

Undergraduates' Perceived Credibility of Political News on Nigerian News Blogs

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Abstract:

The digital transformation of the global economy has redefined the media landscape, with news consumption increasingly shifting from traditional outlets to online platforms. In Nigeria, news blogs such as Legit.ng, Nairaland, Naija News, Linda Ikeji, Bella Naija, and Gossip Mill Nigeria have become popular sources of political information. However, concerns persist regarding their credibility, accuracy, and influence on public opinion. Guided by Source Credibility Theory and Uses and Gratification Theory, this study investigates undergraduates' perceptions of the credibility of Nigerian news blogs as platforms for political news. A descriptive research design was employed, and data were collected through structured questionnaire administered to 381 purposively selected respondents, comprising 300 students from Olabisi Onabanjo University and 81 from Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic, Ogun State. Findings reveal Legit.ng as the most frequently accessed blog, followed by Linda Ikeji and Nairaland. Results further indicate that 67% of respondents perceive political news on blogs as credible, while 14.5% express dissatisfaction. Engagement is relatively high, with 75% of students sharing, liking, and commenting, though active participation in discussions remains limited. The study recommends the need for Nigerian news blogs to strengthen credibility through transparent editorial practices, fact-checking, and audience-driven feedback mechanisms, thereby enhancing trust and political engagement.

Keywords: Blogs, Source Credibility, Gratification, Perception, Political News.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The world has become a digital economy since the advent of the internet, where businesses and other elements are digital. In this sense, the mass media is not exempted, as news feeds and broadcasts have gone digital (Chiedozie et al, 2023). Kamboj & Daya (2014) note that the emergence of social media, the widespread use of smartphones, and the development of the Internet have significantly changed how people access information worldwide. Accompanying the internet's evolution are several changes and advancements that the mass media in Nigeria and throughout the world are experiencing. News and information are progressively and consistently transferred from traditional media to digital platforms. New kinds of news and information from websites, blogs, and social media have become the main way to obtain media broadcasts as mobile phones have grown more popular (Chiedozie et al, 2023). Social media technologies, including wikis, blogs, media sharing, and social networking, have transformed society by meeting people's needs and promoting greater web accessibility, sustainability, and eventually technological participation (Kamboj & Dayal, 2014). This study aims to add to the existing body of knowledge by examining user's frequency of blog news consumption.

Anusiem (2017) considers a blog as a frequently updated diary or journal that appears in reverse chronology. He goes on to discuss the relatively new idea of blogospheres, which he defines as the social realm in which blogs coexist and communicate. More especially, it addresses the media environment in which blogs function as dynamic information sources. This research goes beyond understanding the idea of blogosphere. Rather, it provides a more comprehensive approach to examine the commonly used blogs as sources of news among the users.

Olumuji & Ogba (2018) explain that the environment for journalism and communications has evolved. The Internet has made it feasible for the average citizen to engage in non-professionalized, user-generated news gathering and dissemination activities even in the absence of traditional journalistic training. The idea of online journalism has also gained popularity, due to the blogosphere's rapid growth as a source of information. Elega (2018) posits that the rise of news blogs and the revitalization of online journalism have had a significant impact on traditional journalism practices. Nigerian news blogs have emerged as prominent sources of political news, catering to diverse audiences and offering alternative perspectives on socio-political issues. Political blogs often pose as news blogs since they have gained recognition for several significant accomplishments in both politics and journalism. This is the reason why the study examines the perspectives of youths to the credibility of political news on blogs.

Information on blogs is not usually independently vetted by journalists, therefore it is up to the information's recipient (the blog reader) to decide how reliable and trustworthy the information is (Kenix, 2009). Abdulbaqi, Qayum & Udende (2020) posit that respondents who solely blogged for leisure purposes, downloading movies and music are less likely to view blogs as extremely credible because, unlike users who rely on blogs as news sources, they may not find the constructs used to measure credibility to be as relevant to them. Since more people are obtaining their political news from online sources, there are concerns about the reliability and legitimacy of news blogs in influencing public opinion on political issues and events. This research aims to delve into what influences users' perception of the credibility of political news on News Blogs.

It may not be possible to know all of the news blogs that Nigerians use right now. This popularity and constant development of news blogs make it difficult, if not impossible, for a single study to capture all of the news blogs available to Nigerians today.

However, it is essential to carry out a study on how readers perceive the validity of blogs as news sources.

1.1 Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are to:

- i. examine user's frequency of blog news consumption.
- ii. identify the most commonly used blogs as sources of news among the users.
- iii. examine the factors that influence users' perception of the credibility of political news on news blogs.

2. CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

2.1 News blogs

The emergence of digital media has compelled traditional journalism to adapt to new forms of interactivity, multimedia expression, and evolving communication practices to meet the expectations of a technologically engaged audience (Orihuela, 2017). Within this transformation, blogs have become one of the most influential innovations, redefining how information is produced, disseminated, and consumed.

Derived from “weblogs”, blogs are online platforms that feature diverse articles and encourage active participation through comments and discussions (Duerden, 2010). Their significance lies in accessibility—any individual can publish content at any time—contributing to a dynamic and pluralistic online information environment. However, this same openness raises concerns about content authenticity, as blog entries are not typically subjected to the editorial gatekeeping of professional journalism (Kenix, 2009).

Blogs are also inherently participatory, enabling readers to engage in debates and share opinions, thus functioning as powerful online word-of-mouth (WOM) communication channels. Yet, this participatory model places the burden of credibility assessment on audiences themselves (Abdulbaqi, Qayum, & Udende, 2020). Elega (2018) categorises blogs into three major types: specific information blogs, general interest blogs, and news blogs. The latter, particularly, have gained prominence as real-time information sources, akin to continuous news channels. For many readers, especially university students, news blogs combine immediacy with accessibility, making them essential sources of political and social updates (Elega, 2018).

2.2 News blog credibility

The proliferation of news blogs has amplified debates over the credibility of online news sources. While digital technologies have enhanced information access, they have not guaranteed accuracy or reliability (Edogor, Jonah, & Ojo, 2015). Credibility, broadly defined as the capacity to inspire belief (Akoja & Nweneazizi, 2020), has become increasingly complex in the digital era. It now encompasses not only trustworthiness but

also authenticity, transparency, and authority (Amjad, Nik, & Rosli, 2016). As professional journalism coexists with user-generated content, the challenge of distinguishing credible reporting from misinformation intensifies.

The importance of credibility is underscored by its role in shaping public trust and perception. Hassan (2013) describes it as the lifeblood of journalism, central to audience engagement and acceptance of media messages. Yet, in a digital environment where editorial safeguards are often bypassed, news blogs may compromise rigour, thereby contributing to misinformation, distortion, and privacy violations (Akoja & Nweneazizi, 2020; Olumuji & Ogba, 2018). Furthermore, the participatory nature of blogs complicates credibility assessment, as users not only consume but also co-create and circulate content (Bhutta & Ali, 2017). This democratisation of information expands diversity of voices but also heightens variability in quality and reliability.

Consequently, safeguarding credibility in news blogs has become an urgent priority. Stronger mechanisms—such as transparent editorial policies, fact-checking practices, and user feedback systems—are needed to maintain accuracy and foster public trust. Without such measures, the democratisation of digital information risks undermining the very credibility on which journalism's influence depends.

2.3 Use of online news sources and challenges of misinformation

The evolution of digital media has paved the way for the rapid spread of misinformation and disinformation, posing serious challenges to society, politics, and the economy. Misinformation refers to false information spread without malicious intent, while disinformation is intentionally misleading information disseminated to manipulate public opinion (Ireton & Posetti, 2018; Vaccari & Chadwick, 2020). The accessibility of digital platforms has made it easier for misinformation and disinformation to spread quickly, often bypassing traditional gatekeeping mechanisms that once ensured the credibility of news content.

In a healthy democracy, it is essential for citizens to be well-informed about vital public issues. The news media play a critical role in offering diverse and complex perspectives on political and societal matters, helping to shape public discourse and opinion (Eveland & Schmitt, 2015). However, the nature of news consumption has dramatically shifted in recent years, with more individuals turning to the internet as their primary source of news (Newman, Levy, & Nielsen, 2019). This shift has been facilitated by the internet's vast array of information sources and channels, which not only provide content but also offer increased opportunities for engagement and co-creation among news consumers (Vermeer et al., 2020).

The rise of digital media has empowered many groups and individuals to use these platforms to discuss and advocate for human rights, environmental issues, and other societal concerns. However, this same environment has also been exploited by others to create fear and prejudice through biased and misleading news (Nygren, Brouneus, & Syensson, 2019). The immediacy of online news has fundamentally altered reading habits, as users increasingly return to digital sources to stay updated on current events. Web 2.0 technologies have further blurred the lines between news producers and

consumers, allowing users to participate actively in the development and dissemination of news stories (Yuan, 2015).

This participatory model, while democratizing information dissemination, has also introduced significant challenges. Social media platforms and blogs have transformed news consumption into a social experience, enabling users to filter, assess, and react to news in real time. This dynamic change which has redefined how individuals seek information has influenced many aspects of life in the 21st century (Mefolere, 2019; Oktaviani & Desiarti, 2017). With the proliferation of these platforms, users now enjoy unprecedented access to news at any time of the day, facilitated by the portability, personalization, and participatory features of new media (Mefolere, 2019; Oladokun et al., 2022).

The use of online news sources has become more complex with the rise of social media, where new multimodal forms of misinformation are transmitted swiftly and seamlessly. These can significantly influence political views and decision-making processes, as ordinary users and political actors can produce and circulate misleading content (Vaccari & Chadwick, 2020). The ability to manipulate visual and audio information has only exacerbated the problem, making it increasingly difficult for users to discern truth from deception (Dan et al., 2021). The consequences of such misinformation are profound, potentially leading to widespread public skepticism, decreased trust in institutions, and the polarization of public discourse (Mwangi, 2023).

The abundance of news channels and information sources available online has made it more challenging for users to identify and follow credible stories. While the internet and social media have democratized information access, they have also contributed to the difficulty in distinguishing reliable information from misleading or false content (Olumuji & Ogba, 2018). This challenge is particularly acute among younger audiences, who are primary recipients of online news. The constant influx of information, coupled with the ease of creating and sharing content, has made assessing the credibility of news a critical issue for both policymakers and users (Nygren, Brounéus, & Svensson, 2019; Akoja & Nwanearizi, 2020).

In this digital age, the spread of misinformation and disinformation has not only distorted public understanding of important issues but has also undermined democratic processes. Sensational content, often driven by commercial motives or state-sponsored propaganda, is one of the most common forms of deception, designed to manipulate public opinion and generate traffic for specific websites (Titcomb & Carson, 2018). Continuous exposure to such deceptive content can erode public trust and create echo chambers where individuals are increasingly insulated from opposing viewpoints, leading to greater polarization and the fragmentation of public discourse (Eric, 2023; Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017).

While the use of online news sources has greatly expanded the accessibility and immediacy of information, it has also introduced significant risks in the form of misinformation and disinformation. The challenge for consumers and policymakers alike is to navigate this complex landscape, fostering an informed and engaged public while mitigating the harmful effects of misleading information. As digital media continue to evolve, the importance of media literacy, critical thinking, and robust fact-checking

mechanisms will only grow, becoming essential tools in the fight against misinformation and the preservation of democratic values.

3. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

The growing prominence of digital platforms as sources of political and social information has prompted numerous empirical inquiries into how audiences perceive the credibility of news disseminated online. Across contexts, scholars have consistently highlighted both the opportunities and risks associated with social media and blogs as news outlets, particularly in relation to youth audiences.

Akoja & Nweneazizi (2020) examined youths in Lagos and found that social media platforms were widely regarded as credible sources of news, with Instagram emerging as the most trusted platform. Their study, based on a descriptive survey of 308 respondents, revealed that young people not only valued social media for immediacy and trend awareness but also considered it more reliable than conventional platforms. This emphasis on youth reliance aligns with Bhutta & Ali's (2017) findings among Pakistani university students, who ranked Twitter and other digital platforms higher than traditional newspapers in credibility. Their study highlighted a shifting trust hierarchy, with online newspapers and blogs rivalling television news in perceived reliability. Together, these studies indicate that social media and blogs are central to how young audiences negotiate political knowledge in diverse contexts.

Extending this discussion to the Nigerian context, Udende, Abdulbaqi, & Omidiji (2020) found that undergraduates at the University of Ilorin perceived blogs as credible sources, basing their judgements primarily on hypertextuality rather than interactivity or multimedia content. This suggests that youths privilege ease of navigation and verification cues, resonating recommendations from Akoja and Nweneazizi (2020) that news providers emphasise veracity and accountability. Similarly, David et al. (2022), in their survey of Kogi State residents, reported that respondents relied heavily on Facebook, Twitter, and blogs for political news and considered online political content generally trustworthy. Both studies converge on the recognition that online sources have become integral to political communication in Nigeria, underscoring the need for institutional credibility mechanisms such as fact-checking, verification badges, and ethical editorial practices.

The global dimension of credibility concerns is evident in George's (2018) study of Greek users, which revealed that audiences actively employ verification strategies such as cross-referencing online material, examining journalistic identities, and reviewing comments to assess authenticity. This resonates with Udende et al.'s (2020) call for multiple-source verification and fact-checking tools for Nigerian blog users. The Greek case illustrates that audiences are not passive consumers but increasingly critical participants who adapt strategies to navigate misinformation—a finding that parallels Nigerian and Pakistani experiences of balancing trust with scepticism in digital spaces.

The prevalence of misinformation and fake news is further underscored by Kwoide (2022), whose study of Ghanaian journalists revealed that political and economic motivations, coupled with the pressure to break news, were central drivers of false information. This insight complements George's (2018) findings by illustrating the structural and professional pressures that exacerbate the spread of misinformation. It

also reinforces earlier Nigerian studies that highlight the dangers of unregulated online spaces, stressing the need for collaboration among professional bodies to uphold standards and sanction ethical breaches.

While much of the literature emphasises credibility in political communication, other strands extend the discourse to education and reflective learning. Omodara & Aboderin (2022) demonstrated that Nigerian students view blogs positively as tools for academic engagement, collaborative tasks, and reflective learning, though infrastructural challenges such as poor connectivity and limited access hinder optimal use. Their findings broaden the understanding of blogs beyond political news dissemination, situating them within the wider ecology of digital participation. Interestingly, their conclusion mirrors David et al.'s (2022) call for institutional involvement in strengthening online spaces, though in the educational rather than political sphere.

Taken together, these studies reveal a consistent interrelationship: young people across contexts increasingly rely on blogs and social media for political and educational information; perceptions of credibility are shaped by immediacy, accessibility, and verification cues; and the persistence of misinformation underscores the need for both institutional oversight and user-driven verification practices. The convergence of findings from Nigeria, Pakistan, Greece, and Ghana underscores the global relevance of credibility concerns while highlighting contextual degrees such as infrastructural constraints in African settings. These empirical insights affirm that the credibility of online news is not static but negotiated between structural safeguards, professional practices, and audience.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored in the theoretical frameworks of Source Credibility Theory and Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT), which together offer a comprehensive understanding of how audiences interact with media, particularly in the digital age, and how they assess the credibility of online news sources.

Source Credibility Theory, first proposed by Hovland, Janis, and Kelly in 1951, posits that the persuasiveness of a message is significantly influenced by the perceived credibility of its source. According to this theory, individuals are more likely to be persuaded by a message if they perceive the source as credible, characterized by trustworthiness, expertise, and reliability (Umeogu, 2012; Olumuji & Ogba, 2018). The theory emerged from studies conducted by Hovland and his colleagues during World War II, aimed at understanding the communication processes from the source to the receiver. Metzger and Flanagin (2013) further describe source credibility as the believability of a source, particularly in terms of perceived trustworthiness and knowledge, which are critical in the digital context where information is abundant but not always reliable.

The credibility of digital sources such as blogs, news websites, and social media platforms becomes paramount. Waqas, Iftikhar, & Bajwa (2021) define source credibility as an individual's confidence or belief in a given source, which is crucial when navigating the vast array of online content. In this study, perceived source credibility is assessed through characteristics such as expertise, intelligence, and trustworthiness, reflecting the attributes that online users prioritize when determining whether to accept or reject the information presented to them (Oladokun et al., 2022). Bondoc (2019) adds that source

credibility significantly impacts how audience attitudes and opinions evolve, underscoring the role of credible sources in shaping public perception in the digital era.

Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) complements the Source Credibility Theory by focusing on why and how individuals actively seek out media to satisfy specific needs and desires. Proposed by Elihu Katz in the early 1970s, UGT challenges the traditional view of audiences as passive consumers of media. Instead, it portrays them as active participants who selectively engage with media content to fulfill personal and social needs (Spring, 2002; Sparks, 2011). As users engage with online platforms, they are not only passive recipients of information but also active participants who contribute to the content creation process and seek gratification from their media interactions (Uzuegbunam, 2015). This theory encourages researchers to delve into the diverse motivations behind media use, such as the desire for information, social interaction, and entertainment (Windahl, Signitzer, & Olson, 2008).

Source Credibility and Uses and Gratification provides a robust framework for understanding how individuals navigate the online information landscape. On one hand, Source Credibility Theory explains the importance of trustworthiness and expertise in persuading audiences to accept information. On the other hand, UGT sheds light on the active role of users in selecting and engaging with media that fulfills their specific needs, whether for information, entertainment, or social connection.

In the digital environment, where the line between content creators and consumers is increasingly blurred, these theories together help explain why users gravitate toward certain online sources and how they evaluate their credibility. For instance, a blogger or news site perceived as knowledgeable, transparent, and consistent is more likely to be seen as credible, which in turn influences the user's decision to consume and share that content (Olufadi, 2024). Conversely, when a source is perceived as lacking credibility, users may turn to alternative media that better align with their needs and expectations (Agboola & Bashir, 2019).

The active nature of media consumption described by UGT suggests that users not only seek credible information but also play a role in its dissemination, further reinforcing the cycle of credibility in the digital age. As Alhabash & Ma (2017) note, the theoretical discourse on UGT has expanded to include the interactions with new media, making it relevant for understanding how credibility is constructed and maintained in today's complex media landscape.

Source Credibility Theory and UGT offer a distinctive perspective on the use of online news sources. They highlight the dynamic interplay between the credibility of the source and the user's active role in media consumption, ultimately shaping how information is accessed, interpreted, and shared in the digital era.

5. METHODOLOGY

In order to understand undergraduates' perceptions of credibility of Nigerian news blogs as sources of political news. This study used a quantitative approach, using a survey as the method and a questionnaire as the instrument for gathering data. A purposive sampling technique was used to ensure that the people filling out the questionnaire are undergraduates who are familiar with Nigerian news blogs and their credibility. The

sampling procedure involves selecting the only public university (Olabisi Onabanjo University), and the only polytechnic (Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic) in Ijebu North LGA. This research chose individuals who deemed to possess the particular traits, credentials, or data necessary for the study. This decision was made to focus on undergraduates' perceptions of credibility of Nigerian news blogs as sources of political news.

The research instrument for this study was a self-structured questionnaire which was used to gather information from the respondents. The instrument was administered physical by the researchers.

RESULT

Table 1: Frequency of reading news on blogs

	Frequency	Percent
Very often	83	21.8
Often	253	66.4
Not Sure	41	10.8
Never	4	1.1
Total	381	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2024

21.8% of respondents read news on blogs very often, indicating that about one-fifth of the respondents are highly engaged with news content on blogs. The majority of respondents (66.4%) read news on blogs often, suggesting that two-thirds of the respondents regularly engage with news on these platforms, making it a common activity. 10.8% of respondents are unsure about how frequently they read news on blogs. This might indicate inconsistent or sporadic engagement with news content on blogs. A very small minority (1.1%) of respondents never read news on blogs, indicating that nearly all respondents engage with blogs for news to some extent.

Table 2: Frequency of reading political news on blogs

	Frequency	Percent
Very often	83	21.8
Often	225	59.1
Not Sure	67	17.6
Never	6	1.6
Total	381	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2024

21.8% of respondents read political news on blogs very often. This indicates that about one-fifth of the respondents are highly engaged with political content on blogs. The

majority of respondents (59.1%) read political news on blogs often. This suggests that more than half of the respondents regularly engage with political news on blogs, making it a common source for them.

17.6% of respondents are unsure about how frequently they read political news on blogs. This may indicate inconsistent or sporadic engagement with political content on these platforms. A small minority (1.6%) of respondents never read political news on blogs. This indicates that almost all respondents engage with political blogs to some extent, even if not regularly.

Table 3: Interactions with blogs

VARIABLES	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I share political news I get on news blogs with friends.	54 (14.2%)	181 (47.5%)	58 (15.2%)	77 (20.5%)	10 (2.6%)
I comment on political news I read on news blogs.	47 (12.3%)	156 (40.9%)	58 (15.2%)	106 (27.8%)	14 (3.7%)
I click the like button when I read political news on news blogs.	49 (12.9%)	197 (51.7%)	45 (11.8%)	83 (21.8%)	7 (1.8%)
I participate in online discussions on the political news receive from news blogs.	36 (9.4%)	129 (33.9%)	56 (14.7%)	137 (36.0%)	23 (6.0%)

Source: Field survey, 2024

The majority of respondents (61.7%) share political news they get from news blogs with friends, indicating a high level of engagement and willingness to disseminate information. Only a small fraction strongly disagrees with sharing (2.6%). A significant portion of respondents (53.2%) comment on political news, showing active engagement in discussions. However, 31.5% disagree or strongly disagree with commenting, which suggests some reluctance or disinterest in participating in such activities. A majority of respondents (64.6%) click the like button on political news, indicating a relatively passive but still positive form of engagement. Disagreement is relatively low (23.6%). Fewer respondents (43.3%) participate in online discussions about political news compared to those who share or like the content. A notable portion (42%) disagrees or strongly disagrees with participating in discussions, indicating that while many people engage passively with content, active participation in discussions is less common.

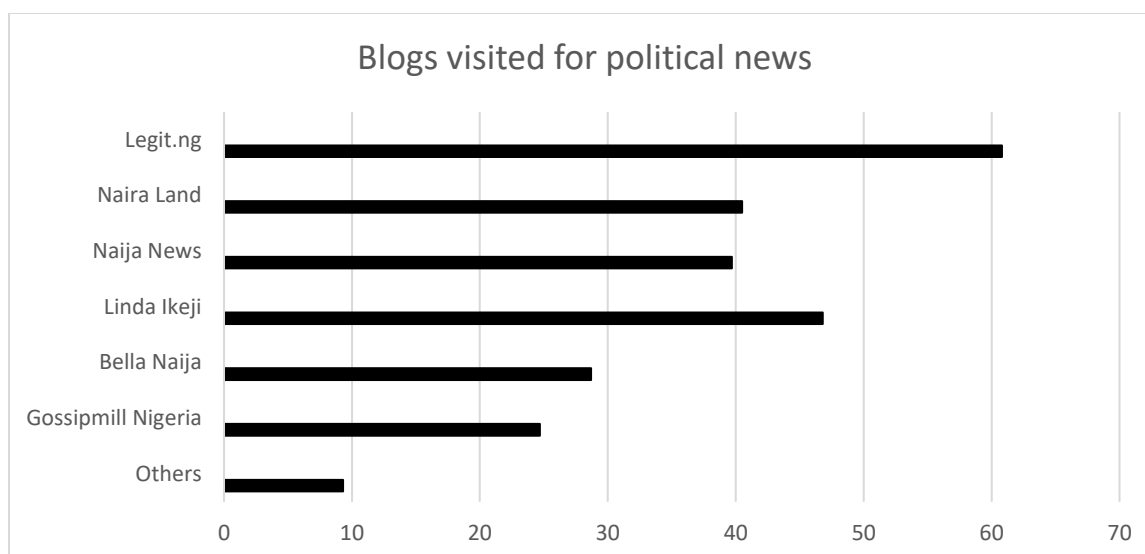


Figure 1: Blogs visited for political news

Source: Field survey, 2024

Approximately 65 respondents visit Legit.ng for political news, making it the most visited blog for this purpose among the respondents. Around 35 respondents visit Naira Land for political news, indicating a moderate level of popularity. About 35 respondents visit Naija News for political news, suggesting it is equally popular as Naira Land for political content. Approximately 45 respondents visit Linda Ikeji's blog for political news, making it a well-visited source but not as popular as Legit.ng. About 25 respondents visit Bella Naija for political news, indicating it is less popular compared to some other blogs. Around 20 respondents visit Gossipmill Nigeria for political news, making it one of the less visited blogs among the listed options. Only about 10 respondents visit other blogs for political news, indicating that these other sources are much less popular.

Table 4: Average minutes spent reading political news on blogs

	Frequency	Percent
10 minutes	188	49.3
20 minutes	138	36.2
30 minutes	43	11.3
1 hour	12	3.1
Total	381	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2024

Nearly half of the respondents (49.3%) spend an average of 10 minutes reading political news on blogs. This suggests that a significant portion of the audience prefers quick, concise updates. A substantial portion of respondents (36.2%) spend an average of 20 minutes reading political news on blogs. This indicates a considerable interest, with these readers likely engaging with more detailed content than the 10-minute readers. A smaller group of respondents (11.3%) spends about 30 minutes reading political news on

blogs. These individuals might be looking for in-depth articles and thorough analysis. A very small minority (3.1%) of respondents spend an hour reading political news on blogs, indicating a deep interest and likely engagement with extensive content and multiple sources.

Table 5: Factors that influence perception of credibility of political news on blogs.

VARIABLES	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I find blogs to be credible for Political news	66 (17.3%)	196 (51.4%)	65 (17.1%)	50 (13.1%)	4 (1.0%)
I find blogs to be credible due to the integrity of news.	59 (15.5%)	193 (50.7%)	67 (17.6%)	54 (14.2%)	8 (2.1%)
I find blogs to be credible due to high frequency of news.	66 (17.4%)	195 (51.3%)	65 (17.2%)	48 (12.6%)	6 (1.6%)
I find blogs to be credible due to the source credibility	60 (15.7 %)	191 (50.1%)	71 (18.6%)	54 (14.2%)	5 (1.3%)

Source: Field survey, 2024

A significant majority (68.7%) find blogs to be credible sources for political news, indicating trust in blogs. Only a small percentage (14.1%) disagree, suggesting a generally positive perception of blogs' credibility. Similar to the general credibility, a majority (66.2%) believe the credibility of blogs is due to the perceived integrity of the news. This indicates that many respondents trust the integrity of the information presented on blogs. The majority (68.7%) find blogs credible due to the high frequency of news updates, suggesting that the timeliness and regularity of updates enhance credibility. A small portion (14.2%) disagrees, indicating that frequency alone may not be enough for some respondents. A majority (65.8%) attribute the credibility of blogs to the credibility of their sources, suggesting that the perceived reliability of the sources used by blogs significantly influences their overall credibility. However, (15.5%) disagree, indicating some skepticism about the sources.

6. DISCUSSION

Findings from the study show that respondents consume blog news frequently, with 21.8% reading it "very often" and 66.4% doing so "often." This suggests that blogs are a valuable source of news, particularly political content, for this demographic. The consistency of interaction with political news (21.8% very often, 59.1% frequently) suggests that blogs are used not only for general news, but also as a primary source of political information. This is consistent with Alhabash & Ma's (2017) observation that

undergraduates, who make up a sizable portion of the youth demographic, have become increasingly reliant on social media and online platforms such as blogs. The accessibility, immediacy, and personalization of digital content encourage regular engagement with online news sources.

Legit.ng is the most popular and frequently visited blog for political news among respondents, followed by Linda Ikeji's blog, Naira Land, and Naija News. This preference reflects a trend toward established and popular blogs that offer a mix of news, entertainment, and user-generated content. The widespread familiarity of these blogs demonstrates that they have successfully established themselves as credible sources of political news among young people. Akoja & Nwanearizi's (2020) study on youth perceptions of social media credibility in Lagos discovered that familiarity and frequency of use play important roles in determining which platforms are trusted for news. This implies that the more frequently a blog is visited and acknowledged, the more likely it is to be considered a reputable source of information, which is obvious from the preference for these top blogs.

The majority of respondents believe blogs are credible sources of political news, with 68.7% believing in their credibility and 66.2% placing their trust in the news' perceived integrity. This belief in blogs as credible sources is supported by the frequency of updates and the credibility of the blogs' sources, according to respondents. This viewpoint is consistent with the findings of Mefolere (2019), who studied online news channel selection among university students and discovered that the perceived reliability of news sources influences platform choice.

Youths are more likely to trust platforms that consistently provide timely updates and reference trustworthy sources, emphasizing the importance of these variables in assessing the trustworthiness of political news on blogs (Mba, 2015; Anusiem, 2017; Elegu, 2018), which are frequently updated and provide recent information on a significant event or anything unusual and serves as an online news source that is widely recognized for breaking news.

Several factors influence respondents' perceptions of credibility, including update frequency, news integrity, and source credibility. With 68.7% and 65.8%, respectively, trust in these elements emphasizes the importance of consistent, high-quality reporting and transparency in news dissemination. The importance of these characteristics is highlighted by Alhabash & Ma's (2017) findings, which state that the perceived integrity and reliability of content are critical in determining user trust in online news platforms. Ajoja (2020) emphasized the role of source credibility in shaping perceptions, arguing that blogs should prioritize transparency and fact-checking in order to maintain and improve their reputation.

This study emphasizes the importance of blogs in the consumption of political news among young people who use them frequently. The most popular blogs, such as Legit.ng and Linda Ikeji's blog, are known for their trustworthiness, due to frequent updates, perceived integrity, and credible sources among undergraduates. These findings highlight the need for news blogs to learn and uphold journalism standards in order to preserve and enhance their credibility among young audience.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study focuses on undergraduates' perceptions of credibility of Nigerian news blogs as sources of political news. The study emphasizes the critical role that blogs play in the consumption of political news among young people, demonstrating their dominance as a reliable source of information in the digital age. The high frequency with which people engage with blogs, particularly for political content, demonstrates the importance of these platforms in shaping public opinion and informing the younger demographic. The recognition and perceived credibility of blogs demonstrate the platforms' influence, which is fueled by frequent updates, perceived integrity, and the use of credible sources. Based on the findings, youths are discerning digital news consumers who value accuracy, transparency, and reliability in their information sources. As blogs continue to be a primary medium for news consumption, particularly among younger audiences, these platforms must uphold high journalism standards to maintain trust and credibility. In an age when misinformation spreads quickly, a dedication to quality reporting and fact-checking is even more important in ensuring that blogs remain credible sources of political news.

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness and credibility of political news blogs.

First, to sustain and increase readership among youth, political blogs should prioritize timely, relevant, and engaging content. This includes frequent updates, in-depth analyses, and the integration of multimedia elements such as videos and infographics to enhance user experience.

Second, maintaining credibility is essential for political blogs such as *Legit.ng*, *Linda Ikeji*, *Naira Land*, and *Naija News*. These platforms should continue emphasizing investigative journalism while ensuring neutrality and transparency in political reporting.

Third, given that undergraduates constitute a significant portion of youth readership, political blogs should foster trust by adopting transparent editorial practices and incorporating fact-checking mechanisms.

Lastly, blogs should implement policies that ensure accuracy and accountability while incorporating user feedback through reader polls and content submissions. These strategies will improve credibility, encourage political awareness, and promote a more informed and engaged digital audience.

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