

# Chapter One: Introduction

## 1.0 Introduction

Across the world, digital platforms are slowly becoming content hubs and gatekeepers (Mikhailov, 2018), increasing the pressure on the dominant technological and business set-up (Ballon, 2009) and functioning as efficient super-highways to content distribution (Metz, 2016). As of December 2021, Meta, the tech giant formerly known as Facebook, owned four of the five most widely used platforms in the world (Shead, 2019).

In 2014, Facebook's role as a catalyst for economic activity in ecosystems composed of marketers, app developers, and providers of connectivity enabled \$227bn of economic impact and 4.5m jobs globally. In September 2021, TikTok hit one billion users<sup>1</sup>. Facebook alone in 2021 amassed almost three billion users<sup>2</sup>. Even though the presence of Facebook introduces significant social and political implications, rapid advancements in the platform's features continue to empower previously inactive mass media consumers to become active content creators on digital media platforms (Salaudeen, Onyechi, 2020).

As Facebook continues to gain traction and use, it is equally becoming indispensable to the distribution of information, communication, and social interaction in different countries of the world (Nielsen, Ganter, 2017), and introducing as well as creating radical changes in how we work, socialize, create value in the economy, and compete for the resulting profits (Kenny, Zysman, 2016).

In November 2021, more than thirty-six per cent of the world was now using Facebook<sup>3</sup>. In January 2022, Facebook reported that it had 2.9billion active users, with 1.9billion of these users staying active online every day<sup>4</sup>. The total number of users on Facebook now exceeds the combined population of two of the largest countries in the world - India and China.

Across Africa, users from different countries have explored opportunities in the growing platform economy as translators, data miners, freelance writers, and cab riders for platforms like Uber. Relying predominantly on mobile-app-based technology, digital platforms have an impact on livelihoods through matching supply and demand for goods and services, opening new channels for employment and distributing additional value-added services (e.g., digital financial services) to consumers, workers, and SMEs (Johnson et al, 2019). What is clear is that platforms are branching out across regions, economic sectors and industries in Africa and they are quickly becoming a vital part of the livelihoods of many individuals in the region (Johnson et al, 2019).

Facebook's growth in Nigeria has triggered academic interest surrounding its influence on politics (Victoria et al, 2014), mental health (Nwammuo, 2014), and educational performance (Ogedebe, 2012). As platforms like Facebook continue to grow and its influence expand into different economic territories across Nigeria, there is a corresponding interest surrounding how people can participate and earn a living in the platform economy. These changes have also shaped the nature and form of digital content being created and

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<sup>1</sup> Pappas, V. (2021). Thanks a billion!. Retrieved 21 July 2022, from <https://newsroom.tiktok.com/en-us/1-billion-people-on-tiktok>

<sup>2</sup> Facebook MAU worldwide 2022 | Statista. (2022). Retrieved 21 July 2022, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/264810/number-of-monthly-active-facebook-users-worldwide/>

<sup>3</sup> Statista. 2022. Facebook: global penetration by region 2021 | Statista. [online] Available at:

<<https://www.statista.com/statistics/241552/share-of-global-population-using-facebook-by-region/>> [Accessed 29 July 2022].

<sup>4</sup> Meta Reports First Quarter 2022 Results. Retrieved 21 July 2022, from

[https://s21.q4cdn.com/399680738/files/doc\\_financials/2022/q1/Meta-03.31.2022-Exhibit-99.1\\_Final.pdf](https://s21.q4cdn.com/399680738/files/doc_financials/2022/q1/Meta-03.31.2022-Exhibit-99.1_Final.pdf)

consumed. The growing impact of platforms like Facebook in every sphere is not limited to Nigeria. Forbes reports that being a YouTuber as a career interest is three times more popular than being an astronaut in the United States (Klien, 2020).

Platforms like Facebook have begun to foster a growing creator community (Linktree, 2022) creating content on platforms like TikTok, OnlyFans, YouTube, Etsy, Twitch, and Instagram as a career path. The members of this community are made up of individuals who started out as ordinary internet consumers and have evolved into sophisticated internet savvy users primarily earning a living as content creators, influencers, YouTubers, etc. Basically, anyone who uses social media alongside software and finance tools to monetize their content, knowledge and skills online is considered a creator (Talub, 2022).

What is common among all these creators across different platforms is the centrality of a digital infrastructure linking creators and consumers, governed at a large scale by code and algorithms (Donner et al, 2020). This growing ecosystem of content creators is shaping how media content across Nigeria is being created, curated, distributed, and consumed.

This community is now being referred to as the creator economy. The creator economy has been defined by (Yuan, 2022) as *“the class of businesses built by over 50 million independent content creators, curators, and community builders including social media influencers, bloggers, and videographers, plus the software and finance tools designed to help them with growth and monetization”*. This economy, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) contributes slightly above 6.1% to global gross domestic product (GDP), averaging between 2% and 7% of national GDPs around the world.

Although previous research established several effects of the rising influence of platforms on media businesses, less scholarly attention has been paid to the effect of platforms like Facebook on the lives of the creators of media content in Nigeria. This study looks to understand the growing relationship between platforms and creators. Facebook has been selected because of its high user base and its global influence. Datareportal reports that the number of Nigerians that used YouTube in the year 2020 was roughly a 30.8million, and Statistica estimates the number of Nigerians using Facebook will be almost a 70million in the next five years.

In 2018, announced that it was launching a ‘Facebook for Creators’ program in partnership with *Afrinolly*, to empower creative communities across Nigeria (Okunola, 2018). The training programme – designed to equip the next generation of content creators with the skills to thrive in a digital world - was designed to be in partnership with *Afrinolly*, a mobile application which enables African entertainment enthusiasts to watch African movies, movie trailers, short films and music videos that have been made public by content owners or their legal representative most especially from the Nollywood film industry<sup>5</sup>. In September 2020, Facebook announced that it was planning a second Africa office in Lagos Nigeria<sup>6</sup>.

Facebook's role amidst other platforms such as YouTube, TikTok and Instagram is one that is significantly contributing to the growth of the Nigerian creator economy. In a country where legislation that would reshape the legal landscape for internet content in Nigeria remains under consideration, including a data

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<sup>5</sup>Jidenma, N. (2022). How Afrinolly Got Almost Half a Million Downloads in 10 Months. Retrieved 28 July 2022, from <https://thenextweb.com/news/how-nigerias-afrinolly-app-got-almost-half-a-million-downloads-in-10-months>

<sup>6</sup> Facebook MAU worldwide 2022 | Statista. (2022). Retrieved 21 July 2022, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/264810/number-of-monthly-active-facebook-users-worldwide/>

protection bill, a bill to regulate online content hosts, and a bill that would expand criminal penalties for online speech (Freedom House, 2021).

This study is thus aimed at exploring the influence of Facebook on the creation of digital content by creators in Nigeria - in a nutshell, Facebook's influence on Nigeria's growing *Creator Economy*. It looks specifically at how creators are finding their ways to create, distribute and earn through Facebook, and how their creative products have been influenced by the platform, exploring their interaction with the platform in the growing creator economy. The aim of this study, therefore, is to contribute to this research area by investigating the role of Facebook in Nigeria's growing platform economy. This exploration aims to contribute to existing knowledge surrounding the influence of platforms and how these platforms are shaping the nature and form of content being created by media organizations in Nigeria.

**The central research questions of this study are:**

1. *How is the Facebook platform influencing the creation of digital content by creatives in Nigeria?*
2. *How are content creators in Nigeria responding to the influence of Facebook, and how are they finding their way around the platform?*

**Purpose of Study:**

The Facebook platform which is now a part of Meta is continuously growing, leveraging its connectivity to its sister apps such as Messenger, WhatsApp and Instagram to create new and changing ecosystems of information exchange. The purpose of this research is to explore how Facebook is influencing the creation of digital content across Nigeria. It will also look at the ways that content creators are responding to its growing influence and finding their ways around the platform.

**Relevance of the Study:**

Societal Relevance:

This research will be contributing to an existing body of knowledge on how platforms are changing the Nigerian media ecosystem. This research will equally be relevant to digital content creators, digital creatives, and media organizations looking to better understand and adjust to the changing nature of media content creation in Nigeria.

Personal Relevance:

This research will contribute to my personal experience as a freelance writer and communications consultant using writing, photography and short documentaries to tell stories about NGO projects across Nigeria. Data gained from this research will contribute to my ongoing work, and knowledge of Nigeria's media ecosystem.

**Study Approach:**

This research will employ a qualitative methodology. The research will employ the use of primary and secondary data collection methods. A review of existing research will be conducted to understand the work of other researchers in this field, and open interview questions will be employed to gain expert-level data from different content creators across Nigeria. The research is explorative as it aims to delve into existing knowledge on how platforms are affecting the media ecosystem. Data from both sources will be analyzed through an interpretative approach.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

*In this section, we look at the essential theories, arguments and controversies related to the field of study, while attempting to highlight the ways in which research in the area has been undertaken by others.*

### 2.1 Introduction

A substantive and thorough literature review is a precondition for doing substantive and thorough, sophisticated research (Gray, 2014). Boote and Beile argue that a researcher cannot conduct significant research without first understanding the literature in the field of study (Boote & Beile, 2005). A literature review, therefore, aims to give a descriptive history of the topic and key literature sources. This process helps to illustrate major issues, and meaningfully refine the focus of the research (Gray, 2014). This literature review can thus be defined as the section of this study that contains substantial references to related research and theory in the area under study (Ridley, 2013).

To maintain a structural process for this section, the working title of this research will be broken down into the meaningful component keywords which collaborate to represent the idea that makes up the entire body of this study. The keywords for this research are *Nigeria, Digital Content, Content Creation, Platforms, and Facebook*. The definition of digital content creation in this study is limited to creatives that generate photos, artwork, writing, or audio and video files to the World Wide Web, for individual or work purposes.

Individually, these keywords will form relevant sections under this literature review. However, to effectively convey relevant knowledge in relation to the area of study, these keywords will be combined to form a more meaningful and concise phrase. For example, the keyword content creation will create a scope that is too broad. But combining *Content Creation* with *Nigeria*, and then with *Facebook*, creates a context that is more appropriate for the scope of this study.

This research will employ an extensive literature review strategy using the keyword combinations established. Except for static facts and information, literature search will generally be limited to the last 20 years, to avoid referencing outdated information. This study situates itself in the field of mediatization; a field that has recently experienced rapid growth. Many scholars seek to understand the significance of the dramatic transformations in the media landscape brought about by new and often disruptive technology.

Given the fast-evolving nature of the digital world, literature search will be generally limited to the last 10 years. The main search engines for this literature search will be Google Scholar and EBSCO Essentials. However, the researcher recognizes that other search engines will be used that are equally extensive and linked to databases that may not easily appear with these two main search engines.

### 2.2 Nigeria media landscape

Nigeria is a country in West Africa. The population of Nigeria is 211million which makes it the most populous country in Africa, and the 7th most populated country in the world<sup>7</sup>. Nigeria is a

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<sup>7</sup> Worldometer. Countries in the world population 2022. Retrieved from <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/nigeria-population/>

multinational state inhabited by more than 400 ethnic groups speaking 500 distinct languages (and over 1,000 dialects), all identifying with a wide variety of cultures (Olarenwaju, 2020). Nigeria's official language is English.<sup>8</sup> The literacy rate in Nigeria in 2021 was 62% of the population.<sup>9</sup> Since 1991, the percentage of the adult population aged 15 years and older in Nigeria who were literate experienced a general increase, except for a decline in 2008.

Nigeria became a formally independent federation on October 1, 1960. The country experienced a civil war from 1967 to 1970, followed by a succession of democratically elected civilian governments and military dictatorships, until achieving a stable democracy in the 1999 presidential election. Nigeria is a founding member of the African Union and a member of many international organizations, including the United Nations, the Commonwealth of Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Economic Community of West African States, and OPEC. Nigeria overtook South Africa as the continent's largest economy, with a GDP estimated to be around 488 billion USD in 2013, compared to the 384 billion USD GDP of South Africa in 2012 (Tétényi, 2014).

Nigeria produces around 2,500 films annually and is projected to record total cinema revenue of \$22 million in 2021. As of 2021, the local industry employs about a million people and generates over \$8 billion for the economy. According to IMF reports, the industry is projected to generate an estimated revenue of \$10.8 billion by 2023 and account for 1.4% of GDP ("Nigeria - Information and Communications Technology", 2022).

Nigeria is regarded as Africa's largest ICT market with 82% of the continent's telecom subscribers and 29% of internet usage. The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) estimates that the country has about 76 million subscriptions on broadband (penetration of 40%) and 187 million lines in the voice segment as of May 2021, representing 97.9% tele density ("Nigeria - Information and Communications Technology", 2022).

Yet, traditionally across West Africa, trust in the media is low. Citizens view most media as political instruments that are frequently biased and easily corruptible. Many media organizations, for their part, compromise editorial independence to survive and resort to the lowest-common-denominator 'content' to drive traffic (Reboot, 2016). There is a history of this mistrust. Before Nigeria's independence from Britain in 1960, all newspapers were run by private businesses and used for nationalistic agitation (Ezeh, 1988). These nationalistic movements were largely directed at colonial administrators, creating a historical press versus state relationship. These agitations resulted in a variety of media censorship processes (Ezeh, 1988).

The most dominant tools of censorship were legal instruments developed against Nigerian newspapers under the country's colonial administration over a century ago (Busari, n.d.). These newly enacted laws, which included punishments of jail terms of up to two years served as tools designed to criminalize statements against colonial officials.

Even though these tools which had been designed to gag the press were developed half a century earlier, Busari argues that they represent the bedrock of state censorship and the repression of press

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<sup>8</sup> Charles Mann: Choosing an Indigenous Official Language for Nigeria.

<sup>9</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics ( [uis.unesco.org](https://uis.unesco.org) ). Data as of September 2021.

freedom in Nigeria till today (Busari, 2020). This fear of government institutions remained an institutional tool of censorship until the end of Nigeria's military era in 1999.

This mistrust, however, has led to a wholehearted embrace of new social media tools, where citizens can seek alternative views, contribute their perspectives, and redefine popular media narratives on platforms that are not beholden to elites (Reboot, 2016). The historic 2015 Nigerian general election demonstrates this virtuous cycle. Citizens photographed polling results, compared them to the official government results, and discussed their analyses on social media. Their evidence spread across new and traditional media, giving their contributions audience and influence, which in turn incentivized more citizen participation (Reboot, 2016).

There has been a significant and continuously growing increase. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp are becoming the dominant spaces for newsgathering and dissemination channels by journalists and media organizations (Inobemhe & Santas, 2021). Popular television broadcasting stations are beginning to adopt them as alternate broadcast platforms just to ensure their audience does not miss anything.

### **2.3 Digitalization & Nigeria Media.**

*This section sketches the Nigerian digital media history and attempts to capture the landscape before the advent of platforms.*

In the 1980's several African countries launched a series of economic liberalization policies. This led to a wave of international financial investments in communication and internet infrastructure, resulting in a widespread diffusion of ICT products and services across the continent (Solomon and Klyton, 2020). But even as digitalization continued to rise in Africa, Akoh and Jagus wrote that the absence of publicly available historical data created a difficulty to adequately offer an impressionistic sketch of the changing patterns in different African countries (Akoh & Jagun, 2015). Beyond the availability of data, shortage of critical infrastructure and digital skill shortages have continued to retain a digital divide (Solomon and Klyton, 2020).

Beginning in 1932, when radio broadcasting services started in Nigeria, as *Empire Service of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)* to 1992 when broadcasting in Nigeria was deregulated, the broadcast media in Nigeria was owned either by the National, Regional or State Governments (Balarabe, 2013). The country's broadcasting sector - comprising 187 radio stations and 143 television stations was one of the largest infrastructures on the African continent. This meant that as the most populated country on the continent of Africa, Nigeria played a major stakeholder role in the global move towards digitalization (Balarabe, 2013). Three of the most digitally advanced countries in the region—Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa—boast impressive internet penetration and are expected to be the top three markets for smartphone connections in 2025 (Harris, 2021).

Digital migration took centre stage in the dialogue around media development across Nigeria in the early 2000s. This was termed the *digital switchover*. However, the decision to go digital was not matched with a clear process. Nigeria's approach to digitalization, though robust at the policy level, continued to face serious political and infrastructural setbacks.

In 2007, former Nigerian President Umaru Musa Yar-Adua mandated the National Broadcasting Commission to pilot the country's migration from analogue to digital television (Olalere et al, 2013). This mandate was affected by bureaucracy, policy inconsistency, cost of digitalisation infrastructure and political infighting within the country, a situation which resulted in the division of the government's communication department into two independent departments for ICT and Communications (Olalere et al, 2013).

Much of the infrastructure that enables a full shift from analogue to digital media has remained a challenge in Nigeria (Balarabe, 2013). Other authors looking at the broadcast media sector such as (Badmus, and Ojebuyi, 2021) reached the position after their research, that broadcast journalists were aware of, but unprepared for, the digital switchover plan.

The associated policy focus and privatisation-driven approach, however, resulted in significant growth in Nigeria's emerging technology ecosystem which is now comprised of technology companies, start-ups, accelerators and incubators that are growing organically into clusters (Ogunyemi et al, 2020). Nigeria has witnessed exponential growth in its information and communications technology (ICT) sector with the digitalization policy of the telecommunications sector. In 2021, there were 101.72 million mobile internet users in Nigeria<sup>10</sup>. A staggering increase when compared to almost 40million users in 2016. In Lagos, Nigeria's commercial capital, the *Yabacon Valley* accommodates over 60 start-ups and other technology companies (Ogunyemi et al, 2020).

At the infrastructure level, a major challenge to digitalization has been the country's lack of power supply. Ifijeh, Adebayo and James while analyzing digital inclusion, organize three classifications of digital capacity revolving around three sequential classifications of the digital divide - opportunity (encompassing accessibility and affordability), infrastructure (network indicators and indices) and utilization (ICT usage and quality). Nigeria falls within the countries with low digital opportunity index scores (Ifijeh et al, 2016).

There are still core infrastructural hurdles to the country's decision to adopt the ITU mandate of full digitalisation in 2020. ICT facilities are not readily available and could be very expensive compared with availability and prices in developed countries (Ifijeh et al, 2015). Ifijeh, James & Osinulu also record that a major challenge in this area includes electricity supply, cost of digital devices and the training of personnel who would undertake the job of digitalising materials (Ifijeh et al, 2015).

The change in the structural ecosystem of Nigeria's media as internet penetration grew, saw an increased influence of multi-stakeholder interests on Nigeria's political machinery. Through the influence of internet-driven online news outlets, Nigerian civil society actors introduced new stakes in its 2011 national elections, activated and mobilized the citizenry for the most massive protest in Nigeria's history, and unseated an incumbent president in 2015. These new paradigms did not come without attendant costs. Barney Warf argues that in response, government censorship ranging from relatively mild steps such as anti-pornography measures to the arrest and execution of cyber-

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<sup>10</sup> Statista: Nigeria: mobile internet user penetration 2016-2026

dissidents has equally become an inescapable dimension of the geographies of cyber-space (Warf, 2011).

The approach is different for each country. In Nigeria, the power to regulate the access to information conferred on state actors has been regularly exploited as a means of denying information to the public, freedom of the press and freedom of speech (Saidu, 2014). More recently, and in response to the growing influence of the internet, the Nigerian government has adopted three main approaches: obstacles to information access, limits to content, and violation of human rights (Freedom House, 2021).

In summary, the journey towards the evolution of Nigeria's digital infrastructure began in the arena of state institutions and for a long time, remained significantly political. It also started off as significantly state-controlled given that very few organisations could manage the huge resources needed to run media organisations. A significant amount of the opinion of citizens on political issues was shaped by media houses only, and these media houses were largely controlled by government institutions.

#### **2.4 Internet & Online activity in Nigeria**

The internet, like the invention of electricity, wheels, and antibiotics - has made a profound across the world. The rise of the internet as a popular medium created previously unimaginable transformations in information technology. This perspective is different for different societies. Soriano (2007) writing about hybridity in Wallonia opines that the rise of digitization did not bring a major shift in media via the domination of other categories of signs (sound and image after writing on paper). What it did, was reduce these all into computer code - enabling multiple forms of combinations and simulations in a hypersphere (Soriano, 2007, as cited in Burnier et al, 2014), this thus provided many opportunities for hybridity. The most potent form of this hybridity has been the internet.

Internet development and connectivity are well governed by articulated policies and a regulatory framework in Nigeria with the National Information Technology (IT) Policy being established in 2001 and National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) implementing the IT policy. The policy makes provision for the promotion of legislation (Bills and Acts) for the protection of online business transactions, privacy and security, safeguarding the effective use of the .ng domain name and stimulating the proliferation of high-speed internet gateways through a less stringent licensing regime towards ISPs and internet access providers (Adomi, 2005).

Even though the early use of the internet in Nigeria was limited to sending emails between local media houses and internally between senior staff to junior ones, over time the internet also made the world smaller for Nigerian journalists to explore (Talabi, 2011). This era introduced new markets and forms of journalism where journalists could specialize, and work either as online journalists, content managers or editors for particular websites (Talabi, 2011).

This era also saw a major shift towards learning new skills such as conducting research online, acquiring photographic interests which led to creating digital pictures and uploading them on the web, writing blogs and creating hypertext links (Talabi, 2011). Interestingly, this era also introduced



a blurring of the role of journalists and citizens as more people could contribute content to the web (Talabi, 2011).

In the academic environment, internet usage was increasingly used through communication and electronic document delivery system which saved a lot of time and financial cost. Internet adoption and utilisation among Nigerian universities were deterred by erratic electricity and the inadequacy of internet infrastructure resulting in lower-than-expected usage by students (Ajanaku, 2018). Academic researchers could request information through the internet or e-mail to other university librarians, colleagues, journal editors, and publishers, within and outside Nigeria. Relevant forms, payment for personal subscriptions, and other professional and commercial transactions could be completed on the internet with ease (Ani et al, 2010).

But the rise of the internet in Nigeria did not only arrive with the increased ability to create and disseminate information locally and globally. Adeniran writes that despite the internet being a significant symbol of modernity and an engine for economic growth in Nigeria, it also represented a potent global destabilizing factor for facilitating subversion. At the core, he argued that it hindered official control over what information is exchanged within identifiable territorial jurisdictions (Adeniran, 2008).

This era Adeniran adds saw the rise of cybercrime in Nigeria. He points out how the varieties of applications offered by the internet such as electronic mailing, 'chat' systems and Internet messaging (IM), became the enabling grounds for carrying out nefarious 'webonomics' and other fraudulent activities by Nigerian youths, and initiating the emergence of a *Yahoboys* sub-culture in urban centres. The anonymity and privacy that the Internet provides to potential users have excessively enhanced the degree of fluidity and structural complexity of cybercrime operations in Nigeria. Embezzlements, electronic frauds, fictitious sales of properties, laundering, hacking and credit card scams, pornography and gender-switching have become social norms (Adeniran, 2008).

The increased levels of '*modernized criminality*' among the Nigerian youths operationalized by the intrinsically insecure Internet system did not come without a premise. Adeniran sets the picture more correctly by pointing out that a prevailing culture of fraud and corruption evident within the larger Nigerian society facilitated the institutionalization of such a youthful version, as a subset (Adeniran, 2008).

Perhaps the most distinguishing feature of the era of the internet in Nigeria is what Adeniran describes as its disruptive approach to official control over what information is exchanged. The rise of the internet meant new forms of distribution channels had become present, and it set the precedent for the rise in the use of platforms as tools of subversion.

## **2.5 Platforms & Platformization in Nigeria.**

This section looks into the effect of digital platforms, it takes a global to narrow approach in documenting the conversations surrounding platforms, and narrows down to Nigeria. This section

aims to answer the question: How are Nigerian media organizations evolving to accommodate the influence of these platforms?

The platform economy and its potentially disruptive qualities have been a source of excitement and anxiety globally (Smit et al, 2019). Zotto and Omidi note that digital platforms have repeatedly been considered the fundamental players in a vast array of markets, especially in the media and cultural industries. They point out how the impact of, and transformation led by digital actors have been so influential in contemporary society, and have led to the coining of concepts such as “platform society”, “platform capitalism” and “platform revolution” (Zotto, Omidi, 2020). These deeply transformative changes being caused by the rise of platforms, and the pervasive penetration of all types of transactional and social platforms into human life have led Zotto and Omidi to argue that digital platforms have ushered the world into a new era which they label as the era of “platform life” (Zotto, Omidi, 2020).

These changes have not come without observation and contestations. On the one hand, Ballon makes the observation that allowing and facilitating convergence between IT, internet, telecommunications and media services and technologies does not directly result in an unbundled, open marketplace in which competition will flourish (Ballon, 2008). On the other hand, DeNardis contributes to the growing levels of disruption by looking at how traditional institutions of power have had their historic control of the content market diffused by the forces of globalisation and technology. She cites the struggles of content monetization faced by corporate media and how revenue models have been destabilized by user-generated content and content-sharing sites (DeNardis, 2008 pg.10).

But even as these changes loom, Evens and Donders argue that even though a platformization of industries globally will alter market structures, affect competitive strategies and change the ‘rules of the game’, its impact also has to be mediated by power structures and institutional relationships that have been persistent for decades. In other words, the more things change, the more they might stay the same (Evens, Donders, 2018). These changes are not new, nor unexpected. Platforms have started to play an active role in the financing, production, aggregation and/or distribution of audiovisual content (Evens, Donders, 2018). Authors like Thompson have researched and documented in the past that the use of communication media transforms the spatial and temporal organization of social life, creating new forms of action and interaction, and new modes of exercising power, which is no longer linked to the sharing of a common locale (Thompson, 1995).

A few of the debates about platforms have also centred around the varied use of these new communication technologies. Digital media have been, and are used by minorities to organize international resistance to corporate business interests and national governments; fostering participation, decentralization, and the flattening of hierarchies. (Meyrowitz 2003: 208). And as government institutions each grow in their learning of these ubiquitous tools, Kurbalija writes that although Internet governance deals with the core of the digital world, governance cannot be handled with a digital-binary logic of true/false and good/bad. Instead, Internet governance demands many subtleties and shades of meaning and perception; it thus requires an analogue approach, covering a continuum of options, trade-offs, and compromises (Kurbalija, 2016).

Platforms introduced another dimension to the corridors of political power. Strategic uses of news created through mass media (tv, radio and newspapers) can promote public debate and generate community support for changes in community norms and policies (Eze, 2014).

Across Africa however, the increase in internet usage has been accompanied by increased investments in data storage, processing power & innovation ecosystems. (Ogunyemi, 2019) while studying the effects of platformization in Nigeria conducted research that revealed that issues circling around customer protection, data protection and privacy concerns, value capture, digital divide issues, concerns for vulnerable users and possible reasons for failure for platform operators were among the biggest questions around the impact of platforms.

The nature of the role of platforms in different societies has driven the nature of the conversations about their role, uses, and how they are perceived. In Nigeria, other more localised problems that had been driven by activists through social protests - which pressed demands on the government against conditions such as insecurity, high cost of living, poverty, unemployment, corruption and repressive rule across the country - found the coordination and amplification of their voices and demands through the rise of platforms (Egbunike, Olorunnisola, 2015).

The use of social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to curate and drive advocacy conversations, mobilize and activate citizenry and drive for social change was more vividly demonstrated in the #OccupyNigeria protests. The protests were sparked as a response to the government of Nigeria's move to remove fuel subsidies. It was characterized by sit-outs, sit-ins, rallies, roadblocks and strikes. Across the country from the business capital Lagos to the administrative capital, Abuja, most of the major cities such as Port Harcourt, Kano, Kaduna, Ibadan and Calabar were embroiled in an orgy of rage. All of which were carefully curated through the use of social media platforms such as blogs, Facebook, Twitter and blackberry messenger (Egbunike, Olorunnisola, 2015).

These events, and many others that followed, set the use of digital platforms as active agents for the cross-examination of government processes, unleashed broader popular anger over corruption and social inequality, and became contact points for Nigerians to vent their frustrations at the insensitivity of their leaders (Egbunike, Olorunnisola, 2015).

The key discussion that anchors the role of platforms now, however, is about how digital platforms are slowly becoming content hubs, content gatekeepers, and functioning as efficient highways to content distribution. The growing influence of platforms has contributed to the breakdown of the traditional media distribution monopoly, the proliferation of new modes of distribution, and the integration of content and distribution infrastructure at the corporate level (Evens, Donders, 2018).

In 2016, writing about the impact of platforms, Kenny and Zysman argued that the emerging digital platforms were diverse in function and structure, and are provoking a reorganization of a wide variety of markets and work arrangements, including how value is created and captured (Kenney & Zysman, 2016).

There are different socio-political and socio-economic spheres that the internet and digital platform growth threaten to redefine. Oudshoorn and Pinch hold that the old view of users as passive consumers of technology has largely been replaced and along with it the linear model of

technological innovation and diffusion. This has led to increased discussion of the social shaping of technology (Oudshoorn & Pinch, 2008).

The literature seems multidimensional in its volume, but not in its specificity. For example, less focus has been directed toward the economic implications of these changes in media technology. The neglect of economic considerations in media is rooted in the perception of media as a means to secure social, cultural or political status. (Ballon, 2014). Moreover, historically, private media company owners themselves often regarded their media activities not so much as a business but rather as a means to secure social, cultural or political status...” (Ballon, 2014).

## **2.6 Digital monoliths: Facebook in Nigeria.**

*This section looks at the economic implication of Facebook on Nigeria’s media ecosystem focusing on key learnings from the scholarly work of others. It highlights major political, social and economic impacts.*

Facebook's steady growth as a platform is monumental. In January 2022, the platform had acquired over two billion users globally<sup>11</sup>. This number means the platform is now bigger in its population than the individual populations of India, China, Africa and Europe. As the company continues to grow exponentially, academic literature on the impact of its activities has begun to diverge from the political economy of the platform. Graham, Gosling and Wilson among other researchers have cited that Facebook and other OSNs are interesting not only in the way they reflect existing social processes but also in how they shape them (Wilson, Gosling & Graham, 2018).

Several researchers have cited the platform's continuously growing influence in the political, social and economic reorganization of modern society. Graham, Gosling and Wilson point to the utility of Facebook as a novel tool to observe behaviour in a naturalistic setting, test hypotheses, and recruit participants. They argue though, that because research on Facebook is carried out by a wide variety of disciplines and the results are published in a broad range of journals, it is difficult to keep track of various findings (Wilson, Gosling & Graham, 2018).

Studying Facebook is conceptually similar to studying any culture over time, where fluidity is to be expected and measured, not interpreted as a fatal design flaw (Wilson, Gosling & Graham, 2018). Facebook's growing influence, and how it impacts the media ecosystems has been a subject of discussion for academics and policy actors globally. In 2014, the platform’s role as a catalyst for economic activity in ecosystems composed of marketers, app developers, and providers of connectivity enabled \$227bn of economic impact and 4.5m jobs globally.<sup>12</sup>

In November 2018, Zuckerberg published another long essay titled: *A Blueprint for Content Governance and Enforcement*. In this article, Zuckerberg stated that an oversight body would be created for content moderation. He argued that he had “increasingly come to believe that Facebook

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<sup>11</sup> DATAREPORTAL. Facebook stats and trends 2022. <https://datareportal.com/essential-facebook-stats>

<sup>12</sup> The global economic impact of Facebook | Deloitte UK. (n.d.). Deloitte United Kingdom. Retrieved 30 November 2021, from <https://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/pages/technology-media-and-telecommunications/articles/the-global-economic-impact-of-facebook.html>

should not make so many important decisions about free expression and safety on [its] own” (Gorwa, 2019).

Nieborg and Helmond hold that behind Facebook executives' approach of playing up its empowering potential for users as citizens, the monetary potential of users as consumers and targets of advertising is what Facebook's investors and business analysts get (Nieborg & Helmon, 2018).

After a series of public criticism of the platform, in February 2017, Mark Zuckerberg posted a long-form article that served as a manifesto, and outlined Facebook's changing direction from 'connecting people' to building 'social infrastructure'. Nieborg and Helmon argue that this framing positions the platform as a ubiquitous, foundational, if not essential gateway supporting 'social' services (Nieborg & Helmond, 2018).

At the technical level, (Heyman & Pierson, 2015 p. 8) have described how embedded design features such as *EdgeRank* and *Gatekeeper* evaluate and discriminate through the criteria of efficiency and profitability, resulting in the creation of obligatory passage points that force and steer the nature of connections between users and actors.

As Facebook's impact grows into the Nigerian media ecosystem, new approaches to understanding, adapting and responding to these changes have been attempted. But governments globally are struggling with the most appropriate way to respond. The most popular ideas are around ways to govern the internet, but the process to achieve this does not present itself as an easy task.

In October 2021, Facebook had a brief shut-down that led to significant business inconveniences globally but resulted in a devastating business impact on small companies in Nigeria<sup>13</sup>. As with the arrival of the company, its growing influence has shaped the media ecosystems across the world. The shutdown demonstrated more powerfully the dominance of the platform in its Nigerian market.

This dominance has continued to pervade all spheres of the economy. In the academic sphere, the studies follow a similar but slightly divergent focus. While some researchers (Apuke, Apollos, 2017) discuss how Facebook has turned into one of the fundamental platforms for political aspirants to propagate diverse campaign messages to their constituents who have an interest in their political careers and aspirations. Others (Ebele, Oghenetega, 2014) have focused on the impact of platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram on the academic performance of students citing that more students get distracted by these platforms than those who actually use them to bolster their academic performance.

At a more socially granular level, researchers like (Aliyu and Sule, 2019) took a more nuanced approach to looking at the use of social media platforms by Muslim students in proselytizing the religion of Islam in Tertiary Institutions of Learning in Northern Nigeria. Their work unpacks the different forms and uses of technological changes happening within different societies as more and more platforms become dominant.

In hindsight, even though so much has been explored about the impact of Facebook, as (Wilson et al, 2012) observed, the sizeable body of research on Facebook which includes all the different forms

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<sup>13</sup> Job, C. P. (2021.). In Nigeria, Facebook's Outage Revealed a Dangerous Dominance. Wired. Retrieved 30 November 2021, from <https://www.wired.com/story/nigeria-whatsapp-facebook-outage/>

of questions, methods, and perspectives is so varied, diverse, and fragmented that writing a coherent summary of the literature would be impossible.

While it is now without a doubt that Facebook has introduced exponential disruptions in different spheres, much of the attention on Facebook's impact has been on other existing systems. Facebooks bypass of traditional news media companies' use of conditional-access mediums, which allowed established news media companies to keep a captive audience engaged with curated professional content, and its enabling of content creators to distribute their work to a larger audience at a relatively low cost has significantly changed the content creation ecosystem (Pinjamaa & Asatiani, 2016).

The Cambridge Analytica data hijack triggered a series of investigations which revealed among them, that the Cambridge Analytica team were paid to influence the outcome of the 2007 presidential elections in Nigeria. This led to scholarship by authors (Ehondor, Ogbu 2020) to point their attention to observing the influence of platforms such as Facebook in the area of data protection and privacy infringements. Yet, there is scanty academic literature on the impact of digital technology on Nigeria as a society.

Santas and Inobemhe touch on digital adoption by pointing to how media houses in the developed world have gone further than those in developing countries such as Nigeria in the adoption of new media innovations in newsrooms (Inobemhe, Santas, 2021). They point out that newsrooms have leveraged the use of platforms in the areas of timely newsgathering and delivery and receiving early feedback (Inobemhe, Santas, 2021). Others (Asigbo, Aniagboso, 2017) direct their attention to the impact of technology on cultural values.

As described in the examples above, the focus has been on its use by political actors, institutions and clusters. A lot of the discussions have not well navigated Facebook's impact on digital professionals who create content.

## **2.7 Digital Creatives and Creators.**

[This section explores the impact of platforms on Nigeria's creator economy. It seeks to answer the question of how digital creatives respond to technological changes.](#)

The creative industries are part of the service sector. Yet they are unlike routine services that are based on known technologies and extant institutional structures (such as health, transport or insurance), which are often specialised outgrowths of primary and secondary sector operations. Instead, the creative industries are by definition involved in the process of new value creation because their business opportunities and value-added derive from the very existence of novelty and innovation in other sectors (Potts, 2013 p. 31).

Authors like Couldry have written about particular pathways that platforms introduce, such as the emergence of digital storytelling which has led people to tell personal stories in a way that they have never done before through digital forms (Couldry, 2008). He argues that when a practice such as digital storytelling challenges media's normal concentration of symbolic resources so markedly, analysing the consequences for wider society and culture is difficult, but it cannot be ignored

because of the possibility that digital storytelling is part of wider democratization, a reshaping of the hierarchies of voice and agency that characterize mediated democracies (Couldry, 2008).

Elaborating further, Couldry discusses digital storytelling in terms of mediatization and mediation. Touching on key features around mediatization such as the pressure to make visual representations, limit narrative lengths, standardize content and normalize the possible misinterpretation of content shared (Couldry, 2008). Through the frames of mediation, the discussion takes a more interesting turn. Couldry dives extensively deeper into the changes that digitized content introduce through the lens of mediation. Mediation requires us to understand how processes of communication change the social and cultural environments that support them, as well as the relationships that individuals and institutions have with that environment and with each other (Couldry, 2008).

Using this scope he raises three questions: Firstly, how are digital storytelling's contexts and processes of production becoming associated with certain practices and styles of interpretation? Secondly, how are the outputs of digital storytelling practices circulated and recirculated, and how are they exchanged between various practitioners, audience members and institutions? Thirdly, he takes a broader vantage point to ask about the long-term consequences of digital storytelling as a practice for particular types of people in particular types of locations, and its consequences for wider social and cultural formations, even for democracy itself (Couldry, 2008).

He also spotlights the impact on content creators by pointing out that if digital storytellers assume that their public narratives will be an archive that can be used against them in years to come, they may adjust the stories they tell online (Couldry, 2008).

At the organisational level, the undisputed dominance of a handful of tech companies in controlling (or deeply influencing) access to creative works raises existential questions for cultural industries, their core businesses, and even more so for the authors and performers who must make a living (Mazziotti, 2020). Mazziotti looks into whether the phenomenon of "content platformisation" can be ultimately beneficial to artists and content creators. He cites that while social media services have allowed creators to keep building their digital audiences, the logic underlying online platforms, as a whole, systematically penalises creators (Mazziotti, 2020).

This new environment introduces a multiplicity of views, (Igado, et al, 2018) argue that the network digital disruption has given birth to a pluralization of narrative acts, cascading into an exponential multiplication of projects, formats and meta-media. They add that these new processes introduce unique proposals that do not fit any of the already existing taxonomies of the New Media.

Nevertheless, digital content creation has continued to be on the rise. A new wave of actions being taken by platforms such as Facebook to monetize digital content on its platform is slowly powering what is now referred to as the *Creator Economy*. The terms *Digital Creatives* and *Creator Economy* are still emerging in literature. Authors like Caves write that the creative sector of the economy is composed of a set of industries producing goods and services broadly associated with cultural, artistic, and often entertainment value (Caves, 2000:1).



This budding creative ecosystem has been labelled the creator economy. The Creator economy is a software-facilitated economy that allows creators to earn revenue from their creations<sup>14</sup>. This describes a creative ecosystem comprising the different ways creators have been building an economy through software platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, OnlyFans, Instagram, TikTok, Twitch, Substack, Spotify, and Patreon (Jones, 2021).

Yuanling Yuan in her article for SignalFire defined the Creator Economy as:

*"the class of businesses built by over 50 million independent content creators, curators, and community builders including social media influencers, bloggers, and videographers, plus the software and finance tools designed to help them with growth and monetization".*

What has become particularly interesting about this new and growing economy is how they are centred around platforms. Yuan writes that this economy is made up of individuals who started out as ordinary internet consumers and have evolved into sophisticated internet savvy users primarily earning a living as content creators, influencers, YouTubers, etc. Basically, anyone who uses social media alongside software and finance tools to monetise their content, knowledge and skills online is considered a creator (Talub, 2022).

Many people including those who have blue-collar jobs use digital media to showcase their skills and/or teach using videos, podcasts or blogs. More than 50 million people around the world consider themselves creators, despite the creator economy only being born a decade ago (Yuan, 2022).

This economy has triggered a rise in the digital and ancillary support industry comprising companies and agencies designed to help creators earn money by selling digital products and services, and leveraging a range of services which include: advertising and sponsored content, brand management and representation, paid subscriptions, Digital content sales, Merchandise, books/ebooks, Live and virtual events, fan engagement, speaking engagements and so on. All of these combine to enable and activate creators whose social base is anchored on an ecosystem of trusted followers and audiences. They use these to focus on creating more unique niche content tailored to the interests of their audiences (Talub, 2022).

## **2.8 Nigeria's growing Creator Economy**

As the global creator economy goes on the rise, across Africa, creators which include freelance journalists, independent writers, artists, videographers, gamers, and podcasters still find it harder to create content as they continue to struggle with gaining the funds required to finance their creative work (Akinfenwa, 2022)<sup>15</sup>. This background raises several controversies.

Oladunmade (2022) writes that one of the challenges that creators in Nigeria face is that the biggest social media platforms uphold policies that make it difficult for African creators to profit from their content. He particularly cites how social media companies such as TikTok did not include Africa in

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<sup>14</sup> The Creator Economy Explained: How Companies Are Transforming The Self-Monetization Boom - CB Insights Research. (2022). Retrieved 27 July 2022, from <https://www.cbinsights.com/research/report/what-is-the-creator-economy/>

<sup>15</sup> Akinfenwa, D. (2022). Influencer Marketing: Funding A Booming Creator Economy in Africa. Retrieved 26 July 2022, from <https://guardian.ng/life/influencer-marketing-funding-a-booming-creator-economy-in-africa/>



its Creator Fund monetisation scheme. He also points to the activities of locals who are coming up with solutions such as the organisation Selar which paid over \$1 million to African creators in 2021.

Other problems which have been identified include challenges with payment and access to especially international payments for Nigerian creators. A process which has been documented as very cumbersome, tricky and tiresome. It is in the wake of these challenges that platforms such as Selar have emerged. Selar has been used by over 25,000 creators in 11 African countries have used the platform. In 2021, Flutterwave acquired Disha, a Nigerian platform for curating and selling digital content (Oladunmade, 2022).

In 2016, Nigeria's key database institution the National Bureau of Statistics reported a significant growth (1.86% to 12.81%; contributing N54bn to the country's GDP) in Nigeria's entertainment and media (E&M) industry (Omenugha et al, 2018). This growth which had doubled over five years was noted by the NBS to have been sprung by the internet and mobile-based entertainment as one of its key drivers.

Short, shareable, individualized video content from creators distributed on mobile phones has been gathering likes, retweets, shares and endorsements - pivoting previously unknown young creators into national superstars<sup>16</sup>. This has led to the inclusion of content creators into awards categories such as the Future Awards<sup>17</sup> and resulted in new conversations about the role of creators in the economy.

This new crop of creators unlike earlier generations work very independently often only working with friends as managers. They rarely involve agents or agencies and cut off middle-men positions. They leverage advanced platform features to create authentic high-quality videos that do not follow traditional storytelling techniques and are more attuned to their personalities or the characters they play.

Young Nigerians have turned what was once considered informal work into a viable industry, creating jobs not just for themselves but for others too, and are largely responsible for exporting Africa's contents across the continent and the world (Sylvans, 2022).

In 2020, the Africa Polling Institute (API) an Abuja-based research institute, undertook a study to understand this space. The study listed popular content creators in the comedy genre such as Broda Shaggi, Mark Angel Comedy, Mr Macaroni, and Taaooma as Nigeria's top skit comedians and digital content creators. It also

*“From the study, we found out that 67 per cent of Nigerians say they watch comedy skits, with 45 per cent saying they watch them once in a while and 29 per cent a few times a week. “65 per cent of Nigerians consider comedy skits funny and entertaining, while 20 per cent consider them quite informative. “An average of 88 per cent of Nigerians agree that comedy skits are useful in creating*

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<sup>16</sup> Broda Shaggi, Mr Macaroni others top list of digital content creators. (2022). Retrieved 27 July 2022, from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/entertainment/439364-broda-shaggi-mr-macaroni-others-top-list-of-digital-content-creators.html>

<sup>17</sup> Drum rolls! ? Introducing the Winners of The Future Awards Africa #TFAA2020. (2022). Retrieved 27 July 2022, from <https://www.bellanaija.com/2020/11/the-future-africa-awards-2020-winners/>

*awareness on social trends, correcting societal ills, and creating job opportunities,” (API, 2020)*

The work by the API, despite its narrow focus on comedy genres, points to a growing creator economy. The growing economy is also seeing new approaches by platforms each competing to retain creators on their platforms. As creators continually move to platforms that are better different monetisation programs are being designed as lock-in strategies to keep clients. Facebook has said it is investing a billion dollars for creators on its platform. These changes have also been observed on platforms like Substack, where writers keep a sizeable sum of their subscription fees and TikTok which set up a \$2 million creator fund (Jones, 2021).

Even though the opportunities available in the creative sector are growing rapidly (Obaseki, 2022), academic focus and literature on the subject in Nigeria are significantly limited. These new emerging changes are still not being well captured and documented. There is very little direct literature that addresses this. As a result building a framework for understanding the impact of platforms on this new economy is difficult.

## **2.9 Literature Review Summary**

In summary, we have reviewed some academic, historical and contextual material linked to the different variables of our study. This helps to provide some necessary background to understanding existing knowledge surrounding the study. The purpose of exploring the theoretical literature around a research topic is to gain insight and contextual knowledge about the subject in order to raise some new questions (Gray, 2014).

This chapter has explored the different connected parts of the study which include Digitization, the Internet, Platforms, Facebook, Creatives and the Creator Economy. This review has surfaced new questions regarding how creators themselves interact with Facebook creating the necessary structure for the other parts of this study. This also chapter also provides the basic framework to understand the study procedure. The next section looks at the instruments applied to collect direct qualitative data from content creators using Facebook to create their content in Nigeria with the aim to further investigate along the lines of the study questions.

## Chapter Three: Research Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction.

This chapter is focused on the researchers' approach to executing the study while relying on a well-explained methodology. This study seeks to examine *The Influence of Facebook on the creation of digital content by Content Creators in Nigeria* utilizing a qualitative research approach. This section covers explanations as they relate to the choice of participants, the research design including the population, sample size, sampling procedure, the research instrument, data collection, ethics, and data analysis. The methodology adopted seeks to ground the data collection part of the thesis with the aim of answering the questions that surfaced during the literature review. The analysis which will follow will be done based on an effective deployment of this research methodology to generate the results which will be useful for the discussion that will follow.

The data collected was in line with the academic discourse on the role of platforms in Nigeria's media ecosystem. The study sought to draw new lines of inquiry around the effect of Facebook as a platform, pursuing a narrow objective, by seeking to understand the platform's influence in shaping the nature and form of digital content that is being created by content creators<sup>18</sup> in Nigeria.

The process I took to undertake this research began with a general Google search for the keywords in my research. As this turned out less productive and only referred me to articles that were either non-relevant, outdated or non-academic. I then streamlined the search process to academic search engines such as Research Gate, Google Scholar, and Taylor and Francis. For each section of the research, I created Google Doc folders where I saved relevant materials that I had read through, journals, books and other sources used for the research.

The Introduction chapter contains a brief review and synthesis of the research work. It gives a general picture of the study drawing on contextual data and research to describe the study. This was built on the rationale of identifying the problem/phenomena that the study seeks to understand. Chapter two takes a deeper dive into the chronological activities, events and situations that serves as grounded knowledge upon which the research is built offering a theoretical perspective to the study through the review of past and recent works, directions and related interests to the subject of this study.

### 3.2. Research Questions.

The research allowed me to adopt an Explorative Research approach, focused on the Nigerian content creator ecosystem and was directed at understanding and contextualizing the problem. The central research questions are

1. *How are the content creation processes of digital creatives in Nigeria (writers, reporters and photographers & videographers) influenced<sup>19</sup> by Facebook?*
2. *How are Nigerian content creators evolving to accommodate the influence of Facebook and how are they responding?*

Based on the above overarching questions, this research pursued five key research questions based

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<sup>18</sup> The definition is not limited to the traditional creators of content before the rise of user-generated content as listed here: [https://web.archive.org/web/20140112224852/http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2004/PIP\\_Content\\_Creation\\_Report.pdf.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20140112224852/http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2004/PIP_Content_Creation_Report.pdf.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> Influence for the purpose of this research is limited to technical, social and economic influence.

on the above objectives, as defined below. New lines of inquiry under each question surfaced during the data collection process. For this research process, I also recognized that additional lines of inquiry may surface during the interviews, and/or specific priorities may emerge. This made me organize the research into a broader range of inquiries. This research thus sought to understand:

- The use of Facebook by digital creators for content creation and distribution. This includes:
  - Needs and uses of/for content creation, with a focus on Facebook.
  - Habits around the use of digital platforms, especially Facebook.
- How does Facebook support or inhibit content creation?
- Economic implications around the use of Facebook for content creation.
- How are content creators finding their way around Facebook?
- What are their perceptions around the use of Facebook for digital creation?

### **3.3 Qualitative Research:**

This study adopted a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative methods include ethnography, grounded theory, discourse analysis, and interpretative phenomenological analysis (Creswell, 2018). Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretative material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

### **3.4. Participants**

The study area for this research is Nigeria and the population of the participants is creators which include writers, videographers, photographers, Social Media Influencers, and Editors who are based in Nigeria or are creating content in Nigeria. This research will be focused on a limited number of respondents. Twenty respondents will be selected for the purpose of this study.

### **3.5 Sample Size**

The sample size for this research study is 20 participants. These were selected through the Convenience Sampling technique. This sample size has been limited due to the constraints of time, resources, and the impracticality of reaching a large sample frame, this number will be convenient for data collection for a research investigation of this size.

I began by building a diversified list of creators which includes artists, photographers, illustrators, editors, writers, videographers, filmmakers, journalists, graphic artists, and staff of Facebook to use as a counterweight to the data gained from the content creators. Through desk research, I surfaced each creator that fell within the list and reached out to them by email requesting them to share their knowledge and experience with me for the purpose of my study.

A semi-structured questionnaire, with open-ended questions, was used as an early instrument to collect data. This allowed the conversation to take an organic shape while still being structured along the lines of inquiry. Descriptive and inferential statistics have been used in analyzing data. A consent form which contained all necessary information on ethical considerations, such as anonymity, the right to withdraw, and an informed consent form was given to the respondents to read, sign and return. This was done to demonstrate ethical awareness of the context of the study.

### 3.6 Research Design

This study followed an exploratory research design. Existing literature on the influence of platforms on media ecosystems across Africa is limited. Data sets to understand Facebook's influence on Nigeria's digital media ecosystem are also limited. As I found limited prior research that directly explores how Facebook is influencing the media ecosystems in Nigeria, this study took a phenomenological approach.

Specifically, there is limited academic literature that has directly captured the role/impact of Facebook on Nigeria's creator economy. As a result, I did not choose to formulate any hypotheses regarding the research outcome. This study employed the use of the research questions listed above, with an aim to provide the researcher with an outline and direction for the study.

#### 3.6.1 Documentation Review

The researcher will review existing documentation on previous efforts to understand and engage with content creators using Facebook in Nigeria. These will include academic literature, journals and publications as well as industry-specific relevant material addressing the questions listed above. The researcher aims to narrow these down to relevant and related materials that can include surveys, and materials relating to initiatives as well as activities related to the keywords associated with this research. Literature reviews, expert consultations, and discussions with institutional partners, ground the potential future with the wisdom of what has been done before (Reboot, 2013).

##### **Secondary Research:**

Secondary information consists of sources of data and other information collected by others and archived in some form. These sources include government reports, industry studies, archived datasets, syndicated information services as well as the traditional books and journals found in libraries. Secondary information offers relatively quick and inexpensive answers to many questions and is almost always the point of departure for primary research (Stewart & Camins, 1993).

For this research, the researcher conducted a review of existing related documentation of academic literature, journals and publications as well as industry-specific relevant material addressing the questions listed above. These included results from previous relevant research, surveys, documentation of previous initiatives and activities, and other relevant materials related to the keywords associated with this research.

**Focus:** Reviewing documentation helped me to understand how other researchers have sought to understand and/or engaged with content creators using Facebook in Nigeria. It also guided me in ensuring that the research builds on existing knowledge and is aware of potential sensitivities, both when conducting desk research and as well as when engaging with experts and/or digital creators in Nigeria.

#### 3.6.2 Interviews

Several qualitative methods have been developed to support an in-depth and extensive understanding of issues, through their textual interpretation. The most common types include interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

Interviews can be used as either the main instrument of data collection or in conjunction with observation, document analysis or some other type of data gathering technique. Qualitative

interviews, semi-structured interviews (where additional probing questions can be used) or standardized interviews, where they are not (Gray 2021).

**In-depth Interviews:**

The researcher interviewed digital content creators who have been designated as experts<sup>20</sup> in the field. These will include active editors, photographers, videographers, translators, and other actors who use Facebook as part of their day-to-day lives. These interviews will be less structured and are aimed at addressing the questions surfaced above.

- Semi-structured interview. I conducted 18 interviews in total, the first 10 interviews remotely with a duration of 25-30mins and carried this out using Zoom and Google. I then traveled to Nigeria and conducted another 8 interviews in-person. Documentation of the initial Zoom conversations was carried out by extracting recorded versions of the conversation and converting this to text through the online platform Otter. Otter is software that allowed me to get transcribed versions of the conversations held. The platform offered 3 free transcriptions for each new user. To gain more transcriptions I utilized several personal including the different email addresses of colleagues and friends to get an extension of the transcriptions. This then helped me to create an archive of typed-out formats of the interview for extrapolation. The population of the study was specific to Content Creators in the following categories:

<b>Facebook Team/Personnel</b>	<b>Platform users</b>	<b>Advertisers</b>
Core Staff	Text-based creators.	Ad Agencies
Regional: Africa/Nigeria Office	Visual Based creators	Social Media Influencers

- Text-Based Creators: Columnists, Editors and Writers.

Visual Based Creators: Photographers, Cartoonists/Illustrators, Graphic Artists & Videographers.

**Focus:** The interviews were used to probe all key research questions. They were used to achieve a deep and nuanced understanding of different aspects of Facebook's influence on digital content creation as well as how creators are responding. Responding to this research includes the attitudes, behaviors, and approaches regarding accessing, sharing, creating, and disseminating content on the Facebook platform.

**3.6.3. Qualitative Content Analysis**

The process of content analysis in research is the application of a method that acknowledges that society is enacted in talk, texts, and other modalities of communication and that understanding social

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<sup>20</sup> The interview process aims to give room for an adaptation of the specific expert the researcher is speaking to. The aim here is to draw out elements of their expertise that are most relevant to the research.

phenomena cannot be achieved without understanding how language operates in the social world (Krippendorff, 2018).

For media and communication policy research, qualitative content analysis is a highly useful method of data analysis. Given the multitude of empirical studies interested in media policymaking and regulation that use interviews and documents for data collection, methods for analyzing such qualitative data are elementary for the research field. As one such method, qualitative content analysis offers several advantages (Mayring, 2014).

This method was employed to gain a nuanced understanding of the transcripts from the interview process as listed above. To analyze the transcripts of the interviews related to this study, I adopted an inductive qualitative analysis approach: using *Thematic Content Analysis*<sup>21</sup>.

Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) is a descriptive presentation of qualitative data. Qualitative data may take the form of interview transcripts collected from research participants or other identified texts that reflect experientially on the topic of study. While video, image, and other forms of data may accompany textural data, this description of TCA is limited to textural data<sup>22</sup>. This method of analysis is used by social scientists to examine patterns in communication in a replicable and systematic manner (Bell et al, 2018).

For this process, I created four themes through which the questions to the respondents were asked and extrapolated sentences, statements, references, and direct answers to the research questions to form a broad-to-narrow analysis as a way of understanding and documenting the results. In line with the Exploratory Research approach adopted as part of the process of this research, two key types of qualitative research methods were employed for this study below:

1. Content Analysis.
2. In-depth interviews.

The review of past literature helped me understand the experiences of other researchers and guide my research towards ensuring that the study builds on existing knowledge. This also helped to equip me with the awareness of potential in-country sensitivities, both when conducting interviews or engaging with experts and/or local content creators.

### 3.7 Benefits & Criticisms

**Benefits:** These methods have been adopted to support a more nuanced understanding of the research questions. A qualitative research method has been employed by the researcher with the aim to give the researcher a deep, intense, and holistic overview of the context under study, often involving interaction within the everyday lives of individuals, groups, communities and organizations (Gray, 2021).

**Criticisms:** Among the challenges of the methodological approach (qualitative research) and the methods (secondary research and interviews), a major problem associated has been the lack of clear theoretical concepts about how to interpret qualitative datasets. Cicourel (1982) writes that we lack

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<sup>21</sup> How to Analyze Interview Transcripts in Qualitative Research <https://www.rev.com/blog/analyze-interview-transcripts-in-qualitative-research>

<sup>22</sup> Thematic Content Analysis (TCA): Descriptive Presentation of Qualitative Data <http://rosemarieanderson.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/ThematicContentAnalysis.pdf>

a theory of comprehension and communication that can provide a foundation for the way that question-answer systems function, and the way respondents understand them (Cicourel, 1982).

One of the criticisms against qualitative research is that the process is ‘unscientific’, anecdotal and based on subjective impressions (Gray, 2021).

The challenge with the use of secondary data, specific to this research study is the difficulty faced to obtain information specific to the geographical study of this research - Nigeria. Additionally, existing research data accessed by the researcher do not have direct relevance, and the currency is necessary to be useful. These challenges are among why an interview method is being adopted by the researcher to complement the datasets towards having a more robust and nuanced understanding of the study.

The biggest challenge for this research was planning the interview sessions. Some of the respondents had last-minute commitments that led them to cancel our meetings, others had challenges with internet, power, noise disturbances nearby, and technical issues surrounding hearing or seeing them well.

### **3.8. Data Reliability & Validity**

When dealing with quantitative methodology, the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable.<sup>23</sup>

For this study, a qualitative methodology is employed. Golafshani writes that a good qualitative study can help us understand a situation that would otherwise be enigmatic or confusing (Golafshani, 2003). Thus, the aim of this research is therefore to generate understanding. For this research, I tried to ensure that I paid to the credibility, neutrality or confirmability, consistency or dependability, and applicability or transferability of this study, as these are the essential criteria for quality<sup>24</sup>. To ensure quality parameters, I also tried to assimilate reliability and validity into this study by ensuring that there is little or no change in the interpretative output of the study, from the data sets compiled, reviewed, and analyzed.

### **3.9 My Position as Researcher**

I refer here to my ontological position as a researcher. I accept that it has been impossible for me to remain entirely neutral throughout this work. This is mainly because the phenomena and dynamics that I studied belong to a social environment that I am part of myself. I have been born and raised in Nigeria, and have my own ideas about the impact of digital platforms on the Nigerian ecosystem. Furthermore, I am also a digital content creator using Facebook for the creation of content regularly.

From an epistemological perspective, I have been seeking to acquire in-depth knowledge about the intersection between platforms and digital content. This has allowed me to objectively gather this knowledge by doing the preceding literature review as well as by using qualitative content analysis to empirically evaluate and understand all the data collected.

### **3.10. Expected outcomes from research.**

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<sup>23</sup> Joppe, M. (2006). The research process. <http://www.ryerson.ca/~mjoppe/rp.htm>

<sup>24</sup> Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage



This study aimed to add new lines of inquiry toward understanding the effects of Facebook on Nigeria's media ecosystem. The research interest is geared toward contributing to the existing literature about Nigeria's media economy, its platform economy and the country's creator economy.

The expected outcome of this research was that the study contributes as an academic body of work, to ongoing discussions about the role, influence, and effects of platformization and the platform economy, on Nigeria's creative industry. This research will equally contribute to my personal experience as a freelance writer and communications consultant using writing, photography, and short documentaries to tell stories about NGO projects across Nigeria. Data gained from this research will contribute to my ongoing work, and knowledge of Nigeria's media ecosystem.

This research aims to explore how digital platforms are shaping the nature and form of content being created by media organizations in Nigeria. The focus of this research will be on Facebook as it has been identified in the literature material of this research.

### **3.11 Respondent Consent & Data Management**

For this research, I obtained informed consent from every respondent prior to conducting research with them and provided them with the opportunity to state or update their preferences regarding the use of their data at the end of each research activity. Prior to each research activity, I explained to the respondents how and in what formats their data may be used and provided respondents ample opportunity to ask questions about the purpose or outputs of the research.

In two cases, the respondent was uncomfortable with my explanation of how their data would be used and this led me to stop the interview/study activity. I then thanked the respondent for their consideration. In the cases in which the respondent provided consent, I asked them to review and sign a short and easy-to-understand consent form (Official VUB consent form downloaded from Canvas). The respondents did not need to provide biographic data such as age, address, gender or any data about their person. The respondents agreed to provide their names and consented orally that they were satisfied with my explanation and said I could use these data sets. However, I still made sure that the personal data of each respondent was coded in all written documentation and that no identifying details were captured in the project documentation.

#### **3.11.1 Limitations of the study.**

Several challenges and risks present hurdles to the process of this research study. The major strategic challenges are summarized below, along with mitigation strategies:

- **Bounding Research Scope:** Given the short duration of the research period, it will not be possible to exhaustively cover all the thematic points of interest in the study at a depth that may be desired. A trade-off for generality over specificity will be made during the data collection phase of the research.
- **Outreach to Respondents:** The cross-country nature of the research and the impact and effect of COVID all combine to reduce access to required respondents that fit target profiles. This will be mitigated by defining minimum (rather than absolute) targets across different inclusion criteria, in anticipation of likely operational challenges that enable the researcher to remain open to the possibility of snowball respondents emerging.
- **Limited Time:** The data collection duration presents a limited window to explore the range

of research questions presented. To mitigate this, the researcher will aim to reach out to respondents daily to maximize research opportunities.

The next chapter contains the data received from the respondents including some inspection, modification, modelling, and transformation of each of these data sets' data as per the need of the research topic. The conclusion is the final inference drawn from the data analysis, review of literature, and findings.

## Chapter Four: Results, Findings & Analysis

### 4.1 Introduction

The general aim of this research study is to investigate the influence of Facebook on Nigeria's creator economy. This chapter presents a detailed account of data collected alongside an analysis of the collected data. A varied number of creators were interviewed, this includes a visual artist, two photographers, one actor, two journalists, two editors, one digital illustrator, one graphic artist and an advertising agency. Each of these was carefully selected based on the frequency of content creation, and popularity.

### 4.2 Data Categorization.

The use of content analysis has been selected here. This process essentially involves making inferences about data (usually text) by systematically and objectively identifying special characteristics (classes or categories) within them (Gray, 2014). This section aims first to identify four broad categories that have been selected through which the data was captured during the interviews, and by analyzing the data, proceed to use the results of these four categories to answer the two key research questions the study aims to answer. The four themes pursued are below

1. Knowledge and awareness.
2. Technical Application (Support and inhibition).
3. Economic benefit and costs.
4. Political Sensitivities & Implications.

#### 4.2.1 Knowledge and awareness.

The set of questions sought to understand user knowledge and awareness of Facebook, testing their knowledge of the platform, its features meanings, and affordances. The results indicate that all the interviewees have significant knowledge and use of Facebook for their work. Each creator interviewed had used Facebook for an average of ten years. The use of Facebook by each of the creators interviewed has evolved from connecting with friends and family to sharing personal ideas about social issues and more recently shifted towards meeting clients and customers. One interviewee noted:

*Respondent 14 - I started using Facebook, just like every other person for social connections and all the making friends, you know, sometimes posting your ideas, saying stuff out there posting your own opinion and all that. But over time, it has grown into a platform where I share my work, a platform where I share my ideas, where I post my content and it gets viewed by people all over the globe. So for now, it is now basically a platform where I share my work for people to view and for people to consume. But before it was just a social connection, you know, meet people make new friends from a different area make distance friends. But for now, it's mostly business now, it's more about putting my work out there for people to see it to share my work with the world.*

The awareness of Facebook has also grown over the years as some creators did not begin to use Facebook with the intent to create or distribute on the platform. One respondent answered that: *Facebook for me just part of joining the crowd in online activities.*

The use of Facebook over the years has been largely used by news platforms to disseminate resulting in editors across newsrooms in Nigeria finding new ways to share content via the app.

*Respondent 18 - I am the editor of the Cable. I have been in journalism for 12/13 years. For most of that time, it's been online journalism. So as you would expect, Facebook has been a key part of how we promote our content. On every platform, I've worked for, in the past editor of Ynaija. I was a pioneer editor of Cable Lifestyle, which is the entertainment arm of Cable. And at the time that we launched it in 2016, Facebook was one of the platforms that we use to promote it a lot, so as to connect with the audience and gain some traction. I've also worked at Opera which is a content aggregator platform. So they have an app and they also do other things. So I was the pioneer team lead of the Opera news hub, which was the hub that was open to the public to contribute to writing. So virtually, in every place I've worked Facebook is a surefire tool to promote what we disseminate.*

Data from the respondents point to extensive use of Facebook. This is not surprising as the selected interviewees are people who have been using the platform extensively. One respondent described his use of Facebook robustly below:

*Respondent 13 - I also use it to, especially when it comes to breaking news how to perform the act of breaking news I check reactions. I check object comments from different backgrounds, especially when it comes to political news, you know, that involves many parties or political players, I check the way people react to the FOR and against and the neutrals were so this in a way how to form an opinion on certain issues. That also helps me when I'm creating content for my work. It helps me to strike a balance, it also helped me to look for some fresh perspective, you know, so by the time I listen to both sides. And all in the between, and I look for that, that particular perspective that people are not talking about, I look for that. So that, so that by the time I create my work, and then so I now know that people will not come back to say I did not think of things. And then so it makes it interesting, unlike just joining the wagon. So, beyond that also, it's helped me to gauge the reaction to my work. And so I've done the job and pushed it out there, I want to know what people think about it. So, beyond the self-censorship that I try to instil in my work, you know, I also benefit from the feedback that I get most often, from the commentary and the sharing and all that. Then you see the way people react. So you see the way people react to a lot of things and then you check out for some of those little nuances, especially in the public domain, and then, so, automatically you test it for the network, you know, how do I handle some sentiment how do I handle some new some reaction or some expected reactions. Beyond that people get you to see my work, and then some people who feel, say oh I like this one, they often say I think I will like this*

*work for a project I'm doing so I get some, some kind of referrals, I get some people reaching out for me, to me for personal projects. A lot of guys come into my inbox with proposals like that, of course, somehow being financially beneficial to me. So, that is the financial angle to it. Generally, also, it keeps me abreast with a lot of professional and personal life. How you go about different things the kinds of information that you get, such as information about financial and personal security. And, of course, also keep me abreast of political development. Because I may not get some kind of news I want if really want to go out looking for this. But then you see the people sharing news of this on their timeline. And then as friends you follow the link and then read up about certain things, things that you would not normally read, know, or go looking for. So I think that and other things are some of the benefits of being on Facebook.*

Even though Facebook is among the older platforms, the size of people on the app still gives it a significant value to content creators that work for brands, media houses and newsrooms. The use of sister applications of Facebook such as Instagram and WhatsApp are being leveraged, but measuring audience and conversion remain challenging. One newsroom delivers early morning highlights of daily news directly to their WhatsApp contacts. A few of these experiences have been narrated by one respondent below:

*Respondent 6 - In terms of Facebook sister products we use WhatsApp a lot. We have like a list of contacts that we send broadcasts to on a daily basis every morning. So we give them a daily brief in the morning, that's like top stories from the previous days, of course, we get a reasonable conversion, but at some point, we had difficulties tracking, what exactly is the conversion rate from a platform like WhatsApp, as opposed to Facebook, you know, with Facebook, you can easily get the metrics, and you see the conversion rate, you see the impression, you see the CTR and everything. But in terms of WhatsApp, it becomes a bit harder. But of course, we still use it. Because we know that these days, a lot of people are on WhatsApp, a lot of people respond to broadcasts, as long as what you're sharing with them is attractive enough to get their attention. For Instagram, we use Instagram too were quite active, you know. But among the very, I would say Instagram is our least vibrant in terms of the fact that we understand that we need to have it, but we do not see conversion as much as the others, you know. So we, of course, put a lot of content out on a daily basis when they want to put content out we design our graphics and all that engaging content as well. But in terms of conversion, is not there's not so much of that.*

As of March 2022, there were over 36 million Facebook users in Nigeria, accounting for 16.5 percent of the population. Overall, 33.2 percent of users were aged between 25 and 34 years, making this age group the largest user base in the country (Statista, 2022).

Since Facebook launched its platform in Nigeria, its user base has continued to grow. The platform's influence was demonstrated most vividly in the historic 2015 Nigerian general election. This period saw users of the platform becoming active agents of democracy. Citizens photographed polling

results, compared them to the official government results, and discussed their analyses on social media. Their evidence spread across new and traditional media, giving their contributions audience and influence, which in turn incentivized more citizen participation. Despite citizens' critical role in reshaping media and improving governance, surprisingly few organizations are thinking deeply or critically about how to leverage them for both social impact and financial sustainability. Beyond the low-hanging fruit of elections and major corruption scandals, citizen energy remains largely untapped (Reboot, 2015).

#### 4.2.2 Technical & Creative Use

The researcher asked a series of organic questions about the technical use of Facebook. This section sought to understand the affordances of Facebook for the creation of content by creators in Nigeria. Sets of questions relating to how creators found their way around the use of the application. Respondents were asked follow-up questions on sentences and statements, while the researcher probed for technical challenges and opportunities as well as ways different creators have used the platform.

The journalists interviewed for this study responded that they applied Facebook's features extensively to their reporting work. One respondent speaking about it noted below:

*Respondent 6: It's a platform that helps in amplification. So that's one, it helps in engagement, that's two, we use it to reach out to sources that's three, and now there is this thing that Facebook does, I think they call it the fact-checkers, third party agreements, I get to use it with Facebook, if you're in it, it helps when you debunk information, it helps you to flag it. So there are so many things to do with Facebook.*

*Respondent 4: So basically what I do aside is just reporting, I equally produce video content, multimedia content, video, podcast, and anything basically to enrich the organization's social media platforms in whatever format it appears. So, yeah, so that's basically what I do. So I also do the reporting aspects, normal news reporting, feature rights, special requests, investigations, and vox pops and explainer videos. Yeah. So themes regarding, like the all-around multimedia production, basically, from start to finish of gathering content to produce them to edit them to post-production, that's like dissemination on social media platforms. When to post how to post, and what format to post. So yeah, that's basically what I do implement.*

The Facebook platform has different features that allow users especially creators go beyond the distribution of content such as the group function which allows people to drive advocacy activity. As described by one respondent below, the use of Facebook for posts about sensitive social issues can extend into its application as a tool to call for social action.

*Respondent 4: I use social media platforms and Facebook, particularly as you highlighted for my articles, particularly, when I finished probably, maybe a report is a special report has been produced. And it's not just, that it doesn't make sense, just leave it on the website. Because I mean, you're not just creating it for just*

websites, viewers or readers will also too, I mean, spread it across other social media platforms to get more views. So I sort of beyond it sex on the website, and I sort of do a little story, short storytelling, with pictures, and videos, and a short post, indicating what people can find in a report, and then including the link of the reports there. So basically, it's just a promote what I do, basically, it's to drive more people to go read my reports for one and secondly, also to boost my profile as a journalist, because I mean, as a journalist, it's important for you to You are a brand on your own. And it's important for you to have a very solid profile. And this is how you can showcase yourself to I mean, you know, a whole lot of people that this is what you do, you are authentic for this purpose. So yes, it's for brand building, as well as letting people know more about the particular reports I've worked on. So yeah, basically, that's what I do. I mostly post, particularly on Facebook, I mostly post posts about my career more by career things aside from my report. Probably events I attend, I feel they can be knowledgeable to the public. And also, depending on the report I do as well if I feel that it's so there's a way that I can sort of get impacts for the sources of my reports, I also use that channel as well, for instance. For instance, there was a report I did on the intersection between religion and divorce a month amongst Muslim women in Nigerian advanced black community where because as a result of their religion, loopholes in their religion, make it easy for a man to divorce them. So I use that channel to promote the work after producing the report. I mean, I saw the very sad situation these women are in. I mean, having been married to a man who just abandons you with maybe nine children. And then I had to use that opportunity through the Facebook platform to sort of seek support, like reaching out to NGOs, to get support for the women so that so it's not just about the report of also beyond reports of trying to make an impact on peoples lives. Also, another report I did on female IDPs, who living beyond their status of being displaced, empowering themselves with their businesses, I was able to put out as well. And were able to get funding, like additional funding from an NGO. So yes, aside, from the fact that I use, like the platforms to just like, tell stories or showcase my stories. I also use it as a form of advocacy as well, depending on the situation of the report, depending on the report that has just been published. So yeah, that's how I guess.

Creating on Facebook still comes with some challenges inc cases where it's not one creator tinkering around with dance videos, but in a situation where content such as sensitive news needs to be disseminated. One respondent while commenting on the effective ways that Facebook allows audience targeting also talks about how the process can be made easier.

*Respondent 17 - If you are a media company, or other maybe PR as well, you know, sometimes you do not know exactly what your audience wants, you know, of course, it takes time for some people, while for some others, particularly the ones who have a niche or niche, you know, the pronunciations are different for different people. For those who have a niche market, it's easier for them, but if you are doing so many things, you tend to take a longer time to know who your core audience is. So Facebook helps in that regard because with from experimentation, you get to*

*understand the demography that is actually by clicking that is, you know, paying attention to what you're putting out or responding, you know, you get to understand the where the impressions and clicks are coming from. So that for me, I feel like that is priceless and valuable, which is one of the advantages that Facebook has, you know, what works for them and keeps them going, because those insights, helping you to them craft the kind of content that you want to put out. So for example, if I know for a fact that between the ages of 24 and 44 is my target audience, and they are the ones who respond the most to my Facebook promotions, then I know that I have to give them content that they will, you know, easily gravitate towards. So yes, that helps that on that front. In terms of challenges. Apps, I would say. Maybe it could be easier, you know, it could be simpler, you know, the whole process could be faster, as opposed to you know, taking some time, sometimes you have some card issues, sometimes it takes a while before a post is vetted and approved to be promoted. And also partly could be easier. For me, that's what else is a key challenge.*

This position differs from the position of Facebook where its Market specialist holds that when users are familiar with one way of creating, they tend to stick to it even after other new tools or features have been added.

*Respondent 16 - There is so much that users can do with the platform. Every day a lot of upgrades are being made across the Facebook environment around ways to improve user experience. Users are locked into one form of creating and hard to shift into others.*

This is not a strange phenomenon as academic work such as the works of Tuomi point to the role of users as agents of innovation (Tuomi, 2002). But within the features that creators in Nigeria have been using there is already a clear understanding of what works and what does not work.

*Respondent 1: I have like almost 5000 Friends, I have two Facebook pages actually. So the first one was one, you have so many other points. So I have a point, it's also about 5000, I had a 5000 Friendship up. So I had to create another one to accommodate more of my people. As a media professional and a communication professional, I worked at an agency. And I was able to work for brands so I managed like social media pages of like 10, Nigerian and international brands and the likes of Maggie, Absolute, Maternal etc and so, so I, for this brands, like for example, Maggie, Facebook is big for them, like Facebook is big for them. So on this platform, they use this platform there are different sections on this platform. Most people who use it, only use it for maybe friendship. So unlike the brands, which use Facebook to target their audience and their consumers. So people only use Facebook when they log into Facebook to connect with friends, they only use that. So many people don't know that Facebook adequately equipped us to do so many people don't know that Business Suite. So this Creator Studio gives the gives freedom to create us to creators*



*to know how the contents are doing. What's the performance of the content that you like for every video, you can post a video. You can post you can go live. You can post photos, so on this platform. You can see what content is doing well and what the performance of this content was impression like. For people who use Facebook as a general platform let's say for laymen, we only used to post our own mind, what's on our minds. We don't care about how many likes, some don't care about how many likes. And even if you care, you already see those two people like your post, or you have to comment on it and set it as their own like, brands are creatures, you want to know, What you are doing wrong? And what you're doing right on this platform. So you want to measure your impressions, you want to know how many people did this content reach? How many people engaged. So what type of content works, you also want to mine your data to know the kind of content you want to create next? Or how you want to target your people next? Or what works with this data? How will the data inform your marketing strategy, your communication strategy or your content strategy? So this is a part of the creators do on creators studio. Then moving to Business Suite, they have a business suite, where you manage different pages, like I was managing 10 pages and I for Facebook, isn't that businesses? It was a Facebook Page Manager before it now is the Meta Business Suite. So for that suits you have, you can manage different pages. You can manage ten. And you can switch from one page to another, to reply to comments on each of those pages, then you can on that business suite, you can start ads. You know, like you have Google ads. An example of this is where you may bump into the sites? Or maybe you're searching for shoes. Before you know it you click on the next site, and then you see shoe adverts bumping into your face.*

Structural challenges have also hindered creators' ability to create content for the Facebook market. These challenges include electricity shortages, safety and security of staff, and low-tech equipment (Ngene, Aviara, 2014) often requiring users of the internet such as creators to work through finding cheaper materials and less efficient tools.

*Respondent 8 - In Nigeria here, electricity impacts everything, you can run out of if you don't have a power supply, you cannot have a battery on your phone and you will not be able to get into Facebook. So yeah, the power supply can contribute to and impact on people accessing Facebook, then, of course, internet, the internet is still really expensive in the country, and it is relatively stable. Sometimes it's stable and sometimes it is not, so you find even those that have the financial means, as you know, looking for different internet services to give them that stable connection. So it's not that stable. Also, people cannot really assess Facebook to view content, though there is you know, sometimes you find that it is free in some places through Facebook free. But when you do Facebook free you can only access texts, You can only read stuff, and post stuff, but, you cannot watch videos or view certain large pictures and all that. So yeah, the internet is also a factor, you know, internet, you know, based on what people are entering here, I think the internet should be cheaper, you know, the internet should be cheaper. We're looking forward to a time when the*

*internet becomes more stable because right now is relatively stable. Sometimes it's stable sometimes not, actually, for content creators like go sometimes you know, you have deadlines on okay, I want to post this content at a certain time. You want to post content at three o'clock and you start uploading the content and the internet is bad. So you find out that something that was supposed to be up by three o'clock, but because of this challenge you're uploading it like five o'clock because the internet is slow. So yeah, that is a major factor for us here.*

Facebook has been making adjustments to its application making new adjustments and features to make the app more creator-friendly. In July 2022, Facebook announced that it was overhauling the design of its flagship social network by elevating content from creators over posts from friends and family in an effort to fend off intensifying competition for users' attention from TikTok<sup>25</sup>.

These changes include alterations on the Facebook platform to display more entertaining posts from outside creators - this includes easy access to its short-form video service known as Reels as well as its ephemeral video product known as Stories (Nix, 2022).

#### **4.2.3 Economic Benefits & Costs**

This section of the study includes sets of questions regarding how creators earn from the Facebook platform. I probe for monetization strategies, challenges and opportunities creators in Nigeria have explored around earning from Facebook.

In July of 2021, Mark Zuckerberg announced that Facebook was making plans to invest \$1 billion in creators by the end of 2022. The investment will fund bonus programs, creator funds and other monetization programs to boost all stripes of creators on its platform (Bell, 2021). Content creation takes a new direction when creators aim to monetize their content. To monetize and earn directly from the Facebook platform, creators have to meet several eligibility requirements depending on the monetization tool the creator wants to adopt. One of such criteria for example are In-Stream Ads for On-Demand (Short ads that you can include in your uploaded videos to earn money), which requires the creator to have at least 1,000 followers and one of the following: 15,000 post engagement OR 180,000 minutes viewed OR 30,000 1-minute views of 3-minute videos in the last 60 days.

This process often requires a lot of commitment from creators as they constantly have to create to meet the eligibility requirement. It also requires constant review and learning. One of the respondents described this process as a process of continuous learning:

*Respondent 5 - I think Facebook is really friendly, because, you know, you can find a lot of people there, you don't have to necessarily be very tech savvy to use Facebook, you can just know the basics and work on it, anybody can show you the basics and you can start to use it once you are somebody conversant with the internet a little bit. I*

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<sup>25</sup> Nix, N. (2022). Facebook forsakes friends and family to compete with TikTok. Retrieved 25 July 2022, from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2022/07/21/facebook-news-feed-overhaul/>

*think you can use Facebook, the interface is very friendly, and the blue colour is mild. But when you now take it further to areas of for people using Facebook as content creation, people that are using Facebook for more for business purposes. That's where a little bit of learning comes in. You know, for some of us that are using it to put our content out there, you know, to get viewed and to make money. There is some learning curve, there's always some learning to be done at every stage which helps you to know how to post these videos how to title these videos, and how to get people to watch these videos. These are things you can easily study and understand as they are there on platforms like YouTube like how to use titles, hashtags and all that stuff. As you know, the title of the video, the captions, and thumbnails, are the things that can attract people to watch your content. So those will require consistent learning and practice and more recently, you need to check your content to see how the algorithm works. So sometimes you can put some in, and it gets a lot of views and this helps you review and look at the things you did right to replicate them on other videos. And if it works, then you understand that this is what people want to see. So it's really a lot of learning, all these things such as how the algorithm works, what kind of videos get more views? What kind of captions get more views?*

Creating video content on Facebook differs from other platforms as a distribution channel. There are different sets of opportunities and challenges than YouTube. In 2020, the Facebook platform set up additional systems to support creators and publishers who navigate the platform and announced a change to their video algorithm “to help talented video creators find their audience and build profitable video businesses on Facebook.” (Marshall, 2020).

But these financial incentives do not always directly translate to income for creators. There was a contrast between this position and the position of Facebook on the use of its application. The Facebook personnel interviewed opined that even though creators are being provided with a vast array of features to support their work, not enough of these features are being utilized.

One key challenge around monetization is how to curb some illegal and unethical practices around the use of the internet. One respondent opined that:

*Respondent 16 - There is a lot of work on ways to monetize content. The problem is that most users and even content creators in Nigeria have often been seeking different ways to hack, bypass, and cheat the platforms and these mostly end up in them having a different platform experience: Abusive Content Sharing, Spam, and Reshare Farms are common practices but these often lead to problems with branding, monetisation, visibility etc.*

This response aligns with Adenirans position in the literature which points to how the rise of embezzlements, electronic frauds, fictitious sales of properties, laundering, hacking and credit card scams, pornography and gender-switching have become social norms (Adeniran, 2008).

Creating original content has been the base of Facebook's interests. Respondent opined that when tracking and monitoring the performance of content, those created gain more visibility than the ones re-shared on the platform.

The challenge across creators has been how to understand and manage the way algorithms work to ensure that the content they post gains more traction, visibility and engagement. Several new features are constantly being introduced requiring creators to stay updated and continue learning. The updates build on Meta's massive investment into creator-centric features. Meta has made competing with TikTok one of its top priorities, and getting more creators on its platform is central to that effort (Bell, 2022).

Facebook has issued new guidelines to reward creators who publish original video content, attract repeat views, and upload videos over three minutes long.

Zuckerberg also announced several other monetization updates for creators on the platform. The company is expanding Stars, the company's in-app tipping feature, to more creators, and will open up its bonus program for Reels to more users as well. Meta is also expanding its support for NFTs on Instagram, which it began testing on Instagram profiles last month (Bell, 2022).

On Instagram, creators can now make money from commercials on IGTV or open their own shops. They can sell badges and products in live streams. On Facebook, they can host paid virtual events, promote fan subscriptions, or sell in-app gifts in live streams or audio rooms. Soon, they'll be able to start paid newsletters, earn affiliate commission from products their followers buy and participate in a branded content marketplace. The company is also launching several new bonus programs that will pay creators to sign up for IGTV ads, create Reels, or meet live-streaming milestones (Bell, 2021).

The content creator market also differs extensively between the Global South and Global North. This difference in shape and form is linked to a variety of socio-economic differences. One respondent talked about this as documented below:

*Respondent 16 - The market is significantly different from Europe and North American markets due to existing challenges. These challenges are often structural but fall within different categories. The first one includes devices. More content creators in Nigeria like in many countries of the Global South create content with a lot of rudimentary devices across the region. You see young creators trying to shoot a whole movie with an android phone. Then to the larger problems of low internet and electricity and down to the more cultural aspects of how vastly different the social needs are. Most content is scripted around social narratives the narratives that drive the markets in Europe and North America differ from those in Nigeria. Then at the tail end, you have the different types of laws regulating the content creation practices across both the divide. What gets raised as a problem of privacy and safety in Europe gets imported into Nigeria and translated into policing policies.*

#### **4.2.4 Political Sensitivities & Implications**

Even though Facebook's operations have expanded significantly across Nigeria and across Africa, none of the respondents highlighted the ethical implications of Facebook in Nigeria, and all respondents shared a utopian view of the platform. This differs from the cases in Europe for example where in July this year, Ireland's privacy regulator doubled down on its order to stop data flow from

Facebook to the United State, a move which experts say risks seeing social media services Facebook and Instagram shut down<sup>26</sup>.

In a slightly similar vein, Facebook's operations in Nigeria have faced light regulation by internet regulators in the country with the Federal Government of Nigeria calling on Facebook to stop yielding its platform to designated terrorist groups in the country such as the Pro-Biafran separatists (Adegboyega, 2022). In November 2018, the Nigerian government stated in a BBC report that false information on Facebook was resulting in ethnic rivalry resulting in the loss of lives (Adegoke et al., 2018).

While politics has been a major part of Facebook's presence in Nigeria, some creators are more concerned about how it directly affects their work, and Facebook's role in supporting a more peaceful society. One respondent opined that Facebook can guide its algorithms to promote more societally beneficial, knowledge-driven and peaceful content as against the more popular content trending in Nigeria.

*Respondent 17 - I don't think there is so much more for the platform to do except to improve upon what Facebook is doing, you know, in terms of the experiences of the content creator, in terms of the content creation process, making it more flexible and easy for content creators to, you know, put their stuff and share their stuff, make it more interactive, make it more friendly for content creators, especially content creators, in Nigeria, content creators in Africa - making more easier for us, you know, then for I think, more people are going to more content creators are going to adopt, Facebook as a means to put their content out there. Imagine, you know, you have a platform where it may be a young, upcoming filmmaker now that has short films, and does not have a platform to put them, Facebook is a free space for you to put your films and if they are good people watch it, then you get monetized. You get monetized, then, you know from there you can start earning money or you can get to showcase your stuff. So I think more people more people are going to adopt, and more content creators are going to adopt Facebook, you know, what I think what they have, they've already, you know, doing it, or they just need to improve upon it. And, you know, especially improve upon it, when it comes to Africa when it comes to Nigeria. And I think more I think another thing they can do is to reward you know, I know that has been difficult because they are too many people. So of course is the algorithm that determines all these, you know, support, they should reward more good content, you understand more beautiful content, more happy content, content that makes people you know, that makes people happy, that makes people feel good, that promote peace that promotes well-being, I think those content should be more promoted, you know, like when somebody posts something that, you know, when somebody posts something that is very, very positive, that promote peace, that promote wellness, that promote those content should be pushed out more, you know. More than, you know, maybe violence or nudity the oldest things, you know. So I*

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<sup>26</sup> Manancourt, V. (2022). Europe faces Facebook blackout. Retrieved 25 July 2022, from <https://www.politico.eu/article/europe-faces-facebook-blackout-instagram-meta-data-protection/>

*think, you know, they should the algorithm should work on the algorithm more, where more creative and positive content is allowed to reach more people. You know, I think we that you know, was going to be a better place so far. If I post stuff, if I post of them motivate young people to do better. I think those content should get more distribution, if I post happy content, if I post creative content, let's say engineering content, inventions, all those kinds of stuff, not just people dancing, not just people you know, doing challenges, not just people posting sexy nudities and all the above you know post inventions let these things get more views, I think it impacts more on the society to make us more positive.*

Beyond the regulation of content, the growing proliferation of user content continues to amplify the conversation about Facebook's role in shaping the growing influence of user-centered content.

*Respondent 18 - We were in a phase where news, you know, has been decentralized. You know, everybody's a journalist, everybody's a news disseminator if I may use that word, you know, so I feel like platforms need to like Facebook specifically need to do more in terms of gatekeeping. Of course, this is a conversation that has been ongoing forever, you know, for the past few years, but it cannot be overemphasized. Gatekeeping is absolutely necessary. And, and to gatekeep effectively, you must have the manpower, you must have the manpower investment, you must invest in manpower. So, I'll just give you a quick backstory when I was at Opera, when I was leading the news operations team, my team was called the review team. So the job we did was, you know, because the opera news hub was open to the public, so all sorts of garbage and excellent work from both ends were coming in. So our work was to vet based on certain guidelines and rules that we created, and you know, we decide on which pass to allow to go to the platform on which he, you know, reject. It required a lot of manpower; it was a 24-hour operation. So I split my team into various shifts, you know, and make sure that all the hours in the day were covered, you know, so I feel like, for a platform as big and massive as Facebook, they need to really invest in, in manpower to vet, a lot of, you know, incendiary content that comes on a lot of hate speech, a lot of, you know, fake news, you know, so it's the, as it is, now, I know Facebook is doing quite a lot. But Facebook is tending to focus more on content creators and news platforms as opposed to individuals, you understand. So individuals and individuals are the ones that are the biggest culprits. Because the news platform, even the irresponsible news platforms, we still try and you know, find some semblance of responsibility, you know, even if it's just to get by. But individuals who have nobody checking them or watching them have no allegiance and have no sense of responsibility to anybody can put out anything whenever they like. So Facebook needs to focus more on individuals*

### **4.3 Data Analysis:**

The interviews all indicate that creators have been using the Facebook app mostly in four key areas.

#### **1. Audience Analysis**

A similar use of the application by all respondents has been towards gauging audience response before and after the creation of content. One respondent who creates political cartoons as an illustrator responded that he reviews the comment sections of breaking news to take the pulse of popular opinions which then shape the nature of the cartoon materials he produces.

The editors interviewed in this study described how Facebook has been used as a tool to support content amplification and engagement of their news items. One respondent (editor) pointed out that in her newsroom the third-party Fact-Checking function of Facebook is regularly used to verify information that goes into their news items. This points to how newsrooms are significantly employing Facebook features for the distribution of their content on the platform.

#### **2. Connecting with clients and customers.**

The Facebook platform has also been used by the journalists interviewed in this study to connect to sources. One interviewee responded that Facebook became an online office where he posts his photography content and connects with new and old clients. Journalists interviewed point to the use of Facebook in reaching out to the authors of posts as sources of information that are relevant to a developing story. This process usually involves reaching out directly through the messaging function embedded on Facebook to ask direct verification questions about posts, or comments.

#### **3. Content Engagement.**

The most common thread that surfaced has been paying for ads and boosting as well as streamlining paid adverts on the platform. There has been a shift from text-based content to photos and videos. Creators also point to how Facebook's algorithm has been adjusted to favor more personalized and video content.

Three respondents point to how Facebook algorithms have been prioritizing more video content leading photographers towards a practice of using their photos as collages that get published on the platform to generate more views and clicks. Content engagement as described by each creator interviewed has been classified into three areas:

Viewership	Clicks & likes
Engagement	Comments and Reshares
Conversions	Outreach and Purchases

#### **4. Content Forms & Formats.**

Through this sub-theme, the researcher sought to understand how creators navigated the technical challenges of Facebook for the distribution of their posts. The responses from those interviewed point out that most creators are already familiar with these challenges and had no problem managing this on the platform. One interviewee responded:

*Respondent 11 - As a photographer, before Facebook, I was already working with formats and dimensions in my photography. So, it was not a problem to navigate this through Facebook. I simply work on it on my photography apps and when I post them on Facebook, they are fine.*

*Respondent 9 - The Facebook algorithm prioritizes photos and videos in terms of making them more visible. So what we endeavored to do and I think we spotted it a couple of I think during the pandemic, as our social media manager noticed the trend. So we made sure we were intentional about us put out more videos. In fact, it also coincided with the time that we set up our production studio. So we have a production thing churning out videos every week. And in terms of photos, we, of course, many traditional media platforms, they just settle for, you know, any kind of photo to just go along with the story. But we make sure that our photos are as descriptive as possible and as captivating as possible. We are more intentional about the photos that we play within the stories that we'll put out. So that captivates the audience as much as possible.*

*Respondent 10 - The future of social media is Mobile Based. Short Videos are the mainstay of the platform. Over the last three years, a lot of investments have been directed to this area. Data has proven that interactions happen more in the video than in text. African audiences respond more to video than written material.*

Newsrooms belonging to the journalists and editors interviewed have been de-emphasizing long-form writing and replacing these with short shareable video content such as one-minute explainers. The impact of mobile phones has also been a significant game-changer on how content is created. All creators interviewed have said that the content created on Facebook has been formatted for consumption on mobile phones.

## **5. Financial Rewards and Gains**

The monetization processes of Facebook like the introduction of the Ad Breaks feature in 2019, gave video creators in Nigeria, alongside Ghana, Kenya and South Africa - the opportunity to monetize their content from advertising. Facebook's new injection of \$ 1 billion dollars into its creator's fund has resulted in the rise of creators opening Facebook pages for content that only went to platforms like YouTube. The biggest financial rewards so far have come from Ad revenues for all creators interviewed.



## Chapter Five. Conclusions & Recommendations

*This section is a summary of reflections on the evidence and arguments presented. I review the data collected and analyzed and draw conclusions as well as offer some recommendations for further research.*

### 5.1 Answering the Research Questions

The two research questions of the study were significantly open questions. As a result, the research process was very exploratory. I did not start with a clear goal in mind regarding how to answer these questions before I began the process of data collection and the analysis of empirical data.

Each of the findings surfaced in the last chapter can be considered as partial answers to both research questions. I have made use of a qualitative content analysis with both inductive and deductive elements to identify the abovementioned tendencies. The qualitative interviews significantly deepened my understanding of how creatives are interacting with Facebook and allowed me to also surface new nuances.

This study sought to understand how Facebook was influencing the creation of digital content by creatives in Nigeria, and how creatives were finding their way around the platform. Facebook's growing presence in Nigeria comes in a time of increased pressure in the west which points to an interest in countries like Nigeria with a lighter legislative environment. With over one hundred million Nigerians having access to mobile phones and, and slowly on the increase – this benefits Facebook in the area of additional new users and data.

Facebook's presence has also introduced the rise of various types of creators all finding ways to work independently and earn their livelihoods on the platform. Independent content creators can create and distribute without other financial intermediaries. Writers, journalists, filmmakers, language translators, photographers and all the other creators who participated in this study say that Facebook has helped them indirectly to access clients and retain customers.

At the content creator level, all Nigerian creators interviewed in the study consider Facebook a valuable contributor to the dissemination of their creative products. Like other platforms, the first influence has been in the nature and form of content being created - short, shareable, high-quality video content compatible with mobile devices has been the more popular style encouraged by Facebook and its sister platforms like Instagram. Creators have easily adapted to Facebook's platform changes with few cases of initial difficulties. More creators have continued to adopt the platform leveraging its different features to create video content.

Our results point to the different ways that creators have been responding to the presence and influence of Facebook. The main challenges have been creating enough content to stay relevant in the algorithmic world of Facebook, a process that has gained the phrase '*death by algorithms*' by creators in Abuja. Learning how to adjust to new features and Facebook and finding ways to use this knowledge to amplify content dissemination is a process most creators engage in daily. This

also includes self-governance to ensure that content on your platform continues to have favorable interactions with Facebook's algorithms. The most popular approach to increasing likes has been where creators collaborate to share each other's content on their pages and grant copyright privileges to each other. This allows creators to stay algorithm friendly.

The platform's biggest contribution has been in its huge user base. Creators on other platforms like YouTube, can create long-form content and then make teasers for these videos which get shared on Facebook and Instagram leading more users to those videos. This leverages Facebook's user-base size to give content more views. The Facebook analytic features also allow creators to monitor the content they put online allowing an environment of data-driven creativity.

On the financial side, ad revenues have been the main way that creators benefit from platforms. Even though most creators in Nigeria have earned more from other platforms like YouTube than from Facebook over the last few years, they have leveraged the Facebook platform as a means to increase the popularity of their creative works. This allows them to earn more from sponsorships and branding partnerships and can even set up an online shop on platforms like Instagram.

Facebook's new injection of \$ 1 billion dollars into its creator's fund has sparked the interest of creators who are now returning to the platform to create and share content. Even though grey areas still exist around content monetization, a few creatives in Nigeria who create content either on multiple sources or exclusively for Facebook can earn a living from the platform.

Advocacy has also been a big part of how Facebook has been used. Early adoption of Facebook for connecting with friends and family has drifted into engaging the Nigerian government at the local, national and federal levels. Many of the users are no longer as interested in the political use of Facebook or its political implications in Nigeria. The Facebook company is collaborating with other companies and state government officials in Edo state in the South-South region of Nigeria to lay fiber-optic cables across the state.

Facebook's impact on the Nigerian creative space has also had positive socio-political externalities. Journalists leverage the Facebook platform to gather public sensitivity around social issues and also drive political agenda. In summary, Facebook has had a significantly positive influence on creators in Nigeria. The platform which gained prominence over a decade ago not only contributed as a tool to connect to friends and family but also an instrument to voice public outcry and opinion as well as organize and activate citizenry to demand better governance.

The results from the study show that Facebook is still actively increasing its user base in Nigeria and is focused on a process of growing its pool of creators who are now the best benefactors of the platform's newest features. The introduction of reels, the new formats and dimensions that prioritize videos, and the constantly developed creator tools all combine to express the interest of the platform in growing its creator bases in Nigeria.

## **5.2 Limitations & Future Research**

This thesis is contributing to the state of scientific knowledge on the relation between platforms and content creators in Nigeria. As research knowledge is very limited on this subject, this thesis adds to the subject by filling a research gap.

My work can thus be included to a considerably varied chain of academic studies on the platformization of society (Anwar & Graham, 2021), The limitations of this study for me, which includes time and financial resources has led to my adoption of a small sample size (18 experts), a limited geographical area (Nigeria), and a narrowing down of choice of platform (Facebook). The extent to which my results are representative of all content creators in Nigeria can thus be put into question. I would like to point out here, however, that the views and reflections of the interviewed creators go beyond those selected for analysis. I decided to select the statements and positions that directly spoke to the research interests.

To further expand the understanding of this subject, further research can be done on the influence of other platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. The impact of these platforms as they grow in relevance, scale and impact, and their overall contribution to the concepts of platform livelihoods will be a useful area of study interest.

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