

The Influence of Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality Technologies on Media Consumption Patterns in South Africa

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Abstract

Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) technologies are reshaping the landscape of media consumption globally, yet their impact on South African audiences remains relatively unexplored. This study aims to investigate the influence of VR and AR technologies on media consumption patterns in South Africa, addressing a significant gap in current research. The objectives of this research are threefold: first, to assess the extent of VR and AR adoption among South African audiences; second, to analyse the factors driving their usage; and third, to examine the effects of these technologies on traditional media consumption habits. A mixed-methods approach was employed, consisting of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. A survey questionnaire was distributed among a diverse sample of South African consumers to gather quantitative data on VR and AR usage patterns. Additionally, focus group discussions were conducted to delve deeper into participants' experiences and perceptions regarding these technologies. The major findings reveal a growing interest in VR and AR technologies among South African consumers, driven by factors such as novelty, immersion, and interactivity. These technologies are found to significantly impact traditional media consumption behaviours by offering innovative modes of storytelling and immersive content experiences. This study contributes to the field of media studies by providing insights into the evolving media landscape in South Africa and the transformative potential of VR and AR technologies. The implications of this research extend to media practitioners, policymakers, and researchers, emphasizing the importance of embracing innovative media technologies to adapt to changing consumer preferences and behaviours.

Keywords: Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, Media Consumption Patterns, South Africa, Emerging Technologies.