

CHAPTER TEN

SOCIAL MEDIA RESEARCH WRITING, DISSEMINATION, AND PUBLICATION

Dickson Adom

Department of Educational Innovations in Science and Technology, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana

adomdick2@gmail.com / dickson.adom@knust.edu.gh

Ampofo Twene

Department of Publishing Studies, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana

ampofodrum@gmail.com

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

- Steps in writing social media research and publication.
- Ways in disseminating social media research.

ABSTRACT

Social media research has been one of the fastest-growing disciplines in the 21st century due to the great interest in social media outlets as an avenue for information, education, and entertainment. However, few published articles offer a clear pathway to the writing, dissemination, and publishing of social media research. This chapter offers simple but comprehensive procedural steps for undertaking the writing of social media research while highlighting the accepted dissemination and publication outlets for social media research papers to reach a larger readership audience. This study heavily relied on a careful document analysis of published articles under the desk survey approach and the time-tested experiences of seasoned researchers. It assures social media researchers that scholarly procedures in writing, disseminating, and publishing the findings of their studies are within reach and highly possible. However, scholarliness on their part would require that they meticulously follow the standard practices elucidated in the chapter for success in undertaking their social media studies.

Keywords: Journal article publishing, Research dissemination, Research methodology, Research writing, Social media research

INTRODUCTION

A new class of information technologies known as social media has exploded in popularity in recent years, allowing people to communicate and collaborate via Internet-based platforms. Sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter, which each have hundreds of millions of users as of this writing, are among the most well-known of these tools (Pretorius et al., 2018). The

youth of today are much involved in the use of social media. In recent years, students in second cycle institutions have become increasingly interested in social networking. It is a way to connect with pals from within and outside the school's walls. Social networking offers a means of connecting to a community of users (Karaaslan et al., 2021). However, we have only a rudimentary knowledge of how researchers are using social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, and if so, for what objectives; and how they integrate into the research life cycle (Pretorius et al., 2018). The phrase "social media" has several definitions. At its most basic level, social media platforms are web-based environments that enable users to create and share information while engaging others online. User-Generated Content (UGC) is created and distributed by online users via social media networks (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Platforms can be classified according to their functionality under this definition. Basically, six social media platforms are categorized based on their function (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). They include websites for blogging such as Twitter and Tumblr, online platforms for content sharing such as YouTube, Instagram and Flickr, social network platforms such as Facebook, online collaborative project platforms like Wikipedia, Virtual social communities such as Farmville and Online video game for entertainment platforms such as World of Warcraft.

Big data must be considered because of the scope of social media research and data. The origins of big data may be traced back to the early twenty-first century when commercial enterprises began to produce massive databases. For example, Google, eBay, LinkedIn, and Facebook were created from the ground up on big data (Davenport & Dyché, 2013). On the other hand, social media research refers to any study that employs data derived from social media sources (Pretorius et al., 2018). Furthermore, social media research refers to the systematic process of collecting, analyzing and interpreting data from social media platforms. Social media research is mainly quantitative, though there are few qualitative and mixed methods studies available. Based on this premise, there are two types of research. The first is the use of social media as a data collection tool for research, such as the use of surveys. The second is conducting a scholarly investigation on the activities and contents on social media.

Due to the social nature of studies in this area, data is primarily obtained through purpose-built platforms. Various methodological considerations must be considered to ensure rigour, as with any new research; these practicalities will be discussed. Economists, educators, and researchers are disputing whether the use of new technologies, such as social media, can promote better study because of the vast amount of data available due to its expanding popularity. As a result, the main objective of this study was to teach researchers how to conduct social media research. The chapter provides a step-by-step guide for writing, disseminating, and publishing social media research.

METHODOLOGIES USED IN SOCIAL MEDIA RESEARCH

Quantitative and qualitative methods are the two types of methodologies employed in social media research. Quantitative research is a method for investigating the relationship between variables in order to test objective theories. These variables can then be measured using tools, resulting in numerical data that can be examined using statistical processes (Creswell &

Guetterman, 2018). The quantitative approach utilizes the number of followers, users, rate of usage, engagement, and searches, and a number of reactions such as views, likes, comments, quotations, and many more. In contrast, qualitative research is a method of investigating and comprehending the meaning that individuals or groups attach to a social or human issue. Emerging questions and processes are part of the research process, as are data acquired in the participant's environment, data analysis that builds inductively from specifics to broad themes, and the researcher's interpretations of the data (Creswell & Guetterman 2018). The qualitative technique integrates visual, textual and auditory material such as image tags, media tone, text, tone, and sentiment. Furthermore, biographical data (gender, age, nationality, occupation, and so on) as well as geography, textual semantics, and other demographic aspects help both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Although quantitative and qualitative methods are the main research methods for social media, mixed methods research approaches could also be used. In a mixed-method, wherein the researcher collects both quantitative (closed-ended) and qualitative (open-ended) data, integrates the two, and then interprets the results based on the combined strengths of both types of data to comprehend research challenges have the potential to be useful in social media studies as well (Creswell, 2014).

Empirical review of quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods

This section gives a brief review of studies conducted using quantitative and qualitative methods on social media research. Joshi (2017) employs a quantitative strategy to investigate the influence of social media reviews on brand perception. This study used hypothesis testing to obtain data that indicated a relationship between dependent and independent variables. The correlation method was employed in the investigation. In a linear regression model, the study used the interval scale. Using the R programming language, the study gathered 942 YouTube videos created by tech content developers with 69 YouTube reviewers from the United States and Canada creating these films for six smartphone companies (Joshi, 2017). The values that were assigned to the independent variable were resolution of the video, tonality, video duration, date published, channel, and smartphone brand (Joshi, 2017). The values that were assigned to the dependent variable were views, likes, dislikes, shares, comments, and subscriptions. Cheng et al. investigate the relationship between content creators' videos and YouTube's algorithmically generated recommended videos (Dale & Liu, 2008). While the study stressed the importance of content producer choice, it focused on YouTube's snowball effect rather than the impact of these content creators on viewer choice. In addition, as the essential metric of popularity, this study concentrated on counting the total number of views generated by the videos.

However, in terms of qualitative approaches (Aksoy, 2018) also conducts a study on the causes of social media addiction. The study included 25 students from the Gaziosmanpaşa University School of Education who had previously completed the Esgi (2016) Social Media Usage Questionnaire and determined that they were addicted to social media. There were twelve males and thirteen females among the students. The study was carried out as a qualitative investigation. The experience, knowledge, and behaviours of students who use

social media were examined in this study. As part of the document analysis, students' e-mails and social media activities were examined.

Behan (2014) investigated the effectiveness of Facebook fans' perceptions of the Facebook brand. This study investigated the influence of a Facebook page on brand friends using a qualitative non-experimental single case study technique. The issue is a misunderstanding of the influence of social media sites such as Facebook on a user's opinion of a brand. According to the data acquired, the use of Facebook by SMEs aid in the maintenance and, in some cases, improvement of the good perception of the brand. This influence on brand perception is also dependent on the drivers of a) connection, b) change in perception, c) internal value, d) goodwill and e) the choosing process, according to the research (Behan, 2014). The study's findings indicate that Facebook is an important marketing communication medium for SMEs in terms of brand impression.

Vyas, Landry, Schnider, Rojas and Wood (2012), for example, used a survey and follow-up interviews to investigate Latino youth's usage of short message services and social media, as well as the potential role of these services as communication techniques in public health programs. These examples show how qualitative and mixed methodologies research approaches can be used in tandem to uncover new insights.

STRUCTURE, WRITING AND APPROACH TO SOCIAL MEDIA RESEARCH

Social media research is not different from the structure and procedure used in other research however, It must begin with a well-defined research problem and end with a well-designed research protocol that outlines the entire plan (Getahun et al., 2013). This foundation should result in a set of data that can be used to build the manuscript. Manuscripts submitted to journals for publication consideration often comprise these key elements: abstract section, introduction, review of related literature, materials and methods, results and discussions as well as conclusions. The following is a suitable way to draft a social media research manuscript. Write the methods section first, based mostly on your initial study procedure, and possibly during the experimental portion of the work to ensure that all information is covered. The results section details the data garnered from the field, illustrated using figures and tables. Depending on the type of study, there may be some iteration in the display of the data and the drafting of the material. After that, rethink the research questions the study will cover and write the introduction, using your research approach as a guide. Then, using the introduction and results as a starting point, create the Discussion. After summarising everything in an Abstract, condense and refocus it into a Conclusions section (Getahun et al., 2013).

Title page

The title page of any research study includes the topic, the author's name, the year of publication, the name of the institution, or the name of the journal. It is preferable if the researcher defines the scope of the research issue. Limiting yourself to a particular aspect of social media makes the study manageable and researchable. For instance “the impact of social media on brand perception” is more researchable than “ social media”. Again, "the

influence of social media on brand perception" includes certain essential factors that help to keep the study manageable. Again, the document's title and the authors and author connections should be succinct and to the point. Provide five (5) keywords and a concise title (sometimes known as a running title) for the text. Finally, include detailed contact information for the appropriate author.

Abstract

The term "abstract" comes from the Latin *abstractum*, which means a condensed version of a longer piece of literature. Abstracts are classified into two types: descriptive and instructive. Your field of study determines the type of abstract you write. It is also a summary of the whole study being conducted. The abstract is generally the last thing you write, yet it is the first thing people look at when they want a fast summary of the entire manuscript (Koopman, 2022). We recommend that you write the abstract last because you will better understand all your results and conclusions. The abstract should be viewed as a separate document, with no material from the body of the report dependent on the abstract and no material from the body of the report relying on the abstract. The purpose of the experiment should be expressed clearly in the first sentence. If the experiment is based on a hypothesis, which is highly recommended, the hypothesis should be mentioned first, followed by phrases clarifying the basis and evaluation (Getahun et al., 2013).

For papers in the humanities and social sciences, as well as psychology essays, descriptive abstracts are commonly employed. The bulk of descriptive abstracts shares a few fundamental elements (background, purpose, specific interest or focus of work, and an overview of contents (not always included)). Informative abstracts are commonly used in scientific, engineering, or psychological studies. In roughly 250 words, you must convey the essence of your report's topic (Loopman, 2022). The majority of informative abstracts have a few crucial components in common. Each of these sections might be 1-2 sentences long. It includes the following sections: background, research aim or purpose, technique, findings or results, and conclusion. The word count limit for an abstract is sometimes dependent on the journal's specifications. The IMRAD format, which consists of a concise version of the introduction, methods, results, and discussion, is preferred by most journals. Also, standard practices require that no references be cited in the abstract section. Regarding the word count limit for abstracts, authors must consult the journal's specifications or house style as each of them differs in the word count allowed for the abstract section.

Introduction

A brief survey of related and relevant literature to the research topic is required in the introduction. Three to four paragraphs may be required. The introduction takes the reader from a broad research problem or issues to your specific research topic. Thus, the writing of the introductory section often follows the funnel format where generalized contexts of the topic are discussed from the global perspective and narrowed down to the regional, specific contexts. The introductory section contextualizes your research topic by describing the significance of the study. This is usually accomplished by summarizing current knowledge as well as background information on the subject. The discussions of the theoretical and

empirical studies in any aspect of the social media discipline must assist in exposing the research gaps or academic lacunas that call for new research. This is followed by a statement of the research topic or problem's objective(s). The next section could highlight the study's hypotheses or research questions that you hope to address through your research. If any direct theories could be linked to the study, it is discussed briefly by highlighting its proponents and the theoretical perspectives of the theory. The author(s) must then show the theoretical connections of their study with the theoretical propositions of the existing theories cited. If a conceptual framework is developed, especially in cases where no theory agrees directly with the intents of the new study, a diagrammatic representation of the framework, showing the interconnections of the study's variables or key constructs must be established (Adom et al., 2018). The introductory section should conclude with a synopsis of the paper's structure. This concise synopsis offers a guide for readers on the various aspects of the paper.

Methods

This section of the paper details the research methodologies deployed in carrying out the study. It comprehensively discusses how the study was undertaken. It highlights the research approach, research designs, sampling procedures, sample size and their justification, data collection and analytical tools, and brief information on the study areas. Enough scholarly justifications, with support, preferably from the literature should buttress the selection of each methodological approach adopted. A brief discussion of studies that have successfully utilized the methodological approach in similar studies could be cited to justify the projected success of the study using the same methodological framework. This section must not leave any room for doubts but must offer all essential information to allow other researchers who would want to replicate the study under similar conditions to get the same or similar findings.

Results

The data garnered for the study are presented to readers in this section. It should be noted that the results section is not a forum for debate or interpretation of the findings. Tables and figures should be used to present illustrate and enliven the data collected. Each set of tables and figures should be introduced in its own paragraph, emphasizing the overall trends and key data points (Getahun et al., 2013). You might want to make a note in the text about where a particular table or figure is located in situations where the tables and figures are to be presented separately in the paper submission process. Socio-demographic data of the study participants are often presented before the actual data garnered for each of the specific objectives that undergird the study.

Discussions

When writing the discussion of the research findings, keep the following points in mind. The major findings of the study must be scholarly stated and their interpretations or meanings explained in great detail. In this section, you offer an intellectual and captivating discussion of what the data presented in the results section means in relation to the research questions for the study. The interpretations of the data garnered cannot make full sense if it is done alone. Therefore, it is important to relate the study's findings to other empirical studies that have already been published as part of the scholarship in the field of inquiry. Show the connections

of the study's results with the theories that underpinned the study and the conceptual framework (if any) that was projected to show the connections of the study's variables (Adom et al., 2018). The "Discussion" portion should generally not be longer than the sum of the previous sections (introduction, materials and techniques, and findings), and it should be completed in 6-7 paragraphs (Sanli et al., 2013). The discussions will be academically refreshing if alternative explanations for the findings are given while highlighting the novel findings and relevance of the study (Hess, 2004; Sanli et al., 2013). Finally, be aware of the study's limitations. However, avoid over-interpretation of the data and unnecessary guesswork when writing the discussion section.

Conclusion

The foremost purpose of the concluding section is to go through the key points that have been highlighted in the work. The section assists the reader recall the article as a whole by reiterating the important ideas. The second purpose of the concluding section is to connect the statements presented in the paper to the study's thesis or intent, which was most likely stated in the introduction. This helps the reader to remember the importance of your claims in the context of your larger argument. The conclusions are largely built on the key findings. The conclusion's final purpose is to portray a sense of involvement with the topic that extends beyond the argument or prompt. This shows the reader that you, the writer, have given careful consideration to the consequences of your work (Hedengren, 2020). The limitations of the study suggested areas for further research, and the study's recommendations for policy implementation purposes are highlighted in this section. The concluding section serves as the rope to link the existing study with future studies to be conducted to acknowledge the cyclical nature of the research process.

Acknowledgements

This section is a brief note recognizing and thanking participants or consultants who are not authors of this study. This could include government entities, institutions, families and research assistants who provided various assistance to the study's completion.

References

The referencing style depends on how a particular journal renders its publication in social media research. The most common referencing styles include American Psychological Association (APA), Chicago referencing style, Harvard referencing style, American Medical Association (AMA) referencing style, and Modern Language Association (MLA) referencing style (Hedengren, 2020). The selection of the referencing style is dependent on the journal house style. Authors must ensure the inclusion of all the citations of all referenced materials that were used in the text. The references should be carefully chosen to include all relevant field sources as well as earlier studies that support or drive the current effort. On the other hand, extraneous references should not be included in an attempt to simply cite certain authors or periodicals (Getahun et al., 2013). Zotero, EndNote, RefWorks, Citavi, PaperPile, Docear, JabRef, and Mendeley are online referencing management software that can offer immeasurable assistance in referencing researchers.

DISSEMINATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA RESEARCH

The process of spreading research findings to stakeholders and a larger audience is referred to as dissemination. Uptake and application of research findings are critical for long-term performance and survival of practice-based research networks (PBRNs) (Pbrn, 2018). Research initiatives must produce a dissemination plan that specifies how the project's outcomes will be shared with stakeholders, relevant institutions, organizations, and individuals to utilise them. The aim of dissemination, the message to be conveyed, the audience, the method, and the time are all explained in detail in a dissemination plan. While there are numerous methods for disseminating information, it is critical to choose the best one(s) to reach your target audience and achieve your goal. The initiative can also be promoted through newsletters and press releases. Information regarding the project can also be communicated through reports, academic papers (journals), and websites. Like any other type of research, social media research is disseminated across all social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and so on. The research and its findings can be promoted through conference presentations and academic platforms such as ResearchGate, Academia, Kudos, FigShare, and others. Academic institutional repositories, as well as personal blogs, are equally fertile grounds for the dissemination of research articles from social media research.

CHOOSING A SUITABLE JOURNAL FOR THE PUBLICATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA RESEARCH

After the dissemination plan has been decided, the final stage is choosing a journal for publication. There are several categories of journals depending on the kind of paper you want to publish. For instance, if the type of social media research the researcher conducting is basically for education but not on medical issues, it is appropriate to choose an education journal for your paper. Looking at a few issues from various journals, on the other hand, will almost certainly show that research report writing styles vary widely. The length and depth of literature reviews, as well as the extent to which authors describe any underlying theoretical underpinning and the level of statistical data, and the extent to which authors describe any underlying theoretical underpinning and the level of statistical data varies greatly amongst publications (Maddux & Liu, 2005; Sanli et al., 2013). Some publications only require the most basic information, such as whether or not significant differences were found, but others usually include extensive tables and graphs based on the findings. Some publications, primarily aimed at practitioners, want conversational, easy-to-understand language, whereas others require more technical terminology. Looking through back issues of a journal is one of the most important ways to get a sense of the quality and weight (the term weight here can refer to the breadth and depth with which the issue is explored, the number of statistical procedures and results presented, or the level of vocabulary used in the writing) of the work that is typically published in that journal. Furthermore, proper manuscript matching with the relevant journal necessitates a thorough understanding of the available data from a scientific standpoint (Sanli et al., 2013).

CONCLUSION

This chapter has given a general overview of social media research and the systematic processes that could guide the writing of studies in potential areas in the niche. The points that have been elucidated in the chapter are not cast in stone for the writing of all manuscripts for the vibrant and ever-growing social media research field. Social media research is not delineated from the usual research process in other disciplines. Its uniqueness is based on the use of data largely shared on its platforms. Based on the survey of empirical studies that are largely situated in the quantitative methods, it is recommended that social media researchers engage extensively in mixed methods studies to give room for the use of both qualitative and quantitative data sets to phenomena studied in the area.

REFERENCES

- Adom, D., Adu-Agyem, J., & Hussein, E. K. (2018). Theoretical and Conceptual Framework: Mandatory Ingredients of Quality Research. *International Journal of Scientific Research*, 7, 538-441.
- Cheng, X., Dale, C., & Liu, J. (2008, June). Statistics and social network of YouTube videos. In *Quality of Service*, 2008 (pp. 229-238). IEEE.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *A concise introduction to mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J., & Guetterman, T. (2018). *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*, 6th Edition.
- Davenport, T. H., & Dyché, J. (2013). Big Data in Big Companies. Retrieved November 30, 2021, from SAS Institute. Retrieved from <http://www.sas.com/resources/asset/Big-Data-in-Big-Companies.pdf>
- Esgi, N. (2016). Development of Social Media Addiction Test (SMAT17). *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 4(10), 174-181.
- Getahun, F., Mazengia, F., Abuhay, M., & Birhanu, Z. (2013). Comprehensive knowledge about cervical cancer is low among women in Northwest Ethiopia. *BMC Cancer*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2407-13-2>.
- Hedengren, B. (2009). *A Brief Guide to Writing at BYU*. 59.
- Hess, D. R. (2004). How to write an effective discussion. *Respiratory Care*, 49(10), 1238–1241.
- Joshi, N. (2017). *A Quantitative Study of the Impact of Social Media Reviews on Brand Perception*. Retrieved from <http://arxiv.org/abs/1710.08836>
- Karaaslan, M., Şengün, F., Cansu, Ü., Başıyigit, B., Sağlam, H., & Karaaslan, A. (2021). Gum arabic/maltodextrin microencapsulation confers peroxidation stability and antimicrobial ability to pepper seed oil. *Food Chemistry*, 337(6), 94–102. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodchem.2020.127748>
- Pbrn. (2018). *Quick-Start Guide to Dissemination for Practice-Based Research Networks*. 1–5. Retrieved from https://pbrn.ahrq.gov/sites/default/files/AHRQPBRNDisseminationQuickStartGuide_0.pdf
- Pretorius, R. W., Azali, K., Budiman, A., Yunus, M. M., Salehi, H., Kaplan, A. M., Haenlein, M., Kane, G. C., Alavi, M., Labianca, G. J., Stephen, P., Kane, G. C., Moriano, P., Ferrara, E., Flammini, A., Menczer, F., Nicholas, D., Rowlands, I., Ismail, S., ... Erlbaum, N. J. (2018). The Use of Social Media to Assist Writing Skills among Secondary Pupils. *Information Services and Use*, 8(May), 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781786435767.00039>
- Sanli, O., Erdem, S., & Tefik, T. (2013). *How to write a discussion section ?September*. <https://doi.org/10.5152/tud.2013.049>