

SOCIAL MEDIA UTILIZATION IN DIGITAL JOURNALISTIC PRACTICES: A SURVEY OF AJI MAKASSAR JOURNALISTS

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana jurnalis yang tergabung dalam Aliansi Jurnalis Independen (AJI) Kota Makassar mengintegrasikan media sosial dalam praktik kerja jurnalistik digital dengan menggunakan kerangka teori *Uses and Gratifications* (USG). Penelitian dilakukan melalui survei kuantitatif deskriptif terhadap 92 responden. Data dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif (frekuensi dan nilai rata-rata) serta analisis inferensial melalui korelasi *Spearman* untuk menguji hubungan antara karakteristik demografis jurnalis dan pola penggunaan media sosial. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa 81,4% jurnalis berada pada kategori intensitas penggunaan media sosial yang tinggi, yang menandakan integrasinya dalam rutinitas kerja jurnalistik. Instagram muncul sebagai *platform* dominan baik untuk pencarian informasi (30,4%) maupun penyebaran berita (53,3%). Motif utama penggunaan media sosial adalah kebutuhan akan informasi aktual, diikuti interaksi sosial, ekspresi identitas, dan hiburan. Intensitas penggunaan berkaitan dengan usia, pengalaman kerja, dan jenis media, dimana jurnalis yang lebih muda dan kurang berpengalaman cenderung memanfaatkan media sosial secara lebih intensif. Temuan ini menegaskan peran media sosial sebagai ruang hibrida personal-profesional sekaligus sebagai infrastruktur platform yang membentuk praktik jurnalisme digital kontemporer.

Kata kunci

AJI Makassar, Jurnalisme digital, Pemanfaatan media sosial, Platform-driven newswork, Platform-driven newswork

ABSTRACT

This study examines how journalists affiliated with the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) Makassar integrate social media into their digital newswork through the lens of the *Uses and Gratifications* (USG) framework. Using a descriptive quantitative survey of 92 journalists, the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and mean scores) and inferential analysis through *Spearman* correlation to explore the relationship between journalists' demographic characteristics and patterns of social media use. The findings show that 81.4% of journalists demonstrate high-intensity engagement with social media, indicating its deep integration into routine journalistic practices. Instagram emerges as the dominant platform for both information sourcing (30.4%) and news dissemination (53.3%). Information seeking constitutes the primary motivation for platform use, followed by social interaction, identity expression, and entertainment. Usage intensity is significantly associated with age, professional experience, and media type, with younger and less experienced journalists relying more heavily on social media. These findings highlight the role of social media as a hybrid personal-professional space while reinforcing its function as a platform infrastructure shaping contemporary digital journalism.

Keywords

AJI Makassar, Digital journalism, Platform-driven newswork, Social media use, Uses and gratification

Introduction

The increasing integration of social media into journalistic routines has reshaped the global news ecosystem. Journalists today operate in an information environment marked by speed, interactivity, and constant digital connectivity. Platforms such as Instagram, X, Facebook, WhatsApp, TikTok, and YouTube have become central infrastructures that mediate how news is sourced, verified, produced, and circulated (Newman & Fletcher, 2023). Unlike earlier digital transitions that merely modified newsroom workflows, the rise of social platforms has accelerated a more fundamental shift: journalism is now embedded within a platformized communication system dominated by algorithmic visibility and audience-driven metrics. This shift is evident in various international studies showing exceptionally high social media adoption among journalists. In France and the United States, journalists use social media to accomplish routine tasks such as gathering information, monitoring sources, and developing story ideas (Powers & Vera-Zambrano, 2018). In the UK, survey data also suggest that social media has become central to professional journalistic work, with a substantial proportion of journalists reporting that they rely on it to perform their job effectively (N. J. Thurman et al., 2025). These empirical trends reflect a broader transformation in the epistemology of journalism.

Indonesia exhibits a similar trajectory, reflecting a rapid expansion of the digital media environment in which social media increasingly functions as a primary gateway to information. National statistics from Badan Pusat Statistik Indonesia show that internet use in Indonesia continues to grow, accompanied by a high proportion of users engaging in online activities such as accessing social media, streaming content, and digital communication (BPS, 2024). Platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, and TikTok dominate the digital communication landscape, reinforcing the centrality of social media in everyday information practices. These trends provide contextual evidence of an increasingly networked and platform-driven media ecosystem. At the regional level, digital participation is also substantial, as reflected in provincial-level indicators of internet use and online activities reported in Statistik Telekomunikasi Indonesia 2023 (BPS, 2024). This expanding digital infrastructure has significantly shaped public communication and the circulation of news, influencing how events are reported, distributed, and interpreted within local contexts. In the Indonesian context, social media has increasingly operated as a networked communication infrastructure that accelerates information flows and shapes how public attention is formed and negotiated in everyday discourse (Susanto, 2017).

Consistent with this trend, Rosemarwati & Lindawati (2019) found that social media has become an integral part of Indonesian online journalists' work routines, primarily because information is easy and fast to access (43.7%), constantly updated (39.4%), and widely distributed across large user networks (35.2%). However, this environment also introduces challenges, including misinformation, weakened verification practices, and the persistent tension between speed and accuracy in news production (Tandoc et al., 2018). As a consequence, journalists are required to balance rapid dissemination demands with professional norms of fact-checking and ethical reporting.

Despite the rapid growth of social media use, empirical research on how Indonesian journalists integrate these platforms into their daily newswork, particularly at the regional level, remains limited. Existing studies tend to focus on newsroom digital

adaptation, citizen journalism, or media credibility, leaving a gap in understanding how journalists themselves rely on platforms as primary tools for information seeking and news dissemination. Furthermore, limited research has connected individual-level motivations with the broader structural dynamics of platform governance and algorithmic control that shape contemporary journalism. This gap underscores the necessity of analyzing social media not merely as a communication channel but as a system of technological affordances and pressures that organize journalistic practices. Within the broader field of digital communication research in Indonesia, studies examining how journalists themselves incorporate social media into everyday newswork, particularly in regional contexts, remain relatively limited.

This study addresses these gaps by examining how journalists affiliated with the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) Makassar use social media in their professional routines. Makassar represents an important regional context due to its active media environment, diverse newsroom structures, and substantial social media penetration. AJI journalists, known for advancing ethical journalism and digital rights, operate at the frontline of negotiating platform pressures, verification challenges, and audience expectations. Their experiences reflect both global and local transformations in digital journalism, making them a critical population for empirical research.

The importance of this study lies in its analytical focus on the intersection between individual motivations and platform-driven newswork. By employing the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) framework, the study identifies the underlying needs that drive journalists, as active platform users in professional contexts, toward specific platforms, chiefly information seeking, social interaction, and identity expression. Simultaneously, the concept of platform-driven newswork highlights how platforms impose particular logics that shape journalistic routines beyond individual choice, influencing what counts as news, how verification is practiced, and how content circulates in algorithmic environments (van Dijck & Poell, 2013). Conceptually, this study bridges agency and structure by showing how journalists' purposive platform choices are simultaneously enabled and constrained by the platform logics that organize visibility, circulation, and credibility in digital newswork. This dual-theoretical approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of social media's role in both empowering and constraining journalistic practices.

The urgency of this study becomes more apparent when considering the increasingly hybrid nature of journalists' online presence. Journalists often use the same platforms for personal expression and professional newswork, a condition that blurs boundaries, creates ethical dilemmas, and exposes them to heightened public scrutiny (Lewis & Molyneux, 2018). This hybridity can shape audience perceptions of credibility, influence public trust in news institutions, and complicate newsroom expectations regarding appropriate online conduct. For regional journalists, these tensions are often intensified by unequal newsroom resources, limited organizational support, and uneven access to digital literacy and verification training, making the negotiation of professionalism in platform environments both more demanding and more consequential.

This study examines four core dimensions of social media utilization among AJI Makassar journalists: intensity of use, the platforms most relied upon as information sources, motivations for use based on the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) framework, and information-gathering and dissemination practices in everyday newswork. By

combining empirical measurement with theoretical grounding, the study captures the complexity of journalists' digital practices in a platform-centered environment.

By situating its findings within global scholarship and Indonesia's evolving media dynamics, this study offers three key contributions. First, it provides local empirical evidence showing that 81.4% of AJI Makassar journalists demonstrate high-intensity social media use and that Instagram emerges as the most dominant platform for both information seeking and news distribution. Second, it bridges Uses and Gratifications (U&G) motivations with the concept of platform-driven newswork, offering a more integrated explanation of how journalists navigate digital platforms in professional contexts. Third, it enriches understanding of regional media ecology by highlighting implications for digital literacy, verification standards, and journalistic ethics. This integration represents the study's primary novelty: empirically linking journalists' platform-use motivations with the structural dynamics of platform-driven newswork within a regional Indonesian journalism context.

Beyond its regional empirical focus, this study also contributes to the broader field of communication research in Indonesia by providing evidence of how platform logics increasingly shape journalistic routines outside major metropolitan newsrooms. By examining journalists in Makassar, the study demonstrates that platform-driven newswork is not limited to national media centers but also characterizes regional journalism environments. In this sense, the findings extend existing discussions on digital journalism in Indonesia by highlighting how platform infrastructures reorganize information sourcing, news dissemination, and professional motivations across different layers of the national media ecosystem.

Journalism and Social Media

In Indonesia, social media is no longer merely an auxiliary distribution channel; it has increasingly become a central infrastructure of journalistic work where issues emerge, public attention is formed, and news credibility is tested in real time. Platform logics, such as visibility competition, shareability, and engagement-oriented metrics, encourage newsrooms to adjust editorial routines, including topic selection, visual packaging, and interaction strategies to fit the dynamics of platform circulation (Asih, 2025; van Dijck & Poell, 2013). This development reflects a dual pressure on journalists: maintaining professional standards of verification while responding to the speed and participation demands of networked audiences, a challenge intensified by misinformation and the blurred boundaries between reliable and unreliable content online (Tandoc et al., 2018).

These tensions are particularly pronounced in regional news environments such as Makassar and South Sulawesi, where social media often functions as a community-level communication space and a primary arena for circulating local information. Local events may first appear through citizen-generated posts, short videos, or networked conversations before being taken up by professional media, compelling journalists to continuously monitor platform streams, assess source credibility, and translate fragmented updates into publishable news narratives. Cross-platform research shows that newsroom adaptation is not uniform; media organizations modify storytelling styles and dissemination strategies depending on platform affordances and audience expectations (Hase et al., 2023). Therefore, examining journalists' intensity of social media use, their dominant platform preferences, their motivations (as explained through the Uses and Gratifications framework), and their information-gathering and

dissemination routines is crucial for understanding how digital platforms simultaneously enable and constrain journalistic practice in Indonesia's regional contexts.

Uses and Gratification (U&G) Study

Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory provides a foundational lens for explaining why journalists incorporate social media into their daily newswork. Building on the classic U&G proposition that media users are active agents who strategically select channels to satisfy particular needs (Katz et al., 1973), this perspective aligns well with journalists operating in fast-paced and interactive digital environments. Rather than engaging with social media passively, journalists often make purposive platform choices to maximize informational access, professional efficiency, and audience responsiveness.

Within contemporary communication research, U&G has evolved to account for the affordances of digital platforms, where users simultaneously consume, produce, and circulate content. Sundar and Limperos (2013) emphasize that interactive media introduce "technology-driven" gratifications, such as real-time participation, identity expression, and interface-based engagement, which are shaped by platform features and user experience. For journalists, these expanded gratifications translate into concrete professional functions, including monitoring breaking developments, sourcing user-generated information, and tracking public sentiment in real time.

Empirical studies consistently identify information seeking as a dominant gratification motivating journalists' social media use. Heravi and Harrower (2016), for example, show that journalists use social media, particularly Twitter/X, as a routine tool for sourcing and monitoring emerging events, while also emphasizing the ongoing challenge of trust and verification in platform-based information flows. In parallel, research on social media surveillance in newswork suggests that journalists increasingly engage in continuous monitoring practices to detect trends, locate sources, and assess public discourse, reinforcing the centrality of platform-based information gathering within modern newsroom routines (N. Thurman, 2018). These findings indicate that information-driven gratifications are closely tied to journalists' need to operate quickly within ongoing news cycles while maintaining standards of accuracy.

At the same time, U&G also helps explain why social media use extends beyond information needs to include identity and relational gratifications. As journalists build audiences and professional visibility online, platforms become spaces where personal expression and professional performance intersect, shaping credibility perceptions and intensifying public scrutiny. This hybrid presence often produces blurred boundaries and ethical tensions, particularly when journalists negotiate their roles as both individuals and professional communicators in highly networked environments (Lewis & Molyneux, 2018). In regional journalism contexts, where journalists are frequently perceived as community members as well as public figures, such identity negotiation may become even more consequential for maintaining trust and legitimacy.

In the context of this study, U&G provides a theoretical foundation for explaining why AJI Makassar journalists gravitate toward particular platforms, notably Instagram, for information searching and news dissemination. By integrating classical motivations (e.g., information and social interaction) with contemporary platform gratifications (e.g., identity expression and multimedia engagement), U&G enables a nuanced interpretation of differences in platform preferences and usage patterns across age groups, media

types, and professional experience. This theoretical framing helps situate local empirical findings within an established yet continually evolving tradition of media-use research.

Platform-Driven Newswork

Platform-driven newswork refers to the increasing dominance of platform logics in shaping how journalistic work is organized, evaluated, and made visible. Social media platforms structure attention through algorithmic ranking, datafication, and engagement-based visibility, encouraging news organizations to align content with what travels and performs well in platform environments (van Dijck & Poell, 2013). In such contexts, journalistic value becomes closely linked to measurable performance indicators, as analytics and audience metrics increasingly inform professional judgment and editorial priorities. This shift is captured by the notion of measurable journalism, where metrics function not merely as feedback but as normative signals that influence what is pursued, how it is presented, and how success is defined in digital newswork (Carlson, 2018). Editorial analytics further institutionalizes these logics by embedding audience data into newsroom workflows, affecting topic selection, publishing decisions, and strategies of distribution (Cherubini & Nielsen, 2016).

Crucially, platform logics shape not only downstream distribution but also upstream routines such as story selection, workflow coordination, and verification practices. Empirical evidence suggests that metrics can influence newsroom decision-making and even reshape internal power relations by privileging popularity signals and engagement-driven assessments of audience interest (Dodds et al., 2023; Lamot et al., 2021). As a consequence, journalists increasingly operate under pressures to respond rapidly to trending cues while maintaining professional standards of accuracy and credibility. At the same time, platforms function as infrastructural intermediaries that govern discoverability and news exposure, pushing journalists to adapt to opaque ranking mechanisms and shifting distribution architectures (Trielli, 2025). Taken together, platform-driven newswork highlights how journalists' digital practices are shaped not only by individual motivations but also by structural pressures that organize visibility, circulation, and professional risk within platformized media environments.

Accordingly, this study addresses the following objectives: (1) to map the frequency/intensity of journalists' social media use; (2) to identify dominant platforms for information seeking and news dissemination; and (3) to examine journalists' motivations for using social media in newswork and interpret them within the dynamics of platform-driven journalism.

To clarify its contribution, this study provides one of the first empirical accounts of how regional Indonesian journalists affiliated with AJI Makassar integrate social media into everyday newswork while navigating the structural pressures of platformized media environments. Specifically, it links journalists' motivations for platform use, as explained by the Uses and Gratifications (USG) framework, with the structural dynamics of platform logic that increasingly shape journalistic practices. In doing so, the study extends USG beyond its traditional focus on audience media consumption by situating journalists' gratifications within professional constraints such as algorithmic visibility, engagement metrics, and verification challenges in platform-driven news production.

By integrating the Uses and Gratifications perspective with the concept of platform-driven newswork, this study offers empirical insights into how regional journalists negotiate platform logics while maintaining professional routines of information gathering, verification, and news dissemination. In doing so, it contributes to the growing

literature on the platformization of journalism by highlighting how these transformations unfold within regional media contexts in the Global South.

Method

This study employed a quantitative survey design to examine patterns of social media use among journalists affiliated with the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) Makassar. Although the initial operational definition distinguished between frequency and intensity of use, the questionnaire did not include items measuring duration of use, depth of engagement, or emotional involvement. Consequently, this study operationalizes usage intensity as the daily frequency of social media access, treating frequency as a behavioral proxy for routine engagement with social media platforms, a common approach in communication survey research. Higher frequency categories are interpreted as indicating stronger integration of social media into everyday journalistic routines.

The study population consisted of 102 registered AJI Makassar journalists, of which 92 valid responses were obtained, resulting in a response rate of 90.2%. The questionnaire measured social media usage frequency using categorical response options (e.g., >5 times/day, 3–5 times/day, 1–2 times/day, and less frequent categories). Based on this operationalization, the analysis primarily focused on frequency of daily use as an indicator of routine platform engagement.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed based on the Uses and Gratifications (USG) framework and previous research on journalists' social media practices, particularly regarding sourcing routines and platform-based information monitoring (Heravi & Harrower, 2016). The questionnaire consisted of four sections: (1) demographic characteristics (age, gender, years of professional experience, and type of media organization); (2) frequency of social media use; (3) dominant platforms used for information sourcing and news dissemination; and (4) motivations for social media use, including information seeking, social interaction, identity expression, and entertainment. Motivational items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The questionnaire was distributed online via Google Forms, allowing respondents to complete the survey within their digital work environment. Prior to full deployment, the instrument underwent a readability check to improve clarity and minimize ambiguous wording. Respondents were given one week to complete the questionnaire. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained at the beginning of the survey, and no incentives were provided.

Instrument validity was assessed using item–total correlations (Pearson) with an r -table threshold of 0.205 ($n = 92$, $\alpha = 0.05$). All items exceeded the threshold, with correlation values ranging from 0.563 to 0.782, indicating that the items adequately represent the intended constructs. Internal consistency reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding a value of $\alpha = 0.931$ across 20 items. This value exceeds the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, indicating excellent internal consistency according to established standards in social science research.

Data analysis was conducted in two stages. First, descriptive statistics (frequency distributions, percentages, and mean scores) were used to summarize patterns of social media use, dominant platforms, and motivational factors. Second, inferential analysis using Spearman correlation examined the relationship between journalists' demographic

characteristics (age and years of professional experience) and their frequency of social media use, providing additional insight into variations in platform engagement across professional groups.

Ethical considerations were maintained throughout the research process. Respondents' identities were anonymized, and the data were used solely for academic purposes. The study adhered to principles of voluntary participation, informed consent, and confidentiality in the collection, storage, and reporting of survey data.

Result and Discussion

This study surveyed 92 journalists who are active members of AJI Makassar, representing diverse media formats including online, print, radio, and television. The findings are organized into four sections: respondent characteristics, frequency of social media use, dominant platforms, and motivational factors. This structure allows the analysis to capture both the demographic context of respondents and the behavioral patterns that shape contemporary newswork in a platformized environment.

Respondent Characteristics

Understanding respondents' demographic and professional profiles is essential for contextualizing journalists' digital practices. As shown in Table 1, the largest proportion of AJI Makassar journalists in this study fall within the 20–30 age group (51.1%), followed by those aged 31–40 (34.8%), while only 14.1% are above 40 years old. This distribution indicates that the sample is dominated by early- to mid-career journalists who have developed their professional routines within an increasingly platform-centered media environment.

In terms of gender, the respondents are predominantly male (63.0%), while female journalists account for 37.0%, suggesting that the local newsroom workforce remains male-leaning. The distribution across media types shows that online media constitutes the largest segment (53.3%), followed by television (18.5%), print outlets (16.3%), and radio (12.0%). This pattern reflects Makassar's contemporary media ecology, where digital-first operations increasingly shape newsroom practices while legacy formats continue to operate alongside online news production.

Regarding professional experience, 41.3% of respondents report less than five years in journalism, 35.9% have five to ten years of experience, and 22.8% have worked for more than ten years. Taken together, these characteristics suggest a workforce navigating a transitional media landscape, one shaped simultaneously by established newsroom traditions and the growing influence of platform-centered news production.

Table 1. Characteristics of AJI Makassar Journalists

VARIABLE	CATEGORY	N	%
Age	20–30 years	47	51.1
	31–40 years	32	34.8
	>40 years	13	14.1
Gender	Male	58	63.0
	Female	34	37.0
Media Type	Online	49	53.3
	Print	15	16.3
	Television	17	18.5
	Radio	11	12.0
Experience	<5 years	38	41.3

5-10 years	33	35.9
>10 YEARS	21	22.8

(Source: Primary Data Research, 2025)

The dominance of online-media respondents reinforces Makassar’s broader shift toward a digital-first information ecosystem. This transition reshapes newsroom expectations beyond online outlets alone, as journalists across print, television, and radio increasingly need to engage with platform dynamics to maintain visibility and competitiveness. Taken together, the respondents’ profile, marked by substantial professional experience alongside routine platform reliance, suggests a hybrid mode of journalistic practice: practitioners shaped by legacy newsroom logics while increasingly operating within accelerated, algorithmically mediated environments.

Frequency and Intensity of Social Media Use

Because the questionnaire measured only frequency of daily use, this study operationalizes usage intensity through frequency categories, treating higher daily frequency as a behavioral proxy for stronger routine engagement. This approach is commonly applied in media-use research when duration or depth of engagement is not captured in the instrument.

The findings indicate consistently high levels of social media use among AJI Makassar journalists. A total of 77.2% of respondents reported accessing social media more than five times per day, while 14.1% reported using it three to five times daily. Only 2.1% accessed social media less than once per day, and 1.1% reported never using social media for journalistic activity. Overall, the distribution confirms that social media use is embedded within journalists’ daily work routines and functions as a core infrastructure for monitoring information and disseminating news.

This high level of engagement reflects the platformized nature of contemporary journalism, where professional temporality is increasingly shaped by continuous information flows across social media platforms. Journalists remain “always on” to monitor developments, track public discourse, and respond rapidly within accelerated news cycles. Such practices align with research on social media surveillance in newswork, which identifies continuous monitoring as an integral part of journalists’ professional routines (N. Thurman, 2018). At the same time, intensified reliance on platforms may heighten verification challenges and pressures on news quality, particularly when visibility and circulation are governed by engagement-driven platform infrastructures (Schneiders & Stark, 2025).

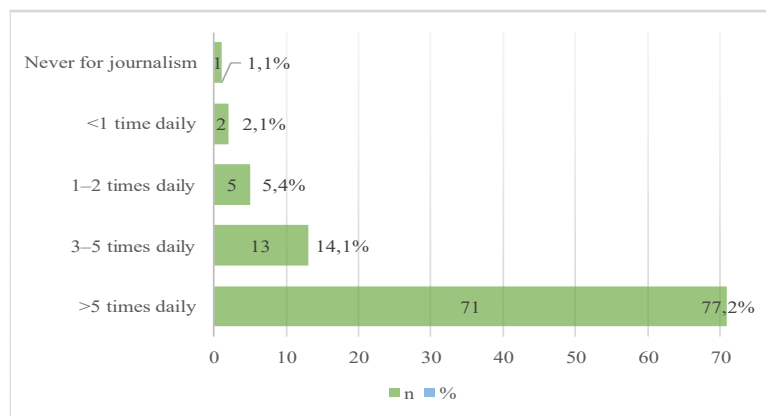
These frequency patterns are summarized in Table 2 and Figure 1, which illustrates the distribution of AJI Makassar journalists’ daily social media use.

Table 2. Frequency of Social Media Use

FREQUENCY CATEGORY	N	%
>5 times daily	71	77.2
3-5 times daily	13	14.1
1-2 times daily	5	5.4
<1 time daily	2	2.1
Never for journalistic activity	1	1.1

(Source: Primary Data Research, 2025)

Figure 1. Chart of Frequency of Social Media Use



(Source: Primary Data Research, 2025)

Dominant Platforms Used for Journalistic Work

The findings indicate a clear concentration of journalistic activity on Instagram, which emerges as the dominant platform for both information sourcing and news dissemination. As shown in Table 3, Instagram accounts for 30.4% of sourcing activity and an even larger share of distribution practices (53.3%), positioning it as the primary gateway through which AJI Makassar journalists both discover and circulate news.

Notably, Instagram's share of distribution is substantially higher than its share of sourcing, suggesting that the platform functions particularly strongly as a dissemination and audience-engagement tool. This pattern reflects the broader shift toward visual-first journalism, where news value is increasingly conveyed through images, short videos, and interactive formats aligned with audience attention patterns in platform environments. Instagram's affordances, including Stories, Reels, and live broadcasts, enable rapid updates and continuous interaction, allowing journalists to maintain visibility while responding to ongoing developments.

The prominence of Instagram also raises important questions regarding the evolving visual orientation of local journalism. If platform visibility becomes a central professional incentive, journalists may face increased pressure to prioritize visually engaging content and rapid updates. While this dynamic enhances reach and audience interaction, it may also introduce new verification risks when speed and engagement compete with traditional routines of fact-checking and editorial scrutiny.

Other platforms demonstrate functional differentiation. X/Twitter (21.7% sourcing; 18.5% distribution) and Facebook (19.6% sourcing; 15.2% distribution) remain important for monitoring conversations and extending reach. Meanwhile, WhatsApp (17.4% sourcing; 7.6% distribution) appears more closely associated with information discovery and coordination rather than outward dissemination, reinforcing its role as a backstage communication infrastructure for journalists and their sources.

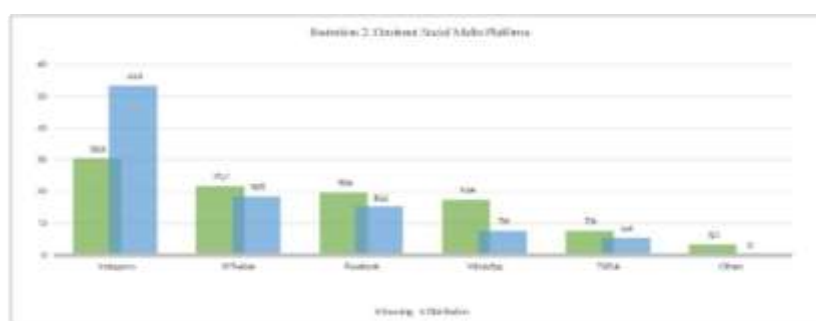
These patterns indicate that platform use among AJI Makassar journalists is shaped not only by individual preference but also by the platform logics of visibility, engagement, and circulation that increasingly structure contemporary journalism.

Table 3. Dominant Social Media Platforms for Journalistic Work

Platform	Sourcing (%)	Distribution (%)
Instagram	30.4	53.3
X/Twitter	21.7	18.5
Facebook	19.6	15.2
Whatsapp	17.4	7.6
Tiktok	7.6	5.4
Others	3.3	-

(Source: Primary Data Research, 2025)

Figure 2. Chart of Dominant Social Media Platforms



(Source: Primary Data Research, 2025)

This dominance of Instagram can be read through the lens of platform-driven newswork, where visibility and circulation are increasingly governed by platform logics and measurable performance signals. Social media platforms do not merely host news; they actively structure what becomes prominent through engagement-oriented affordances and datafied feedback loops that reward content optimized for attention and interaction (van Dijck & Poell, 2013).

In such environments, journalists' publishing decisions are shaped by the pursuit of measurable outcomes, reach, views, likes, shares, and comment activity, reflecting the wider shift toward measurable journalism and the growing influence of popularity-driven metrics on editorial priorities (Carlson, 2018; Dodds et al., 2023). Within Makassar's regional media ecology, Instagram's dominance is also socially grounded: the platform aligns with community-centered rhythms of information exchange, a strong visual culture of everyday communication, and audiences' preference for fast, mobile-friendly updates. As a result, Instagram offers journalists not only distribution power but also a locally resonant space for establishing credibility, maintaining presence, and translating community events into widely circulating news narratives.

Motivational Factors for Social Media Use

The findings show that information seeking represents the strongest motivation driving journalists' social media use, followed by routine convenience and social interaction. As summarized in Table 4, information seeking records the highest mean score (M = 4.07), indicating a very high level of reliance on social media for monitoring developments and identifying news leads. Routine convenience also scores highly (M = 3.92), suggesting that platform use has become embedded within journalists' everyday workflow as a practical and time-efficient resource.

Social interaction (M = 3.76) remains an important motivation, reflecting the role

of social media in maintaining professional networks and monitoring audience responses. Professional branding (M = 3.66) indicates that journalists recognize the importance of online visibility and reputation management in platform environments, even though it is not their primary motivation. By contrast, entertainment records the lowest mean score (M = 3.41), confirming that journalists' social media engagement is largely oriented toward professional rather than recreational purposes.

Overall, these findings support the central assumption of the Uses and Gratifications framework: journalists act as active media users who strategically engage with platforms to satisfy goal-oriented needs, particularly those related to information access and professional interaction.

Table 4. Motivational Factors-Mean Scores

Motivation	Mean	Interpretation
Information seeking	4.07	81.4 (Very High)
Routine convenience	3.92	78.4
Social interaction	3.76	75.2
Professional branding	3.66	73.2
Entertainment	3.41	68.2

(Source: Primary Data Research, 2025)

This motivational pattern reinforces the relevance of the Uses and Gratifications framework in explaining journalists' platform engagement as purposive and goal-oriented rather than incidental. The dominance of information seeking and routine convenience suggests that social media functions as a core professional infrastructure for continuous monitoring and rapid updating, embedding platform use into the temporal rhythms of daily news production. In platformized environments, visibility and circulation are shaped by engagement-driven dynamics, which incentivize journalists to remain responsive to real-time cues while maintaining professional judgment. As a result, journalists' motivations are not purely individual preferences; they are also shaped by structural platform pressures that reward speed, interaction, and measurable attention, thereby strengthening the alignment between journalists' informational needs and the logics of platform-driven newswork.

While the Uses and Gratifications framework provides a useful lens for understanding journalists' motivations in engaging with social media, its traditional focus on audience media consumption invites critical reflection when applied to professional contexts. Journalists are not merely individual media users pursuing personal gratifications; their platform use is also shaped by institutional routines, editorial expectations, and the structural pressures of platform logics such as algorithmic visibility and engagement metrics. In this sense, the findings suggest that USG alone cannot fully explain journalists' social media practices. Rather, journalists' motivations operate within a hybrid environment where individual agency intersects with platform-driven newsroom dynamics.

Taken together, these findings indicate that regional journalism is becoming progressively platformized, where editorial decisions, information sourcing, and news circulation are increasingly shaped by the affordances, metrics, and visibility logics embedded in social media infrastructures.

Inferential Analysis of Demographic Factors and Social Media Use

To complement the descriptive findings, inferential statistical analysis was conducted to examine whether demographic characteristics influence journalists' social media engagement patterns. Spearman correlation tests were used to assess the relationships between age, professional experience, and frequency of social media use.

The results indicate a moderate negative correlation between age and frequency of social media use ($\rho = -0.31$, $p = 0.003$), suggesting that younger journalists tend to engage more frequently with social media platforms in their professional routines. A similar pattern appears in the relationship between professional experience and social media use ($\rho = -0.28$, $p = 0.007$), indicating that early-career journalists rely more intensively on social media as part of their everyday newswork practices.

These findings suggest that generational differences shape how journalists adopt digital platforms in professional contexts. Journalists who entered the profession during the expansion of social media appear more accustomed to integrating platform-based monitoring, audience engagement, and rapid information sourcing into their workflows, reflecting the broader transformation toward platform-centered news production.

Table 5. Spearman Correlation between Journalists' Characteristics and Social Media Use

VARIABLES	SPEARMAN P	SIG.
Age - Social Media Use Frequency	-0.31	0.003
Work experience – Social Media Use Frequency	-0.28	0.007

(Source: Primary Data Research, 2025)

Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the operationalization of usage intensity relies on frequency of access as a proxy, due to the absence of measures capturing duration, depth of engagement, and cognitive or emotional involvement. While this approach is commonly used in communication research, it may not fully represent the complexity of journalists' platform engagement.

Second, the analysis primarily relies on aggregated frequency distributions, including cumulative percentages across usage categories. While these descriptive statistics provide a useful overview of general patterns, they do not allow for more granular cross-tabulation or robust inferential testing at the item level. As a result, potential associations between specific variables, such as platform use, motivations, and demographic characteristics, should be interpreted cautiously, and claims regarding such relationships are deliberately limited in this study.

Third, the study focuses on a specific professional group, namely journalists affiliated with AJI Makassar. Although this population is analytically relevant due to its strong engagement with ethical journalism and digital practices, the findings may not be fully generalizable to journalists in other regions or institutional contexts with different newsroom structures and resource conditions.

Fourth, the reliance on self-reported survey data introduces the possibility of response bias, particularly in measuring professional practices such as verification routines and platform use. Observational or mixed-method approaches could provide a more nuanced understanding of how social media is embedded in actual newsroom workflows.

Finally, while this study conceptually integrates Uses and Gratifications (U&G) with platform-driven newswork, the empirical analysis remains primarily descriptive and correlational. It does not fully capture causal mechanisms or the dynamic interplay between individual motivations and structural platform logics over time.

Future Research

Future research should address these limitations by incorporating more comprehensive measures of platform engagement, including duration, multitasking patterns, and qualitative dimensions of use. Longitudinal designs would also be valuable in examining how journalists' platform practices evolve alongside changing algorithmic environments and newsroom expectations.

In addition, expanding the scope of analysis to include comparative studies across regions, media organizations, or professional roles would help clarify how platform-driven newswork operates under different institutional and socio-cultural conditions.

Methodologically, combining survey data with ethnographic observation, digital trace analysis, or in-depth interviews would enable a richer understanding of how journalists negotiate platform pressures in real time.

Finally, further theoretical development is needed to critically reassess the applicability of Uses and Gratifications (U&G) in professional media contexts, particularly in relation to platform governance, algorithmic visibility, and the structural constraints that shape contemporary digital journalism.

Conclusion

This study examined how journalists affiliated with AJI Makassar utilize social media within their everyday journalistic practices. The findings demonstrate that social media has become deeply embedded in journalists' professional routines, with the majority of respondents accessing platforms multiple times per day as part of their continuous monitoring and information-gathering activities.

Instagram emerged as the most dominant platform for both information sourcing and news dissemination, reflecting the increasing importance of visual and engagement-oriented formats in contemporary digital journalism. Motivational analysis further shows that journalists' platform use is primarily driven by professional needs, particularly information seeking and routine convenience, rather than entertainment.

These findings reinforce the relevance of the Uses and Gratifications framework in explaining journalists' purposive engagement with digital platforms. At the same time, the results also support the concept of platform-driven newswork, demonstrating how structural platform logics increasingly shape visibility, circulation, and the tempo of journalistic routines. Inferential analysis further suggests that younger and less experienced journalists integrate social media more intensively into their professional workflows, indicating generational differences in platform adoption within regional journalism.

Overall, this study highlights how social media platforms function simultaneously as enabling infrastructures and structural constraints within contemporary news production. For regional journalism contexts such as Makassar, strengthening digital literacy, verification capacity, and ethical guidelines becomes increasingly important in maintaining journalistic credibility within accelerated platformized information environments.

At an epistemological level, these limitations suggest that current survey-based approaches capture journalists' platform engagement only as observable behavior, leaving underexplored the deeper processes through which platform logics co-constitute journalistic knowledge, professional judgment, and the very conditions under which news is recognized as credible.

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