications such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp. Linkedin and YouTube, among others, that link people together as they share information through social networking. As indicated by Junco, Heibergert&Loken (2010), social media is referred to as a collection of Internet websites, services, and practices that support collaboration, community building, participation and sharing. From the above, it can be deduced that social media is the platform that gives individuals the opportunity to interact, using two way communication, such that it allows anyone who has an online account to share their opinions with other social media users.

Social media has become one of the prominent communication tools, particularly in the school community. Talaue. Alsaad, AlRushaidan&AlHagail (2018) emphasise that social media platforms help with access to information and educational-related materials. Considering the aforementioned, many students and instructors are using social media as a teaching and learning tool. More so, academic institutions are increasingly using social media platforms, such as

Facebook and skedin. to connect with current and potential students and to deliver instructional content (Paul, Baker, & Cochran, 2012) Therefore, social media platforms allow students to interact with one another, their teachers and communities that share in their education and related activities (Pardo 2013). Bearing this in mind, many universities now maintain profiles and groups on social networking sites such as Facebook, where students and faculty can interact, share resources and express ideas.

Conversely, Lenhart, Purcell, Smith &Zickuhr (2010) assert that not all students interact constantly on social media platforms for academic purposes. This suggests that social media platforms are fored by students for different reasons. Junco & Cotion (2012) affirm that time spent by studenton social media is slightly negatively related to time spent studying. In this same manner, Pempek, Yermolayeva& Calvert (2009) declare that most students spend valuable hours daily on social media platforms. Rideout (2012) reveals that young people spend time on social media more than twice the average amount of time spent in school each year. This supports the position of Subrahmanyam& Patricia (2008) who underscore that using social media sites has both negativeand positive effects, because there are harmful ways in which the Internet can be used.

Despite the benefits of social media on student learning and achievement with respect to knowledge sharing. Rithika& Sara (2013) underline that even when social media is used for an educational purpose, students incorporate the technology into their lives in a way that may differ from the intentions of the course instructor. Extant literature has provided an array of challenges of social media on students' academic life. O'Keeffe & Kathleen (2011) highlight the negative impacts of social media to include accessing inappropriate content, online harassment, and cyber bullying.

2.1.1.1 Characteristics of social media

All social media involve some sort of digital platform, whether that be mobile or stationary. Not everything that is digital, however, is necessarily social media. Two common characteristics help to define social media. First, social media allow some form of participation. Social media are never completely passive, even if sometimes social networking sites such as

Facebook may allow passive viewing of what others are posting. Usually, at bare minimum, a profile must be

created that allows for the beginning of the potential for Interaction. That quality in and of itself sets social media apart from traditional media where personal profiles are not the norm. Second, and in line with their participatory nature, social media involve interaction. This interaction can be with established friends, family, or acquaintances or with new people who share common interests or ea common acquaintance circle. Although many social media were or are initially treated or referred to novel, as they continue to be integrated into personal and professional lives they become less noticed and more expected. (Wright et al. 2011)

2.1.1.2 Forms of social media

As this overview of common forms of social media demonstrates, some are used primarily for recreation or personal connections, others for work or professional reasons, but most allow leeway for both.

Email: Probably the most common form of social media used in everyday life, email (short for electronic mail) involves users logging into an account in order to send and receive messages to other users. Anyone who sends or receives an email must have an account. Many options for free email accounts are available via the World Wide Web, but many times internet service providers will also offer free email accounts with service packages or employers will offer email addresses to their employees. Most workplaces have strict rules about how email accounts can be used, although many organizations report that they have no specific email training. Those who work for public organizations (including politicians, professors at state universities, and administra and assistants for government offices) are often subject to open records laws that will allow interested people or organizations to request any emails sent or received to a government funded email account or an email account used to conduct government business. (Boyd et al, 2007).

Use of email actually pre-dates the internet, with some organizations having the ability to send messages electronically within a local computing network. As the Internet rose to prominence, sending messages across different servers also became a possibility. Email acts as a quick and highly reliable way to send documents or images, updates or important details at a moment's

notice, or to share one piece of information with a large number of people. Many people face issues with sport unsolicited email that is usually from commercial sources. (Boyd et al, 2007)

Many times spam is exacerbated by computer viruses that use email programs to capture all of the email addresses in a user's address book. An address book is the list of email addresses that an individual saves to quickly send an email to an individual or a group of people. People often divide an address book into different kinds of friends, colleagues, or family members to send correspondence to those who it is most relevant. (Wright et al, 2011)

Texters: Similar to email, a texter is a two-way communication channel that allows individuals to quickly send a message to another person or a group of people. Although media portrayals often make it look as if texting is a particularly youthful behavior, people of all ages have adapted to texting. Still, younger individuals tend to text more often and usually do so at a faster speed. As texting technology has improved, it is easier to text photos or to copy and paste links into texters in order to share them with others. Texters often make use of emoticons, the use of keyboard characters to make pictures such as a smiley face (e.g.. :-P), a practice that is also common with email. Texters are derived from chatters, or computer programs that make use of the internet to allow people to quickly talk back and forth via text characters. Although the use of texting is highly convenient and allows many benefits, particular attention has been paid to two texting behaviors that has led to problems: texting while driving and

sexting. It is estimated that texting while driving makes a car crash almost 23% more likely.

Sexting is mostly harmful when adolescent children share pictures that are later redistributed to others by the receiver. In some cases, those forwarding pictures of people under the age of 18 have been charged with child pornography. Politicians have faced scrutiny for sharing sexual messages with others, including interns. Despite these problematic potentials, many adults report that sexting is a satisfying alternative to sexual interaction when they are away from their partners. (Wright et al, 2011)

Blogs: The word blog is derived from the word weblog. A blog is a webpage where an individual or group can share information or ideas with a large group of people via the internet. It is not uncommon for a person to start a blog and then never update it again. Some of the most

successful blogs are updated on a regular basis so the followers of the blog can know when to expect new entries. Blogs cover a wide range of topics, including political issues of all kinds. A common feature to blogs is a feedback forum where, after reading an entry, people can interact with both the blog author and others who have commented. Many traditional media outlets have adopted blog-like features online in order to entice readers to continue sticking with their news or entertainment offerings. For example, many newspaper stories end with the opportunity for readers to share their thoughts or comments about a current issue. These news stories- especially when about hot or particularly partisan political issues can lead to serious debates. Because of the contentious nature many blogs and news outlets find, it is not uncommon for a user to be required to register in order to participate. (Snowden & Collette. 2006)

Message boards: It is not uncommon for fans of television programs or other popular entertainment to frequent message boards that allow users to post messages that talk about a clearly defined subject. Message boards also prove popular with people seeking social support or advice, whether that is wounded warriors trying to make sense of life after war or someone facing breast cancer who wants to talk to someone else who has been through the experience. Advice is also offered through review sites such as Yelp that allow users to rate businesses such as restaurants. (Snowden & Collette, 2006)

Connection sites: Online dating is another form of social media. Users approach online dating sites some that require paid membership and others that are free of charge and create a profile that tells who they are and what they seek in a relationship. Some may be skeptical about how honest some are about the information displayed in an online profile, but research shows that people are generally honest. The stigma placed upon online dating sites has continued to diminish as more people continue to use them in order to meet dating partners. In addition to dating, others use connection sites to find friends or activity partners. For example, the connection site Meet Up allows users to find activist groups, book clubs, or hobby circles. Users enter a profile, and then they can even send messages to meet up group leaders in order to learn more about the activity or see if they would make a good fit for the group. (Wright et al, 2011)

Social networking sites: Facebook and other social networking sites are almost ubiquitous features in contemporary culture. Even those who choose not to create an online profile and participate will often hear from others information gained from such social platforms. A key distinguishing feature that makes a social networking site is the fellow list of users that one

connects with, usually based upon friendship, family, work relationships, or even weak tie relationships. Initially social networking sites were great ways to meet new people, and although that is still a possibility many social networking sites now discourage people from adding concerns they do not know. The public nature of information posted to social networking sites often allow a space for social or political viewpoints to be displayed, although research suggests much of this political activity reinforces pre-existing beliefs - especially because people tend to be online friends with those that are most like them. (Wright et al. 2011)

Apps: Short for mobile applications, apps are not necessarily social media oriented; but many times people can connect through apps via another form of social media (typically Facebook) and many times apps in and of themselves have some kind of social dimension. One example is Grindr, an app that allows gay men to find other gay men who are within close proximity. Like many apps. Causes a smartphone location tracker to determine where the user is and to determine the distance between other users. (Snowden & Collette, 2006)

2.1.1.3 Function of social media.

As the classes of social media make clear, social media have many different functions. First, they allow people to do identity work. When an individual puts who he or she is into a profile, it requires some kind of reflection. As individuals see reaction to their online social presence, they will consider themselves in new light and notice that online interaction allows them to feel more open about thights, opinions, and inquiries both for better and for worse. Second, social media allows people to tend to their relationships in different ways. Even if popular discourse often demonizes outlets such as Facebook or Twitter as narcissistic and shallow, research shows they allow people who may not otherwise be able to connect an outlet to interact. People also report meeting some of their best friends and even spouses through computer-mediated communication platforms. Third, social media allow people to perform work functions. Sometimes the social media is their work, such as a popular blog or someone with a large social network circle being hired to promote events. Other times people interact with work colleagues via social media sites or, especially with email, take care of most of their work communication using the social media outlet.

Fourth, social media allow for people to seek information or share ideas. This information can range from political campaigns to local issues to disaster relief to where is a good place to buy plus size clothing. Fifth, and often in line with information sharing, people can also offer opinions or consider the opinions of others through social media. Finally, individuals can find entertainment through such sites. (Boyd et al, 2007)

2.1.2 Misinformation

Misinformation is incorrect or misleading information (Fetzer and James, 2004). It differs from disinformation, which is deliberately deceptive and propagated information. Early definitions of misinformation focused on statements that were patently false, incorrect, or not factual. Therefore, a narrow definition of misinformation refers to the information's quality, whether inaccurate, incomplete, or false. However, recent studies define misinformation per deception rather than informational accuracybecause misinformation can include falsehoods, selective truths, and half-truths. (Diaz & Carlos, 2023)

Research on how to correct misinformation have focused on fact-checking. However, one can fact-check news, but not beliefs,and studies show that fact-checking can backfire. (Nyhan& Reifler, 2010). Others studied what makes people susceptibie to misinformation. People may be more prone to believe misinformation because they are emotionally connected to what they are listening to or are reading. The role of social media has made information readily available to society at anytime, and it connects vast groups of people along with their information at one time. Advances in technology has impacted the way people communicate information and the way misinformation is spread. Misinformation has impacts on societies' ability to receive information which then influences our communities, politics, and medical field. (Aral, 2020)

The term came into wider recognition during the mid 2000s through the early 2020s, when its effects on public ideological influence began to be investigated. The term has been used to obfuscate legitimate and true speech, and warp political discourses. However, misinformation campaigns have existed for hundreds of years. (Bode& Vraga, 2015)

2.1.2.1 Causes of misinformation.

Historically, people have relied on journalists and other information professionals to relay facts and truths about certain topics (Web of Deception Misinformation on the Internet, 2002). Many different things cause miscommunication, but the underlying factor is information literacy. Because information is distributed by various means, it is often hard for users to ask questions of credibility. Many online sources of misinformation use techniques to fool users into thinking their sites are imate and the information they generate is factual. Often, misinformation can be politically motivated. Conspiracy theories have long lurked in the background of American history, said Dustin Carmahan. Michigan State University professor who studies political misinformation(David, 2022). For example, websites such as USConservative Today.com have posted false information for political and monetary gain (Marwick, 2013). Another role misinformation serves is to distract the public eye from negative information about a given person and/or issues of policy. Aside from political and financial gain, misinformation can also be spread unintentionally. This can cause problems and ignorance in large populations if people do not check what they consume.

Misinformation cited with hyperlinks has been found to increase readers' trust. Trust is shown to be even higher when these hyperlinks are to scientific journals, and higher still when readers do not click on the sources to investigate for themselves. Trusting a source could lead to spreading misinformation unintentionally (Verma, et al. 2017). A good way to check if something is misinforming is to check sources that are widely agreed to be true, such as college research papers and organizations with no agendas or biases (.org, edu, and .gov to be specific).

Misinformation is sometimes an unintended side effect of bias. Misguided opinions can lead to the unintentio spread of misinformation, where individuals do not intend on spreading false propaganda, yet the false information they share is not checked and referenced. While that may be the case, there are plenty of instances where information is intentionally skewed, or leaves out major defining details and facts. Misinformation could be misleading rather than outright false.

Research documents "the role political elites play in shaping both news coverage and public opinion around science issues"(Chen, et al, 2013)

Another reason for the recent spread of misinformation may be the lack of consequences. With little to no repercussions, there is nothing to stop people from posting misleading information. The gain they from the power of Influencing other peoples' minds is greater than the impact of a removed post or temporary ban on Twitter. This forces individual companies to be the ones to mandate rules and policies regarding when people's "free speech" impedes other users' quality of life. (Harford, 2013)

2.1.3 Social media and misinformation.

In recent years, the proliferation of misinformation online has drawn widespread attention. More than half of the world's population had access to the Internet in the beginning of 2018 (Acerbi. Alberto, 2019). Digital and social media can contribute to the spread of misinformation for instance, when users share information without first checking the legitimacy of the information. they have found. People are more likely to encounter online information based on personalized algorithms. Google, Facebook and Yahoo News all generate newsfeeds based on the information they know about our devices, our location, and our online interests. (Fernandez & Alani, 2018)

Although two people can search for the same thing at the same time, they are very likely to get different results based on what that platform deems relevant to their interests, fact or false.

Various social media platforms have recently been criticized for encouraging the spread of false information, such as hoaxes, false news, and (Fernandez & Alani. 2018). It is responsible with influencing people's attitudes and judgment during significant events by disseminating widely believed misinformation. Furthermore, online misinformation can occur in numerous ways, including rumors, urban legends, factoids, etc. However, the underlying factor is that it contains misleading or inaccurate information. (Almaliki, 2019)

Moreover, users of social media platforms may experience intensely negative feelings, perplexity, and worry as a result of the spread of false information (Almaliki, 2019). According to a recent study, one in ten Americans has gone through mental or emotional stress as a result of misleading information posted online. Spreading false information can also seriously impede the effective and efficient use of the information available on social media. An emerging trend in the online information environment is "a shift away from public discourse to private, more ephemeral, messaging", which is a challenge to counter misinformation. (Almaliki, 2019)

2.1.4 Effect of misinformation

Misinformation can affect all aspects of life. Allcott, Gentzkow, and Yu concur that the diffusion of misinformation through social media is a potential threat to democracy and broader society. The effects of misinformation can lead to decline of accuracy of information as well as event details. (Bodner, et al, 2009) When eavesdropping on conversations, one can gather facts that may not always be true. the receiver may hear the message incorrectly and spread the information to others. On the Internet, one can read content that is stated to be factual but that may not have been checked or may be erroneous. In the news, companies may emphasize the speed at which they receive and send information but may not always be correct in the facts. These developments contribute to the way misinformation may continue to complicate the public's understanding of issues and to serve as a source for belief and attitude formation (Southwell, et al, 2018)

In regards to politics, some view being a misinformed citizen as worse than being an uninformed citizen. Misinformed citizens can state their beliefs and opinions with confidence and thus affect elections and policies. This type of misinformation occurs when a speaker appears "authoritative and legitimate", while also spreading misinformation. When information is presented as vague, ambiguous, sarcastic, or partial, receivers are forced to piece the information together and make assumptions about what is correct (Barker, 2002). Misinformation has the power to sway public elections and referendums if it gains enough momentum. Leading up to the 2016 UK European Union membership referendum, for example, a figure used prominently by the Vote Leave campaign claimed that by leaving the EU the UK would save £350 million a week, 'for the NHS'.

Claims then circulated widely in the campaign that this amount would (rather than could theoretically) be redistributed to the British National Health Service after Brexit. This was later deemed a "clear misuse of official statistics" by the UK statistics authority.

Moreover, the advert infamously shown on the side of London's double-decker busses did not take into account the UK's budget rebate, and the idea that 100% of the money saved would go to the NHS was unrealistic. A poll published in 2016 by Ipsos MORI found that nearly half of the British public believed this misinformation to be true (Marwick, & Lewis, (2017). Even when information is proven to be misinformation, it may continue to shape attitudes towards a given topic, meaning as the power to swing political decisions if it gains enough traction. A study conducted by Soroush Vosoughi. Deb Roy and Sinan Aral looked at Twitter data including 126,000 posts spread by 3 million people over 1.5 million times. They found that political news traveled faster than any other type of information. They found that false news about politics reached more than 20,000 people three times faster than all other types of false news (Aral, (2020) Aside from political propaganda, misinformation can also be employed in industrial propaganda.

Using tools such as advertising, a company can undermine reliable evidence or influence belief through a concerted misinformation campaign. For instance, tobacco companies employed misinformation in the second half of the twentieth century to diminish the reliability of studies that demonstrated the link between smoking and lung cancer (O'Connor, et al, 2019)

In the medical field, misinformation can immediately lead to life endangerment as seen in the case of the public's negative perception towards vaccines or the use of herbs instead of medicines to treat diseases (Stawicki, et al, 2020). In regards to the COVID-19 pandemic, the spread of misinformation has proven to cause confusion as well as negative emotions such as anxiety and fear. Misinformation regarding proper safety measures for the prevention of the virus that go against information from legitimate institutions like the World Health Organization can also lead to inadequate protection and possibly place individuals at risk for exposure. (Bratu, 2020).

Some scholars and activists are heading movements to eliminate the mis/disinformation and information pollution in the digital world. One theory, "information environmentalism," has

become a curriculum in some universities and colleges The general study of misinformation and disinformation is by now also common across various academic disciplines, including sociology, communication, computer science, and political science, leading to the emerging field being described loosely as "Misinformation and Disinformation Studies" (Righettiet, at 2022).

However, various scholars and journalists have criticised this development, pointing to problematic normative assumptions, a varying quality of output and lack of methodological rigor, as well as a too strong impact of mis- and disinformation research in shaping public opinion and puit, making (Bernstein, 2021). Summarising the most frequent points of critique, communication scholars Chico Camargo and Felix Simon wrote in an article for the Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review that "mis-/disinforination studies has been accused of lacking clear definitions, having a simplified understanding of what it studies, a too great emphasis on media effects, a neglect of intersectional factors, an outsized influence of funding bodies and policymakers on the research agenda of the field, and an outsized impact of the field on policy and policymaking."

2.2 REVIEW RELATED LITERATURES

Interest in misinformation can be traced back to related research on rumor that predates the digital age. In their seminal book. The Psychology of Rumor, Allport and Postman (1947) indicated that rumormongeringi is motivated· by the desire to extract meaning from one's environment and to relieve and justify one's emotions, such as anxiety. While rumor (unsubstantiated information that may or may not be accurate) is conceptually distinct from misinformation, the rumor literature suggests that it is promising to study the influences of motivational and emotional factors.

However, there is literature on what motivates social media use. Many of these studies draw from the Uses and Gratification Theory (U&G). Categories of motivation vary across studies, but to cite a few, they include: entertainmem, socializing, status seeking and information seeking in news sharing (Lee & Ma. 2012) and in Facebook Groups participation (Park. Kee, & Valenzuela, 2009): communication, friending, identity creation and management entertainment, information search, and more, în young girls' use of social networking sites (Dunne, Lawlor, & Rowley.

2010): intrinsic (enjoyment, commitment to the online community) and extrinsic (self-development, reputation) motivations in photo sharing on Flickr (Nov, Naaman, & Ye, 2009); and entertainment, socialization, and relationship maintenance in mobile gaming (Lee, Goh, Chua, & Ang, 2010).

Marett and Joshi's (2009) study on the spread of rumor in a sports discussion forum also suggests the significance of researching individual motivations. Their study focused on three factors: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and normative influence. All three were found to be positively related to the spread of rumor (Marett& Joshi, 2009).

While the difference between posters and lurkers was tested, the study did not test demographic differences. Other individual differences warrant exploration. With the rise of the user-centered paradigm, scholars have uncovered considerable individual variations in IB. Among them are gender and personality differences, which have been the focus of some IB and social media 00

research (Correa, Hinsley, & de Zúñiga, 2010. Fisher & Jalien, 2009; Heinstrom, 2006, Lim & Kwon, 2010) Kim, 2013)

Information has proliferated due to the widespread use of social media because each user of these platforms can now create their own information (Torres et al., 2018), Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram, and others have made it easier for false information to spread across these platforms (Ali &Gatiti, 2020). According to Veeriah (2021). the advent of social media, smartphones, and other gadgets has made it feasible for users of these sites to fabricate false information and rumours. Masele and Daud (2022) contend that the rapid dissemination of conspiracy theories, misleading information, and fabricated news in social media environ s has suppressed the popularity of actual news by creating the impression that disinformation is factual information. To combat the spread of false information, students should consider using specific content on journals, universities, and other verifiable institutions platforms, Leeder (2019) avers that the propagation of false information is made feasible because it is now difficult for students to verify the veracity of information posted on these websites. Therefore, many institutions have taken the initiative to create various apps for verifying and

proving the accuracy and validity of the information given through social media to prevent users from using and sharing false information (Pangrazio, 2018),

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theory of reasoned action, developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (TRA, 1975), is based on learning theory and holds that the purpose towards a specific object of concern influences the driving force behind a behaviour. Psychologists frequently employ this idea, which is well-liked for understanding human behaviour (Otieno et al., 2016). According to TRA theory, two key influences on intention are a person's perceptions of the consequences of their behaviour and the social context in which they live (Fishbein&Ajzen, 1975). White engaging in a particular behaviour, an individual develops beliefs about what contributes to success or failure. These assumptions allant how easy or difficult a particular action appears (Goh & Sandhu, 2014). Postgraduate students' abilities to use social media and analyse and distinguish between accurate and false information can be evaluated using the TRA theory's constructs. The perceived behavioural control also considers external or environmental factors (for example, time resources and social support). The existence of policies and guidelines on the appropriate use of social media as a tool for combating false information in HEls, media literacy training on how to identify false information shared through social media, and ICT control, including the creation of an app specifically designed for spotting false news, are some examples of external or environmental influences.

3T THEORY OF SOCIAL MEDIA-DRIVEN MISINFORMATION

A process theory that explains how social media transforms a person's view of reality in a way that leads to detrimental human action (see Figure 1). The process starts when a person encounters a claim. This claim triggers doubt, and if the doubt is strong enough, the claim recipient enters a dialectic phase where they must decide whether the claim is true or false. Social media may distort their judgment of the claim's truth value. The dialectic phase produces either a supported belief (where a claim corresponds to factual evidence) or a suspect belief(where a claim does not correspond to factual evidence). Following this, the claim recipientmight enter a phase where their newly formulated suspect belief is reinforced by further information consumed on social media. Finally, the recipient may act on their suspect belief in a way that leads to detrimental outcomes. (Nick & Hamed, 2023)

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUTION

This chapter discussed the methodological approaches that were used to answer the research questions and achieve the objectives of the study. The chapter covered the research methods. research design, the study population, sample size and sampling techniques, source of data and procedure for data collection, data analysis method, and the limitation of the methodology.

3.1 RESEARCH METHODS

Research is the process of getting dependable answers to important questions using a systematic method of gathering, analyzing and interpreting evidence. Its end product is knowledge (Timm et ul. 2005). Resench is a structured enquiry that utilizes acceptable scientific metmishodology to solve problems and create new knowledge that is generally applicable Scientific methods consist of systematic observation, classification and interpretationof data (Dawson, Kothari, and Kumar, 2011). There are three major types of research methods. These are survey research, experiment/ bservation and ipso facto Research. Other research methods include case study, action research, grounded theory, ethnography, and archival research,

The survey research method is the research in which questionnaires are used to collect the opinion of people. it is mostly used for exploratory and descriptive research. Case studies may be described as the thorough study of a particular case where the purpose of that research is partly to capture a larger group of case studies (a population). Case study research may incorporate several cases, that is, multiple case studies. The survey research method was used in this study with the aid of questionnaires for data collection on the opinions of respondents from. Individuals within reproductive age in Ilorin, Kwara state.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The procedure used in selecting research design in this study was synthesizing several design alternatives which emphasize different design objectives, to characterize the alternatives in terms of precision, cost, and operational problems, and to achieve a consensus on the best overall design.

This study hour adopted the survey research design. The survey research design method was used in this study, by collecting data through questionnaire from population of interest. It involved using a self-designed questeemneire in collecting data fran die respondents. This data collection method collects the opinion, views and perspective of respondents regarding the issue of research interest. It allows collection of data which was analyzed quantitatively. This was chosen in order to make reference to phenomena as they exist in real life and it is relatively economical in terms of time and resources. This is because of the large sample size of the study and the sample size comes from a wide geographic area.

3.3 POPULATION OF STUDY

The population of this study comprises undergraduate students enrolled at Kwara State Polytechnic, Horin. Specifically, the research will target students across various disciplines and academic levels within the institution. The inclusion criteria encompass full-time and part-time students actively engaging with social media platforms. This diverse student population provides a comprehensive representation for examining the impact of social media on disinformation sharing within the academic context of Kwara State Polytechnic.

34 SAMPLE SIZE

One hundred twenty (120) questionnaires were distributed randomly to the students of Kwara State Polytechnic, florin, Out of the one hundred and twenty (120) questionnaires that were distributed, one hundred (100) were found valid. Further details are given in Chapter 4. There was no restriction on the gender, religious, or racial nackgrounds of the respondents. In order to effectively assess the influence of social media on misinformation sharing among students.

3.5 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

Sampling techniques can be either probability sampling techniques or non-probability sampling techniques Under probability sampling techniques, each element has a known probability of being included in the sample but the non-probability sampling techniques do not allow the researcher to determine this probability. Probability sampling techniques include simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling, cluster/area sampling while non-probability sampling techniques include convenience sampling, judgmental sampling and quota sampling techniques. However this study used the convenience sampling technique in selecting the sample size of the study based on convenience and easy accessibility to the respondents.

3.6 SOURCE OF DATA

There are basically two ways of sourcing data. These primary and the secondary.

- Primary Source of Data

These are first hand information that was refined for the purpose of this project. This study he questionnaire as a major source of primary data. This is also known made use internal source of data

- Secondary Source of Data

This refers to that information already in existence, having been collected originally for some other purposes. These sources form the bedrock of information used for this project. This includes the reviewing of articles that have to do with Social media, Election and the youth participation in elections in current journal, textbooks, Newspapers, internet etc.

3.7   RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The research instrument for this study was the questionnaire. According to Ojo (2005) questionnaire is an instrument containing some questions and/or statements (some with suggested alternative answers) for which the respondent is expected to provide answers to the questions or confirm the statements. The questionnaire that was used in the study was divided into sections. Section A contained information about the respondents that is their gender, marital status, age, educational qualification, years of working experience etc. Section B contained items on questions related to the research topic. With regards to the scoring of responses, the first section of the questionnaire did not attach any score to it, since the information gotten from that

section were the demographic data of the respondents. The second section that is "B" was ranged from 5-1 point in the following pattern. Strongly agree: 5 Agree: 4 Undecided: 3 Disagree: 2 Strongly Disagree: 1.

3.8 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data were analyzed using the simple percentage method, supplemented by detailed discussions. This involved breaking down the data into percentages to provide a comprehensive understanding. The subsequent sections expound on these analyses, offering in-depth insights and discussions to elucidate the findings further.

CHAPTER FOUR
DATA PRESENTION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

Storedio This chapter delves into the critical analysis and presentation of data collected on the impact of the dissemination of disinformation among studems at Kwara State Polytecinie. Hocin It provides a comprehensive overview of the findings derived from the survey and interviews conducted, highlighting potterns, trends, and correlations identified Urough statistical tools and thematic analysis. By systematically presenting the data, this chapter aims to afer a clear understanding of how social media influences the spread of false Information among the student population, thereby setting the stage for a discussion of the suplications and potential strategies for mitigating this issue

4.1   Data Presentation

The demograj, information reveals basic details about the respondents' backgrounds and familiarity with the research topic, which in turn influences the data obtained. It is necessary to present and analyze this demographic information. Table 4.1 balow provides foundational information amount the respondents in relation to the research topic

SN	Statement	Respondents	Percentage
1.	Gender		
.	Male	42	42%
	Female	58	58%
	Total	100	100%
Social Media platform need			
	Facebook	35	35%
	Whatsapp	55	55%
	Instragram	21	21%
	Tiktok	10	10%
	Twitter	23	23%
Average time spent on social media			

Less than 30 minutes	3		3%
30 minutes – 1 hour	7		7%
1 hour – 2 hours	12		29%
2 hours – 4 hours	49		49%
More than 4 hours	28		28%
Total	**100**		**100%**

Source: Field survey 2024

Fable 4.1 above reveals that 58% of the respondents are female, representing the larger parcentage, whitte the remaining 42% are male. Data on the social media platforms used, which allowed for multiple choices from the respondents, also reveal that 55% of the respondents use WhatsApp (representing the largest percentage), while 35%, 21%, 10%, 23%, and 10% use Facebook, Instagram, Suapchat, Tik Tok, and Twitter, respectively. This indicates that most respondents are multiple social media users, wan WhatsApp being the most used platforin. likely due to its convenience and widespread adoption for communication. Facebook, being one of the oldest social medra platforms, remains popular, while Twitter is the least used, possibly due to its focus on brief, text-based interactions The average time spent by most respondents (49%) ranges een 2 to 4 hours, as shown in Table 4.1 above. This could be attributed to the significant role social media plays in their daily communication, entertainment, and information gathering. Additionally, 28% of the respondents spend more than 4 hours on social media..

indicating a high level of engagement and dependence on these platforms. In contrast, 7% of the respondents spend 30 minutes to 1 hour, and only 3% spend less than 30 minutes, which might reflect a more balanced or limited use of social media among these individuals.

4.2.1 Research question

Table 4.2 How would you fate your overall digital literacy?

Option	Respondent	Percentage (%)
Novice	24	24
Beginner	18	18
Intermediate	36	36
Advanced	15	15
Expert	7	7
Total	100	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 4.2 reveals data on respondents' self-rated overall digital literacy. According to the table. 24% of the respondents consider themselves novices, indicating limited familiarity with digital tools and platforms. Beginners make up 18% of the respondents, suggesting they have basic but still limited digital skills. The largest group, at 36%, are intermediate users, who likely have a functional understanding of digital tools and can navigate most common applications and platforms competently. Advanced users account for 15% of the respondents, demonstrating a high level of proficiency and the ability to use digital tools for complex tasks. Finally, 7% of the respondents rate themselves as experts, indicating they possess a deep understanding of digital technology and can utilize it at an advanced level for specialized purposes. This distribution suggests a diverse range of digital literacy levels among the respondents, with the majority having at least an intermediate level of competence.

Table 4.3 Have you received any formal education or training on digital literacy?

Option	Respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	45	45
No	55	55
Total	100	100

Source: Field survey. 2024

Table 4.3 reveals data on whether respondents have received any formal education or training on digital literacy. According to the table. 45% of the respondents indicated that they have

received formal education or uaming, while 55% have not. The fact that a majority of respondents lack formal digital literacy training could impact their ability to critically assess and verify information encountered on social media Those without formal training might be more susceptible to disinformation, as they may not possess the necessary skills to identify false or misleading comment. Conversely, the 45% who have received formal training are likely better equipped to navigate digital platforms responsibly and discern credible sources from unreliable ones. This disparity in digital literacy education highlights a potential factor contributing to the spread of disinformation among students at Kwara State Polytechnie. Horin.

Table 4.4 On a scale from 1 to 5, how confident are you in your ability to discern credible information from misinformation on social media

Option	Respondent	Percentage (%)
Not confident at all (1)	5	5
2	25	25
3	40	40
4	18	18
Extremely confident (3)	12	12
Total	100	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 4.4 reveals data on respondents' confidence in their ability to discern credible information from misinforution on social media, rated on a scale from 1 to 5. According to the table, 5% of the respondents are "Not Confident at all" (1) in their ability to discern credible information. indicating a significant challenge in identifying misinformation. Additionally. 25% of the respondents chose (2), suggesting a low level of confidence among a quarter of the students. The largest group, 50% of the respondents, chose (3), reflecting moderate confidence in their discernment abilities. Meanwhile, 18% of the respondents chose (4), indicating a higher level of confidence, and 12% of the respondents rated themselves as "Extremely Confident" (5). This distribution suggests that while a majority of students have moderate confidence in their ability to identify credible information, a notable portion still lacks strong confidence. This variation in confidence levall underscores the importance of enhancing digital literacy to better equip students in distinguishing credible information from misinformation on social media.

Table 4.5 Are you aware of the potential spread of misinformation on social media within the academic environment.

Option	Respondent	Percentage (%)
Not aware at all	12	12
Some what aware	22	22
Moderately aware	30	30
Moderately aware	36	36
Total	100	100

Source Field survey, 2024

Table 4.5 reveals data on respondents' awareness of the potential spread of misinformation on social media within the academic environment. According to the table. 12% of the respondents are "Not aware at all." indicating a lack of recognition of this issue among a small segment of students. Meanwhile. 22% of the respondents are "Somewhat aware," suggesting a limited understanding of the misinformation problem. The largest group. 30% of the respondents, are "Moderately aware," reflecting a fair level of awareness about the spread of misinformation. Finally, 36% of the respondents are "Very aware," demonstrating a high level of recognition of the issue. This distribution shows that while a significant portion of students are aware to varying degrees of the spread of misinformation on social media, there remains a substantial number who are not fully cognizant of its impact within the academic environment.

Table 4.6 Have you ever encountered information on social media that you later discovered was inaccurate or misleading regarding your academic pursuits.

Option	Respondent	Percentage (%)
Never	10	10
Rarely	15	15
Occasionally	37	37
Frequently	20	20
Always	12	12
Total	100	100

Source: Field 23. 2024

Table 4.6 presents data on whether respondents have ever encountered information on social media that they later discovered was inaccurate or misleading regarding their academic pursuits

According to the table, 10% of the respondents chose "Never. "indicating that a small portion of students have not come across misleading information related to their studies. Meanwhile, 15% of the respondents chose "Rarely," suggesting infrequent encounters with such information. The largest group, 37% of the respondents, chose "Occasionally," reflecting that a significant number of students have sometimes encountered inaccurate or misleading information. Additionally, 20% of the respondents chose "Frequently," indicating regular encounters with false information, and 12% chose "Always," showing that a notable segment consistently encounters misinformation. This distribution highlights that a majority of students at Kwara Horin, have at least occasionally encountered misleading or inaccurate State Polytecl information on social media related to their academic pursuits.

Table 4.7 How often do you participate in discussions or share academic-related content on social media platforms

Option	Respondent	Percentage (%)
Never	5	10
Rarely	7	15
Occasionally	50	50
Frequently	26	26
Always	12	12
Total	100	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 4.7 presents data on how often respondents participate in discussions or share academic-related content on social media platforms. According to the table, 5% of the respondents chose "Never." indicating that a small portion of students do not engage in academic discussions or share content related to their studies on social media. Meanwhile, 7% of the respondents chose "Rarely," suggesting limited participation in such activities. The largest group, 50% of the respondents. chose "Occasionally." reflecting that half of the students sometimes engage in sharing or discussing academic content. Additionally. 26% of the respondents chose "Frequently," indicating regular participation in academic-related discussions, and 12% chose "Always, showing that a notable segment consistently engages in these activities. This distribution highlights that a majority of students at Kwara State Polytechnic. Ilorin, at least

occasionally participate in academic discussions or share related content on social media. This frequent engagement underscores the importance of ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the information shared, as it directly impacts the academic environment and learning outcomes.

Table 4.8 Have you ever been a victim of or witnessed the negative consequences of misinformation on social media within the academic setting

Option	Respondent	Percentage (%)
Never	5	5
Rarely	8	8
Occasionally	65	65
Frequently	15	15
Always	7	7
Total	100	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 4.8 reveals data on whether respondents have ever been a victim of or witnessed the negative consequences of misinformation on social media within the academic setting. According to the table, 5% of the respondents chose "Never." indicating that a small portion of students have not experienced or witnessed the negative effects of misinformation. Meanwhile, 8% of the respondents chose "Rarely," suggesting infrequent encounters with such consequences. The largest group, 65% of the respondents, chose "Occasionally," reflecting that a significant number of students have sometimes experienced or observed the negative impact of misinformation. Additionally, 15% of the respondents chose "Frequently," indicating regular encounters with the detrimental effects of misinformation, and 7% chose "Always," showing that a notable segment consistently experiences or witnesses these negative consequences. This distribution highlights that a majority of students at Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin, have at least occasionally been affected by misinformation on social media within the academic setting

Table 4.9 Social media contributes to the dissemination of disinformation among students at Kwara State Polytechnic?

Option	Respondent	Percentage (%)
Strongly agreed	25	25
Agreed	60	60
Neutral	8	8
Strongly disagreed	2	2
Disagreed	5	5
Total	100	100

Source Field survey 2024

Table 4.9 pres data on respondents' perceptions of whether social media contributes to the dissemination of disinformation airing students at Kwara Stare Polytechnic According to the table. 25% of the respondents "Strongly Agreed." indicating a strong conviction that social media significantly spreads disinformation. A majority 60% of the respondents, "Agreed." showing a general agreement on social media's role in this issue. Meanwhile, 8% of the respondents were "Neutral," suggesting some uncertainty or ambivalence about the impact of social media on disinformation Only 25% "Strongly Disagreed" and 5% "Disagreed," indicating major source of disinformation. that a small portion of students do not see social media This data indicates that a significant majority of students at Kwara State Polytechnic recognize social media as a key factor in the spread of disinformation. This underscores the importance of improving digital literacy and critical thinking skills to help students better evaluate and verify the information they encounter on social media.

Table 4.10 Students often do fact-check information received on social media before sharing it with peers or colleagues?

Option	Respondent	Percentage (%)
Strongly agreed	5	5
Agreed	30	30
Neutral	15	15
Strongly disagreed	3	3
Disagreed	45	45
Total	100	100

Source: Field survey 2024

Table 4.10 presets data on whether students often fact-check information received on social media before sharing it with peers or colleagues. According to the table, 5% of the respondents "Strongly Agreed." indicating that a small portion of students are very diligent about verifying information before sharing. Additionally. 30% of the respondents "Agreed," suggesting that some students do make an effort to fact-check information, Meanwhile, 15% of the respondents were "Neutral." indicating uncertainty or inconsistency in their fact-checking habits. On the other hand, 5% "Strongly Disagreed" and a significant 45% "Disagreed." revealing that a large portion of students do not routinely verily information before sharing it. This distribution highlights a con ming trend where a majority of students at Kwara State Polytechnic may not be taking necessary steps to ensure the accuracy of information before dissemination

Table 4.11 Social media has influenced your perception of information related to your academic studies?

Option	Respondent	Percentage (%)
Strongly agreed	15	15
Agreed	45	45
Neutral	10	10
Strongly disagreed	5	4
Disagreed	15	15
Total	100	100

Source: Field survey 2024

Table 4.11 presents data on how social media has influenced respondents' perceptions of information related to their academic studies. According to the table. 15% of the respondents "Strongly Agreed," indicating a strong belief that social media has significantly influenced their perception of academic information. Additionally. 45% of the respondents "Agreed," suggesting that a majority ognize the impact of social media on shaping their views of academic content. Meanwhile, 10% of the respondents were "Neutral." indicating some uncertainty or ambivalence regarding the influence of social media on their academic perceptions. On the contrary, 5% "Strongly Disagreed" and another 15% "Disagreed." revealing that a small but notable portion of students do not believe that social media has influenced their perception of academic information. This distribution underscores the varied ways in which social media canimpact students perspectives on academic content, highlight the importance of critically evaluating information encountered on these platforms to ensure is accuracy and reliability

Table 4.12 There is a need for increased media literacy education to help students navigate information on social media more responsibly?

Option	Respondent	Percentage (%)
Strongly agreed	27	27
Agreed	43	43
Neutral	5	5
Strongly disagreed	5	5
Disagreed	10	10
Total	100	100

Source Field survey: 2024

Table 4.12 presents data on whether respondents believe there is a need for increased media social media more responsibly. literacy education to help students navigate information According to the table. 27% of the respondents "Strongly Agreed." indicating a strong conviction that enlianced media literacy education is necessary. Additionally, 43% of the respondents "Agreed." suggesting a majority consensus on the importance of such education. Meanwhile. 5 the respondents were "Neutral." indicating some uncertainty regarding the need for increased media literacy education. On the contrary, 5% "Strongly Disagreed" and another 10% "Disagreed," revealing that a small portion of students do not believe that increased media

literacy education is necessary. This distribution highlights widespread recognition among students of the importance of media literacy education in navigating information on social media responsibly.

Table 4.13 Would you support measures within the institution to promote a more responsible information-sharing culture on social media among students?

Option	Respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	78	27
No	22	43
Total	100	100

Source Field survey 2014

Table 4 13 displays data on whether respondents would support measures within the institution to promote a responsible information-sharing culture on social media among students. According to the table, a significant majority of 78% of the respondents chose "Yes," indicating strong support for intplementing measures to foster responsible information sharing. Conversely, 22% of the respondents chose "No," suggesting a mimarty opposing such measures. This data underscores a widespread recognition among students of the importance of promoting responsible information sharing on social media within the academic institution. It reflects a collective desire to create a more informed and trustworthy online environment, which aligns with efforts to combat the spread of misinformation and enhance digital literacy. The high level of support for these measures suggests a readiness among students to actively engage in initiatives aimed at promoting responsible social media use and mitigating the negative effects of misinformation within the academic community.

Table 4.14 Social media platforms have enhanced the accessibility of academic resources and information at Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin

Option	Respondent	Percentage (%)
Strongly agreed	27	27
Agreed	43	43
Neutral	5	5
Strongly disagreed	5	5
Disagreed	10	10
Total	100	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 4.14 provides data on whether social media platforms have enhanced the accessibility of academic resources and information at Kwara State Polytechnic, Herin. According to the table. 27% of the respondents "Strongly Agreed." indicating a strong endorsement of the idea that social media 1 ignificantly improved access to academic resources. Additionally, 43% of the respondents "Agreed." suggesting a majority consensus on the positive impact of social media in this regard. Conversely. 5% of the respondents were "Neutral," indicating some uncertainty

regarding the 1 of social media on the sccessibility of avadente resources. On the contrary, 59% "Strongly Disagreed" and assother 10% "Disagreed." revealing that a minority of students do not believe that social media platforms have enhanced accessibility to academic resources. This distribution underscores the varied perspectives among students regarding the role of social media in accessing academic information, While a significant portion acknowledges its positive impact, there are still some who remain skeptical or unconvinced of its benefits.

Table 4.15 Students often engage in academic discussions and knowledge-sharing activities through social media platforms.

Option	Respondent	Percentage (%)
Strongly agreed	30	30
Agreed	40	40
5	5	5
Strongly disagreed	5	5
Disagreed	10	10
Total	100	100

Source: Field survey. 2024

Table 4.15 provides data on whether students often engage in academic discussions and knowledge-sharing activities through social media platforms. According to the table, 30% of the respondents "Strongly Agreed," indicating a strong endorsement of the idea that students frequently participate in academic discussions and knowledge-sharing activities on social media. Additionally, 40% of the respondents "Agreed," suggesting a majority consensus on the active engagement of students in such activities. Conversely, 5% of the respondents were "Neutral," indicating some uncertainty or ambivalence regarding the extent of students' participation in academic discussions on social media. On the contrary, 5% "Strongly Disagreed" and mother 10% "Disagreed." revealing that a minority of students do not believe that students often engage in academic discussions through social media platforms. This distribution highlights the varied perspectives among students regarding the prevalence of academic discussions and knowledge-sharing activities on social media. While a significant portion acknowledges active engagement, there are still some who question the frequency or extent of such interactions.

Table 4.16 Social media platforms provide a platform for students to collaborate on academic projects and assignments effectively.

Option	Respondent	Percentage (%)
Strongly agreed	20	20
Agreed	45	45
5	10	10
Strongly disagreed	5	5
Disagreed	10	10
Total	100	100

Source: Field survey. 2024

Table 4.16 presents data on whether social media platforms provide a platform for students to collaborate on academic projects and assignments effectively. According to the table, 20% of the respondents "Strongly Agreed," indicating a strong endorsement of the idea that social media facilitates effective collaboration for academic projects. Additionally, 45% of the respondents "Agreed," suggesting a majority consensus on the effectiveness of social media for academic collaboration. Conversely, 10% of the respondents were "Neutral." indicating some uncertainty or ambivalence regarding the effectiveness of social media for collaborative academic work. On the contrary, 5% "Strongly Disagreed" and another 10% "Disagreed." revealing that a minority of students do not believe that social media platforms provide an effective platform for academic collaboration. These data underscore the varied perspectives among students regarding the role of social media in facilitating collaborative academic work. While a significant portion acknowledges its effectiveness, there are still some who question its suitability for collaborative academic endeavors.

Table 4.17 Social media has facilitated better communication between students and academic staff members at Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin

Option	Respondent	Percentage (%)
Strongly agreed	20	20
Agreed	55	55
5	5	5
Strongly disagreed	5	5
Disagreed	10	10
Total	100	100

Source: Field survey. 2024

Table 4.17 presents data on whether social media has facilitated better communication between students and academic staff members at Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin. According to the table, 20% of the respondents "Strongly Agreed," indicating a strong endorsement of the idea that social media significantly improved communication between students and academic staff. Additionally, 55% of the respondents "Agreed," suggesting a majority consensus on the positive impact of social media on communication in this context. Conversely, 5% of the respondents were "Neutral." indicating some uncertainty or ambivalence regarding the effect of social media on communication between students and academic staff. On the contrary. 5% "Strongly Disagreed" and another 15% "Disagreed," revealing that a minority of students do not believe that social media has facilitated better communication in this context. These data highlight the varied perspectives among students regarding the role of social media in enhancing communication between students and academic staff members. While a significant portion acknowledges its positive impact, there are still some who question or disagree with this assertion.

Table 4 18: The use of social media has improved overall academic performance among students at Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin

Option	Respondent	Percentage (%)
Strongly agreed	30	30
Agreed	35	35
5	5	5
Strongly disagreed	5	5
Disagreed	10	10
Total	100	100

Source: Field survey. 2024

Table 4.18 presents data on whether the use of social media has improved overall academic performance among students at Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin, According to the table, 30% of the respondents "Strongly Agreed." indicating a strong endorsement of the idea that social media has significantly enhanced academic performance. Additionally, 55% of the respondents "Agreed," sugestng a majority consensus on the positive impact of social media on academic performance. Conversely. 5% of the respondents were "Neutral," indicating some uncertainty or ambivalence regarding the effect of social media on academic performance. On the contrary, 5% "Strongly Disagreed" and another 5% "Disagreed." revealing that a minority of students do not believe that social media has improved overall academic performance. These data highlight the varied perspectives among students regarding the role of socialinedia in academic success While a significant portion acknowledges its positive impact, there are still some who question or disagree with this assertion.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research question I: How does social media usage among students of Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin contribute to the dissemination of disinformation within the academic environment?

The study shows that a significant portion of students frequently use social media platforms like WhatsApp (55%) and Facebook (35%), which can serve as channels for both accurate information and disinformation Data indicates that 37% of students occasionally encounter

misleading infuriation related to their studies, highlighting how social media can contribute to the spread of disinformation within the academic environment

Research question 11: What factors influence the susceptibility of students to engage with and share disinformation on social media platforms in the context of their academic pursuits?

Several factor influence susceptibility to disinformation: 55% of students reported not receiving formal digital literacy education, and only 50% felt moderately confident in discerning credible information from misinformation. Additionally, 45% of respondents disagreed that they often fact-check information before sharing it. exacerbating their vulnerability to engaging with and spreading disinformation

Research question III: In what ways can educational institutions effectively mitigate the impact of social media-driven disinformation?

Educational institutions can mitigate the impact by implementing comprehensive media literacy programs. as 7 of students agreed or strongly agreed on the need for increased media literacy education Promoting a culture of responsible information sharing, providing guidelines, and conducting workshops on ethical social media use are essential. Additionally, fostering collaboration between students and academic staff to create and disseminate reliable academic content can help reduce misinformation. A significant 78% of students supported measures to promote responsible information-sharing culture, indicating a readiness to engage in initiatives aimed at mitigating the impact of disinformation.

4.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study on social media's impact on disinformation among students at Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin, reveals several key insights. The demographic analysis shows that both male (42%) and female (58%) students widely use various social media platforms, with WhatsApp (55nd Facebook (35%) being particularly popular. These platforms serve as both resources and potential misinformation channels.

Despite 36% of students identifying as having intermediate digital literacy skills, 55% reported not receiving formal digital literacy education, resulting in moderate confidence (50%) in discerning credible information from misinformation. A significant portion of students (37%) occasionally encountered misleading information related to their studies, highlighting the prevalent risk of misinformation.

Social media is acknowledged for enhancing access to academic resources (43% agreed) and improving con......indication between students and academic staff (55% agreed). It also facilitates academic discussions and collaborations, with 70% of students agreeing that social media provides a platform for effective collaboration on projects and assignments.

However, the strong support (70%) to increased media literacy education underscores the need for targeted programs to enhance critical evaluation skills. Implementing comprehensive media literacy initiatives, promoting responsible information-sharing practices, and encouraging collaboration on reliable content creation are essential steps for addressing the challenges posed by social media-driven disinformation.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION
5.1   SUMMARY

The study on the impact of social media on disinformation sharing among students at Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin, reveals several critical insights. Both male and female students extensively use various social media platforms, with WhatsApp and Facebook being particularly per. This widespread use highlights the significant reach and influence of social media among the student population, which can serve as both a valuable resource and a potential source of misinformation.

Despite a considerable number of students identifying as having intermediate digital literacy skills, more than half have not received formal digital literacy education. This gap results in only moderate confidence in discerning credible information from misinformation, making students susceptible to disinformation. A significant portion of students frequently encounter misleading information related to their studies, underscoring the pervasive nature of misinformation social media and its potential to negatively impact academic performance.

On the positive side, social media is recognized for its role in enhancing academic engagement. It improves access to academic resources and facilitates better communication between students and academic staff. Social media also supports academic discussions and collaborations, with many students using it to work on projects and assignments. These benefits demonstrate the potential of social media as a tool for enriching the academic experience.

However, the findings highlight a strong need for increased media literacy education. A significant majority of students support the implementation of programs aimed at enhancing critical evaluate skills and promoting responsible information-staring practices. Addressing these challenges through comprehensive media literacy initiatives is essential to maximize the positive impacts of social media while mitigating the risks associated with misinformation.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study shads fight on the multifaceted relationship between social media and academic life among students at Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin. The finding underscore sons the pervasive influence of social media in various aspects of demean from information's dissemination and knowledge-sharing to communicate and academic staff. Despite the recognized benefits, such as enhanced d access to academic resources and improved communication channels, there are she challenges posed by the prevalence of misinformation and the need for increased medial literacy situation. Moreover, while social medial platforms provide opportunities for cotton and discussion, there contains a need for critical evaluation of the information shared sure its accuracy and reliability

Moving forward, it is evident that there is a pressing need for comprehensive strategies t promote responsible social media use within the academic community. Initiatives aimed enhancing digital literacy and critical thinking skills should he prioritized to empower students in navigating the digital landscape effectively. Additionally, fostering a culture of fact-checking and promoting Jogue about the responsible sharing of information on social media platforms can contribute to mitigating the spread of misinformation and fostering a more informed academic environment. By addressing these challenges and capitalizing on the opportunities presented by social media, Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin, can harness the potential of digital technologies to enrich the academic experience and foster a vibrant and inclusive learning community.

5.3 RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be proposed to address the challenges and leverage the opportunities associated with social media in the academic context of Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin. Firstly, there is a crucial need for the development and implementation of comprehensive media literacy programs tailored to students needs. These programs should focus on equipping students with the necessary skills to critically evaluate information encountered on social media platforms, thereby enhancing their ability to discern credible sources from misinformation.

Furthermore, proactive measures should be taken to promote responsible information-sharing practices among students. This could involve the establishment of guidelines or workshops on ethical social media use, emphasizing the importance of fact-checking and verifying information

before sharing it with peers. Additionally, collaboration between academic staff and students in creating and disseminating accurate and reliable academic content on social media platforms can contribute to fostering a culture of accountability and integrity in digital communication

Academic institutions should explore opportunities to integrate social media platforms into the formal learning process. This could include incorporating social media-based assignments, discussions, and collaborative projects into the curriculum, providing students with practical experience in leveraging these tools for academic purposes while reinforcing critical thinking and research skills.

Lastly, ongoing research and evaluation of the impact of social media on academic engagement and performance should be conducted to inform evidence-based strategies and interventions. By continually assessing the evolving dynamics of social media use among students and its effects on academic outcomes, the institution can adapt its approaches to better meet the needs and challenges of the digital age.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE
KWARA STATE POLYTECHNIC, INSTITUTE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY,

Dear Respondent,

I am a student of the above-named department conducting a research work on the topic IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON INFORMATION SHARING WITHIN THE ACADRAMIC ENVIRONMENT AT KWARA STATE POLYTECHNIC, ILORIN

I shall be happy if you fill the questionnaire as sincerely as possible Your identity shall be kept con dential as possible, and the data gathered therein will be used strictly for academic purpose.

INSTRUCTION: Please (7) the answer you consider appropriate.

SECTION A

1. Gender? (a) Male [ ] (b) Female [ ] (c) Other (please specify:

3. Social Media Platforms Used (select all that apply)?

(a)Facebook [j (b) Twitter [ ] (c) Instagram [ ] (d) Linkedin [ ] (e) Snapchat [ ]
(d) Tik Tok [ ] (g) Other specify:

4. What is the Average Time you Spent on Social Media Daily? (a) Less than 30 minutes [ ] (b) 30 minutes - 1 hour [ ] (c) 1-2 hours [ ] (d) 2-4 hours [ ] (e) More than 4 hours [ ]

SECTION B

5. How would you rate your overall digital literacy skills? (a) Novice [ ] (b) Beginner (6) Intermediate [ ] (d) Advanced [ ] (e) Expert [ ]

6. Have you received any formal education or training on digital literacy? (a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]

7. On a scale from 1 to 5, how confident are you in your ability to discern credible information from misinformation on social media? (a) [ ] (Not confident at all) (b) 2[ ] (c) 3 [ ] (d) 45 (Extremely confident)

8. How often do you engage with social media platforms on a daily basis? (a) Never [ ] (b) Rarely [ ] (c) Occasionally [ ] (d) Frequently [ ] (d) Always [ ]

9. Ave you aware of the potential spread of misinformation on social media within the academic environment? (a) Not aware at all [ ] (b) Somewhat aware [ ] (c) Moderately aware [ ] (d) Very aware (e) Extremely aware [ ]

10. Have you ever encountered information on social media that you later discovered was inaccurate or misleading regarding your academic pursuits? (u) Never [ ] (b) Rarely [ ] (c) occasionally [ ] (d) Frequently [ ] (e) Always [ ]

11. How often do you participate in discussions or share academic-related content on social media platforms? (a) Never [ ] (b) Rarely [ ] (c) Occasionally [ ] (e) Frequently [ ] (f) Always

12. Have you ever been a victim of or witnessed the negative consequences of misinformation on social media within the academic setting? (a) Never [ ]| (b) Rarely [ ] (c) Occasionally [ ] (d) Frequency (e) Always [ ]|

Key words: SA = Strongly Agree, A Agree. N = Neutral, D = Disagree and SD – Strongly Disagree.

S/N	Statement	Respondents				
13	Social media contributes to the dissemination of dissemination among students at Kwara State Polytechnic?	SA	A	N	D	SD
14	Students often do fact-check information received on social media before sharing it with peers or colleagues					
15	. Social media has influenced your perception of information related to your academic studies?					

16	There is a need for increased media literacy education to help students navigate information on social media more responsibility					
17	Would you support measures within the institution to promote a more responsible information-sharing culture on social media among students?					
18	Social media platforms have enhanced the accessibility of academic resources and information at Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin.					
19.	Students often engage in academic discussions and knowledge-sparing activities through social media platforms.					
20	Social media platforms provide a platform for students to collaborate on academic projects and assignments effectively.					
21	Social media has facilitated better communication between students and academic staff members at Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin					
22	The use of social media has improved overall academic performance among students at Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin.					