



ASSESSING SEMINARIANS' APPROACH TO WHATSAPP INFODEMICS AND INFORMATION OVERLOAD

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Abstract

This work investigated seminarians' approaches to WhatsApp infodemics and information overload, a growing challenge in digital ecclesial contexts. Anchored on information overload theory, cognitive load theory, and stress and coping theory, the research examined how seminarians perceive, process, and respond to incessant WhatsApp communications. Employing a cross-sectional quantitative descriptive survey design, the study targeted all 47 Catholic diocesan seminarians of Uromi Diocese across three Nigerian seminaries: All Saints, Ekpoma, SS. Peter and Paul, Bodija, and St. Albert the Great, Abeokuta, using 15-item four-point Likert scale questionnaire administered via Google Forms. With 43 valid responses (91.49% response rate), instrument validity was ensured through expert review, while reliability was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.89. Findings show that seminarians experience significant and pervasive information overload, often resorting to avoidance and prioritization as coping mechanisms, yet struggling with consistency in organizational habits. While media literacy is embraced for validation purposes, its practical application remains weak. The study concluded that unchecked information overload constitutes a pandemic of the mind, threatening seminarians' vocational formation and future ministry. Consequently, it recommended stricter group communication guidelines, structured digital literacy workshops, and mandatory curriculum integration of applied media literacy skills. By equipping seminarians with these competencies, formation houses can transform the challenge of infodemics into an opportunity for disciplined digital engagement and priestly readiness.

Keywords: Cognitive Dissonance, Infodemics, Information Overload, Seminarians, WhatsApp

Introduction

The contemporary digital environment has fundamentally transformed how information is shared, particularly through instant messaging applications like WhatsApp. This platform, designed for both personal and professional communication, have increasingly become conduits for both necessary and unnecessary information. WhatsApp groups, which may initially be created for specific purposes, are often inundated with messages that deviate from their original intent. These messages may include text, videos, images, and other media artifacts that, while perhaps well-intentioned, clutter digital spaces, consume data, and overwhelm recipients (Vosoughi, Roy, & Aral, 2018). This overabundance of content contributes to what has been termed "infodemic," (information pandemic) where users struggle to differentiate between important communications and trivial or misleading information (World Health Organization, 2020). The impact is many-sided, affecting not only the attention and focus of users but also the storage and usability of their digital devices.

The sending of unsolicited information, whether on WhatsApp groups or via email, raises questions about user behaviour and intent. Individuals often circulate messages for social, emotional,



or informational purposes without considering the relevance or necessity for the recipients. Some messages may aim to inform or entertain, while others might be advertisements, chain messages, or even harmful misinformation (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). This behaviour, though common, creates a tension between the sender's perceived utility of the message and the receiver's capacity or willingness to process it. In professional or purpose-driven groups, the disregard for rules governing relevance can undermine the group's objectives and dilute the effectiveness of communication.

Recipients of unsolicited messages adopt a range of coping strategies, reflecting their attitudes toward information overload. Some may exercise selective attention, choosing to read only messages deemed relevant, while others may block senders or exit groups entirely to manage cognitive and digital load (Okhueleigbe & Aduloju, 2023). These responses are influenced by personal interest, perceived message importance, and the frequency of message receipt (Eppler & Mengis, 2004). Over time, habitual exposure to excessive or irrelevant content may lead to disengagement, where individuals ignore or fail to recognize even important messages, creating risks of missing critical information. The digital ecosystem thus becomes a space of both opportunity and risk, where user behaviour, attitudes, and cognitive capacity interact to shape information processing.

The theoretical underpinning of this phenomenon is closely linked to media richness and cognitive load theories, which posit that individuals have a finite capacity to process information effectively (Daft & Lengel, 1986). When digital spaces are saturated with high volumes of low-relevance content, users experience overload, stress, and decreased comprehension. This operationalizes the variables of message volume, content relevance, and user cognitive capacity, highlighting the need for strategic interventions that optimize information flow while minimizing unnecessary digital burden.

Media literacy becomes a critical solution for seminarians to these challenges. Media literacy defined as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media in various forms (National Association for Media Literacy Education, 2023), equips individuals with the cognitive tools to discern between important and irrelevant content. In the context of WhatsApp infodemics, media literacy enables users, like seminarians to identify credible sources, filter unnecessary messages, and engage with information critically rather than passively. By operationalizing media literacy, digital users can transform from passive recipients to active navigators of information landscapes.

Practical strategies grounded in media literacy include educating users on message relevance, verification of sources, and appropriate sharing norms. For WhatsApp groups, this may involve establishing clear group rules, moderating content, and encouraging members to respect the purpose of the group. These approaches address both the sender behaviour (what types of messages are circulated) and recipient behaviour (how messages are processed), operationalizing both variables for practical application (Livingstone & Helsper, 2007). Users who develop adaptive strategies, such as selective engagement, critical evaluation, or filtering, demonstrate resilience in managing digital communication challenges. Conversely, lack of media literacy skills may exacerbate vulnerability to misinformation, phishing, and cognitive overload, emphasizing the importance of structured educational interventions.

Statement of the Problem

In recent times, concerns have been raised regarding seminarians' communication habits, particularly in relation to the use of digital platforms such as WhatsApp. A priest observed that a seminarian posted to his parish consistently failed to respond to messages, a pattern he noted had also been exhibited by a seminarian previously assigned to him. This attitude was perceived as a sign of indifference or poor interpersonal conduct. Upon further engagement, the seminarian disclosed that the reluctance to check messages stemmed from the overwhelming influx of unsolicited information and incessant postings on his WhatsApp handle, which created a sense of digital fatigue. Similar sentiments were echoed by two additional seminarians within the same diocese, indicating a recurring and systemic challenge. Despite the growing recognition of this



phenomenon, a critical review of available literature revealed that studies addressing seminarians' attitudes towards infodemics remain limited, poorly contextualized, and largely inadequate. This gap underscores the urgent need for a focused and context-driven investigation that captures the experiences of all seminarians within a diocese of the ecclesiastical province of Benin City.

Aim and Objectives of the study

The aim of the study was to examine how seminarians engage with and respond to infodemics and information overload on WhatsApp, particularly in relation to discernment, credibility assessment, and usage patterns. Below are the specific objectives:

1. to examine the extent of WhatsApp infodemics and information overload experienced by seminarians in the Catholic Diocese of Uromi,
2. to assess seminarians' attitudes and coping strategies toward excessive or unsolicited messages on WhatsApp;
3. to explore how media literacy approaches can be utilized to manage information overload and enhance critical engagement with digital content among seminarians.

Research Questions

1. What is the extent of WhatsApp infodemics and information overload among seminarians in the Catholic Diocese of Uromi?
2. What are the attitudes and coping strategies of seminarians toward unsolicited or excessive WhatsApp messages?
3. How can media literacy approaches be applied to manage information overload and improve critical engagement with digital content among seminarians?

Literature Review

Existing scholarship on WhatsApp infodemics and information overload within Nigerian ecclesial and educational settings presents both convergences and tensions. (Igbafe & Anyanwu, 2021) highlights the ubiquity of WhatsApp in tertiary institutions, drawing parallels with seminarians' daily formation, while Ogunsola (2019) emphasises how church personnel in Ibadan appropriate social media for religious activities, thereby revealing both opportunities and excesses. Aghaulor and Hyginus (2020), in their seminary-focused presentation, underscore the formative challenges ICT introduces into clerical training, a concern echoed in Owerri-based evaluative studies (2022), which identify WhatsApp as a driver of fake news dissemination among young people. Uwalaka (2021) further demonstrates, through pandemic-era investigations, how misinformation flows amplified cognitive burden, while Ogunbola (2025) establishes the moderating role of media literacy in shaping perceptions of fake news in Lagos. Complementing these, the ISCA paper on Akwa Ibom theological colleges (2022) stresses measurable academic impacts of social media use, and Afolaranmi (2023) proposes a normative framework for pastoral leaders, contrasting descriptive accounts with prescriptive intervention. Nigeria Health Watch's infodemic management workshop (2021) adds a public-health perspective, aligning with OpastPublishers' analysis (2020) of the Catholic Church's struggles and opportunities in social media adoption, both of which illuminate institutional-level concerns that seminarians inevitably inherit.

Empirical Review

"Academic Use of WhatsApp and Technostress" (Al-Abdullateef, 2022) investigated the role of WhatsApp in academic groups with the aim of determining how group size, message relevance and activity contribute to perceived information overload. The study was framed by technology acceptance and technostress theories and used a cross-sectional survey design among university students as the population. A convenience sampling technique produced a sample of 218 postgraduate and undergraduate students. Major findings showed that receiving an excessive



volume of irrelevant messages correlated with higher perceived information overload, reduced group usefulness, and increased stress. The study concluded that WhatsApp group practices can generate significant information load when group purpose and membership control are weak. It advocated clearer group guidelines, moderation of membership, and training on group management to limit unnecessary postings.

“Demographic Factors Influencing the Impact of WhatsApp Misinformation” (Bapaye & Choudhari, 2021) examined vulnerability to COVID-19 misinformation on WhatsApp, aiming to identify demographic predictors of susceptibility. The study used a cross-sectional survey guided by the persuasion and information processing literature, sampling adult WhatsApp users in a developing country context via stratified sampling to yield 1,200 respondents. Major findings indicated that younger, less educated, and lower digital-literacy cohorts reported higher exposure and greater difficulty in managing the volume of misinformation, effectively experiencing an infodemic. The authors concluded that demographic factors shape the extent of exposure and overload and that targeted digital-literacy interventions are required. The study proposed demographic-tailored education campaigns, platform-level labelling of dubious content, and the use of community moderators to reduce spread.

“COVID-19 as Infodemic: The Impact of Political Orientation and Open-mindedness on the Discernment of Misinformation in WhatsApp” (Bonafé-Pontes, Lopes, & Ribeiro, 2021) aimed to quantify the presence and discernment of misinformation circulating on WhatsApp during the early COVID-19 period and to relate discernment to individual differences. Anchored in dual-process models of cognition, the study used a correlational survey design with an online convenience sample of 630 WhatsApp users. Major findings revealed high prevalence of COVID-19 misinformation on WhatsApp and that lower critical thinking and stronger partisan orientation were associated with increased acceptance and sharing, indicative of an infodemic amplifying information overload. The study concluded that WhatsApp acted as a vector for high volumes of low-quality content, producing cognitive burden for recipients. It called for the promotion of critical evaluation prompts, integration of fact-checking tools within chat interfaces, and intensified public awareness campaigns.

“What’s up with WhatsApp? A review of its role in student groups” (Research Review, 2025) conducted a systematic exploration of WhatsApp’s role in student communication with the aim of mapping its benefits and harms for student cohorts. Grounded loosely in uses and gratifications theory, the review synthesized empirical surveys and qualitative studies using PRISMA-style selection across higher-education populations. The population across reviewed studies consisted of university students; sampling techniques varied by study but commonly used purposive or convenience samples with sample sizes ranging from small qualitative cohorts (~20) to larger surveys (200–800). Major findings consistently documented that WhatsApp increased communication efficiency but also generated information overload, distraction, and message fatigue when group numbers or irrelevant content increased. The review concluded that the platform produces widespread informational intensity among student cohorts and **urged** the establishment of institutional policies. It further emphasised the need for institutional guidelines for academic WhatsApp use, training on message management, and the adoption of moderation roles to limit volume and preserve relevance.

“Too much to handle’: Impact of mobile social networking on information overload and well-being” (Matthes, Karsay, Schmuck, & Stevic, 2020) aimed to assess longitudinal relationships among mobile social network site use, perceived information overload, and psychological outcomes, drawing on stress and coping theory. The study used a two-wave panel design among young adult social media users, recruited through probability sampling in one national cohort, yielding a sample of 1,042 respondents across waves. Major findings showed that higher intensity of mobile SNS use predicted greater information overload over time, which in turn predicted depressive symptoms and lower well-being; coping strategies such as active information management mitigated some negative effects. The authors concluded that information overload on mobile messaging platforms evokes negative attitudes and adaptive/maladaptive coping responses. The study suggested



promoting time management strategies, encouraging digital breaks, and designing platform features to reduce volumetric pressure.

“Information overload and fake news sharing: The mediating role of resilience” (Bermes, 2021) investigated how information overload from social media relates to fake news sharing and the role of individual resilience as a coping resource. Anchored in resilience and information processing frameworks, the quantitative cross-sectional study used online sampling of 640 social media users. Major findings indicated that information overload increased susceptibility to misinformation sharing but that higher resilience and deliberate avoidance strategies correlated with reduced sharing and more critical attitudes. The study concluded that coping strategies—particularly resilience-enhancing behaviours and selective exposure—can alter attitudes toward excessive messaging and reduce adverse outcomes. It advanced resilience-building interventions, training in selective attention, and organisational supports to reduce unsolicited message flows.

“Roles of Worry, Social Media Information Overload and Fatigue in Behavioral Outcomes” (Jiang et al., 2022) sought to map the pathways from pandemic-related worry through information overload to social media fatigue and downstream behavioral changes, using stress-strain-outcome theory. A cross-sectional survey of 1,100 adult social media users recruited via stratified online panels provided the dataset. Major findings demonstrated that worry about the pandemic heightened information overload, which produced fatigue and lowered engagement; coping responses varied from avoidance and unfollowing to active verification. The study concluded that avoidance and prioritisation are common coping strategies but that consistency of organisational habits was low. It highlighted the need for institutional encouragement of verification behaviour, structured media-use schedules, and training to improve organisational habits.

“Postgraduate Students’ Perceptions of WhatsApp Groups” (Mohammed, 2025) aimed to explore attitudes toward academic WhatsApp groups and the coping mechanisms adopted by postgraduate students. The study applied a mixed-methods sequential explanatory design based in uses and gratifications and coping literature, sampling 312 postgraduate students via purposive sampling from a regional university. Major findings revealed ambivalent attitudes: appreciation for convenience coupled with frustration over irrelevant content and message volume, leading to coping behaviours such as muting, selective reading, message batching, and temporary group exits. The study concluded that coping strategies are largely behavioural and situationally adopted rather than skill-based. It outlined practical measures such as teaching message-management techniques, establishing group norms, and institutional training on communication discipline.

“Media Literacy Interventions: A Meta-Analytic Review” (Jeong, Cho, & Hwang, 2012) performed a meta-analysis with the aim of estimating the overall effectiveness of media literacy interventions on media knowledge, criticism, attitudes and behaviours. Grounded in cognitive-development and critical pedagogy theories, the study synthesized 51 intervention studies using meta-analytic techniques. Major findings showed a moderate positive effect ($d = .37$) of media literacy interventions on knowledge and critical evaluation outcomes. The authors concluded that structured media literacy programmes reliably enhance critical engagement with digital content and can reduce susceptibility to misinformation. The study endorsed the integration of media literacy into curricula and sustained evaluation mechanisms.

“Media LIT: Overcoming Information Overload” (RAND Project Brief, 2021) described an applied media-literacy course designed to strengthen citizens’ ability to identify and avoid false information and manage information flow. Evaluation findings indicated improvements in misinformation detection and information management. The brief proposed the adoption of modular, platform-specific media literacy interventions and institutional endorsement to maximise uptake.

“Dealing with Information Overload: A Comprehensive Review” (Arnold, Becker, & Klein, 2023) sought to map prevention and intervention measures addressing information overload across work and education settings, using PRISMA guidelines. Framed by cognitive load and information management theories, the systematic review covered multiple empirical studies employing experimental, quasi-experimental and survey designs spanning varied populations and sampling methods. Major findings identified effective interventions such as digital-organization training,



interface design changes, and education in selective attention and critical evaluation. The review concluded that multifaceted approaches combining skills training with platform or organizational changes produce the greatest reductions in overload. It suggested amongst other embedding digital-organization curricula, platform feature improvements (e.g., message batching), and managerial policies to guard against unsolicited messaging, recommendations that can inform media-literacy curricula for seminarians.

“Impact of Digital Media Literacy on Attitude toward Generative AI Acceptance in Higher Education” (Sergeeva, Pavlova, & Grigoryan, 2025) investigated the effect of a contemporary digital media-literacy curriculum on attitudes and self-reported competencies among university students, with the aim of validating measurement scales and assessing intervention impact. The study used a quasi-experimental pre/post design grounded in self-efficacy and information processing theories and sampled 420 higher-education students via cluster sampling. Major findings showed significant improvements in media-literacy subscales, increases in critical evaluation self-efficacy, and more selective engagement with automated content, implying reduced tendency toward cognitive overload. The study concluded that structured, validated digital media-literacy programs can alter both attitude and behaviour in measurable ways. It encouraged the adaptation of validated modules to specific institutional contexts (religious formation settings included), longitudinal assessment for retention, and integration with pastoral formation curricula to strengthen discernment.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on information overload theory (Toffler, 1970; Eppler & Mengis, 2004), which posits that individuals faced with excessive volumes of information experience diminished decision-making quality, stress, and disengagement, conditions highly relevant to seminarians navigating constant WhatsApp notifications. Complementing this is cognitive load theory (Sweller, 1988; Paas & Ayres, 2014), which emphasizes the limits of working memory and explains how unsolicited and irrelevant digital messages create cognitive strain, thereby reducing attention and reflection. To account for adaptive behaviours, the study draws on stress and coping theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), which frames seminarians’ strategies such as avoidance, muting, or selective engagement as attempts to manage informational stressors. Together, these theoretical perspectives provide a comprehensive framework for explaining seminarians’ experiences of WhatsApp infodemics, their coping strategies, and the role of media literacy in mitigating negative effects.

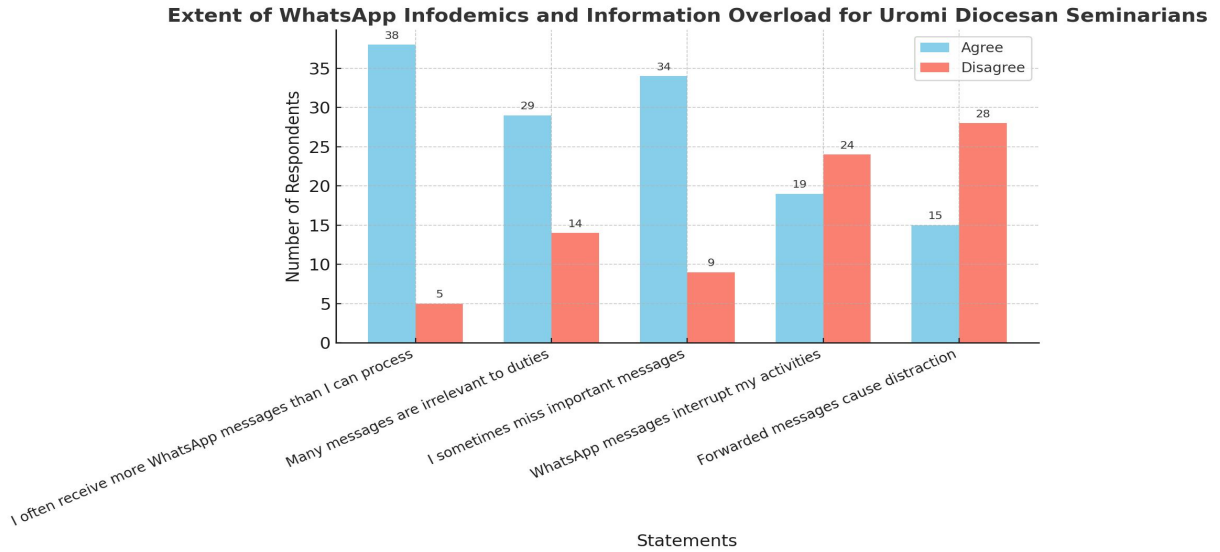
Research Methodology

This study adopted a cross-sectional descriptive survey design with a quantitative orientation, utilizing a structured questionnaire based on a four-point Likert scale. The target population comprised all Catholic seminarians of Uromi Diocese currently studying in three major seminaries in Nigeria: All Saints Major Seminary, Ekpoma (21), Saints Peter and Paul Seminary, Bodija-Ibadan (13), and St. Albert the Great Major Seminary, Abeokuta (13), yielding a total population of 50 seminarians. Given the relatively small population size, a census approach was employed, and the questionnaire, comprising 15 carefully validated items, was distributed to all 47 participants through Google Forms, ensuring full coverage and eliminating sampling bias. Forty-three seminarians completed and returned the instrument, representing 91.49% response rate, which is considered highly reliable for quantitative studies. Content and face validity of the instrument were established through expert review by specialists in communication and social research, while internal consistency was confirmed via a pilot test yielding a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient above the acceptable 0.70 threshold. These methodological choices ensured rigour, minimized error, and enhanced the reliability and generalizability of the findings.



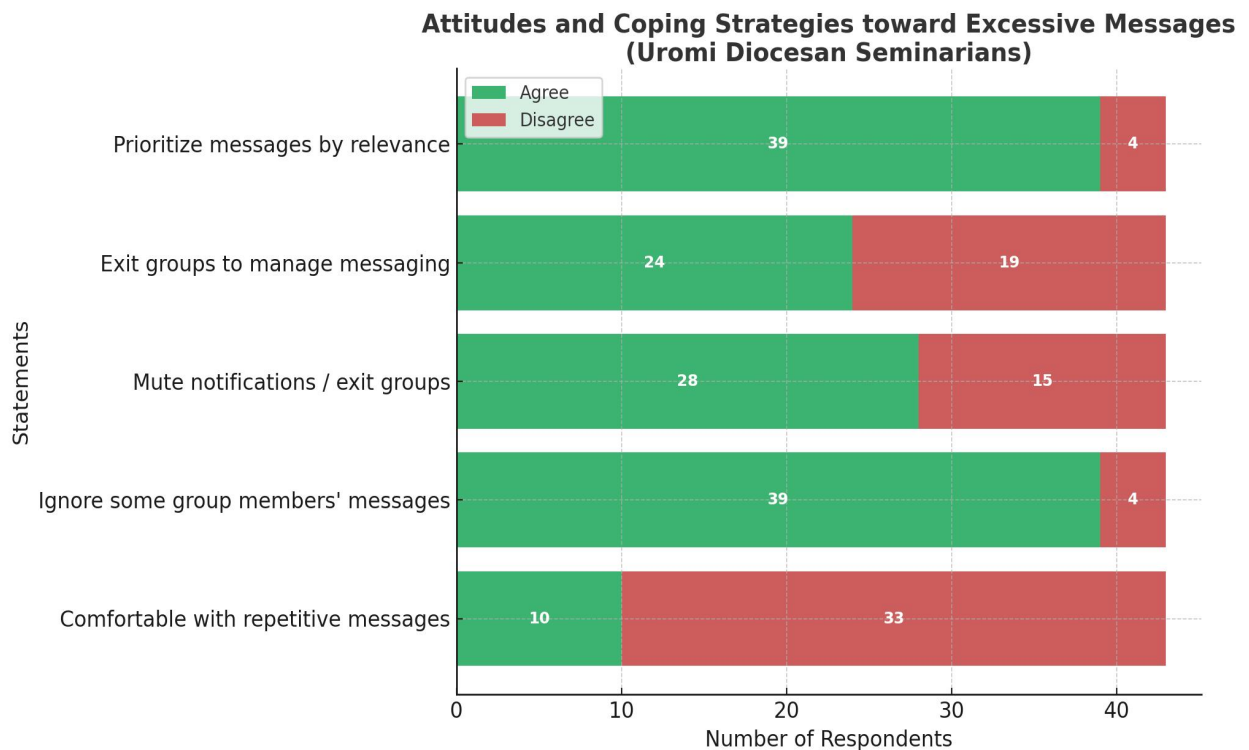
Presentation and Analysis of Data

Fig. 1



Based on the Synthesis Chart, the Seminarians exhibit a strong consensus and highest frequency for proactive media verification, with cross-checking information (WM=3.77) being the most consistent practice (STD=0.59), closely followed by credibility verification which shows a near-unanimous agreement (high Kurtosis=3.73). Conversely, while generally agreeing on the importance of validation, the Seminarians display the greatest variability and lowest frequency in personal organizational habits like managing messages (STD=0.90) and using specific fact-checking tools (WM=2.79), indicating these are inconsistent or less-adopted practices.

Fig 2



In the chart above, the data on coping mechanisms confirms a pronounced aversion to message redundancy, as evidenced by the statistically significant 'Disagree' decision and low central tendency (WM=1.791) for comfort regarding repetitive content. Conversely, active coping strategies exhibit a high statistical consensus and strong adoption, with prioritizing messages based



on relevance recording the highest WM (3.140) and minimal dispersion (STD=0.655), reflecting the group's most successful self-management tactic. While methods of avoidance like muting and ignoring are widely accepted ($WM \geq 2.977$), the act of exiting groups is associated with the highest variance (STD=0.847), suggesting this is the least uniform or most situationally dependent coping strategy within the cohort.

Table 1: Uromi Diocesan Seminarians’ prioritization of WhatsApp messages based on the sender or content relevance

Statement	V.Often (4)	Often (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	WM	STD	Kurtosis	Decision
I verify the credibility of messages before accepting or forwarding them.	55.8%	44.2%	0.0%	0.0%	3.558	0.655	3.732	Agree
I cross-check information from multiple sources before believing or sharing it.	88.4%	0.0%	11.6%	0.0%	3.767	0.591	2.261	Agree
I use fact-checking tools or reliable websites to confirm questionable information.	23.3%	32.6%	44.2%	0.0%	2.791	0.794	-1.313	Agree
I manage my WhatsApp messages by archiving or pinning important ones for future reference.	23.3%	44.2%	23.3%	9.3%	2.814	0.896	-0.563	Agree
I avoid forwarding sensational or unverified news to others.	67.4%	23.3%	9.3%	0.0%	3.581	0.655	0.411	Agree

Uromi Diocesan Seminarians overwhelmingly prioritize proactive media verification over personal organizational habits, as evidenced by the statistical hierarchy of their responses. Specifically, cross-checking information registers the highest WM (3.767) and the lowest STD (0.591), indicating it is the most consistent and agreed-upon practice, while the extremely high Kurtosis (3.732) for credibility verification signals a sharp, near-unanimous consensus on its critical importance. Conversely, practices requiring active message management (archiving/pinning) and the use of fact-checking tools both show the lowest frequency ($WM \approx 2.8$) and the highest statistical



variability ($STD \approx 0.8$ to 0.9), confirming these are the most inconsistent and least adopted strategies within the cohort.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding of this study is that: “the extent of WhatsApp infodemics and information overload experienced by Uromi Diocesan seminarians is significant and pervasive”. This mirrors the broader Nigerian and international evidence that WhatsApp is both ubiquitous and prone to propagate low-quality content (Igbafe & Anyanwu, 2021; Ogunsola, 2019), and accords with empirical findings that high message volume and weak group governance produce technostress and perceived overload (Al-Abdullateef, 2022). Divergence appears when comparing seminarians with general populations: demographic vulnerability studies (Bapaye & Choudhari, 2021; Bonafé-Pontes et al., 2021) report higher susceptibility among younger/low-literacy cohorts, whereas the seminarians in this sample report stronger normative verification—an outcome plausibly explained by vocational formation and ecclesial norms that valorize truth-seeking (Aghaulor & Hyginus, 2020) but tempered by practical constraints (volume, platform affordances). Theoretically, these results align with information-overload and cognitive-load accounts: verification requires cognitive resources, and sustained high message volumes produce strain that makes systematic tool use less likely despite high motivation to verify. Methodologically, the high response rate (43/47, 86%) and instrument reliability support internal trustworthiness, but the clustered responses (high kurtosis) caution against ceiling effects and social-desirability inflation of self-reported verification practices.

Findings for the second objective (attitudes and coping strategies) show a predominantly active-selective repertoire: strong prioritization of messages by relevance had a high mean ($WM = 3.140$, $STD = 0.655$), while avoidance behaviours such as muting and ignoring were widely accepted ($WM \geq 2.977$); comfort with repetition was rejected ($WM = 1.791$), and exiting groups produced the greatest variance ($STD = 0.847$), signalling that discontinuation is a situational, ethically fraught choice for clerical trainees. These empirical tendencies converge with longitudinal and panel studies that link intensive mobile SNS use to overload, fatigue and both adaptive (time management, prioritization) and maladaptive (withdrawal, depressive symptoms) responses (Matthes et al., 2020; Jiang et al., 2022).

Resilience research (Bermes, 2021) explains reduced sharing under high resilience and supports the observed tendency toward selective exposure rather than indiscriminate forwarding; postgraduate and student studies (Mohammed, 2025; Adeleke et al., 2024) similarly document muting, batching and temporary exits as common tactics. The stress-and-coping lens (Lazarus & Folkman) clarifies that seminarians employ a mix of problem-focused coping (prioritization, verification) and emotion-focused strategies (muting, ignoring) to manage informational stressors, while formation constraints identified by seminary practitioners (Aghaulor & Hyginus, 2020) and pastoral frameworks (Afolaranmi, 2023) shape the ethical calculus behind group exit decisions—hence the observed heterogeneity. Policy and institutional literature reinforce that behaviorally anchored practices alone are insufficient without institutional norms and moderation.

The last finding (media-literacy measures and critical engagement) reveals a clear gap between epistemic intent and capacity: despite high self-reported cross-checking, formal media-literacy tool adoption is modest ($WM = 2.791$), suggesting reliance on interpersonal triangulation and heuristics rather than systematic, skill-based verification. This gap is consistent with meta-analytic and programmatic evidence that structured media-literacy interventions produce measurable gains in critical evaluation and self-efficacy (Jeong, Cho & Hwang, 2012), and with recent quasi-experimental work showing curriculum integration yields durable attitude and competency shifts (Sergeeva et al., 2025). Systematic reviews emphasize that complex interventions, combining skills training, organisational rules, and interface/design changes—are most effective at reducing overload (Arnold et al., 2023), a prescription reinforced by local intervention studies (Ogunbola, 2025) and by practitioner toolkits from Nigeria Health Watch.

Contrasts in the literature reveal important moderation effects: demographic tailoring (Bapaye & Choudhari, 2021), political orientation and cognitive styles (Bonafé-Pontes et al., 2021)



can constrain the effectiveness of generic literacy programmes, while short, behaviourally focused modules (Mohammed, 2025) often achieve higher uptake among busy cohorts—an important implementation lesson for seminary formation. In theoretical terms, media-literacy interventions reduce cognitive load by automating evaluative heuristics and increasing schema-based processing (cognitive-load theory), while also enhancing coping self-efficacy (stress-and-coping theory). Practically, the evidence supports a tailored, curriculum-embedded strategy for Uromi, bite-sized, platform-specific literacy modules, enforced group norms/moderation, and message-management training, coupled with longitudinal evaluation and objective logging of message volumes to overcome the limitations of self-report and to test scalability beyond the present diocesan sample (Jalaludin, 2024).

Conclusion

Excessive information is no longer a mere challenge; it has become a pandemic of the mind, more insidious than a tsunami, silently eroding attention, mental resilience, and spiritual focus. For seminarians, men in formation who are trained to value time, discipline, and clarity of communication, unchecked information overload is not just a distraction, but a direct threat to their vocation. As future priests, they will inevitably be thrust into a society already drowning in infodemics, and without deliberate preparation, they risk being swept away themselves. Thus, for the seminarian, media and information literacy is not an elective skill but an existential necessity, one that safeguards his own world and equips him to guide the people he is called to serve. Anything less would be a failure both in formation and in mission.

Recommendations

Seminary Rectorate should establish clear guidelines for seminary groups, including limits on non-essential postings, structured message scheduling, and the designation of 'Academic/Spiritual Priority Groups' to control message flow and combat overload.

The Seminary IT Coordinator should introduce structured digital literacy workshops focused on time management and message organization (e.g., archiving, categorization), reinforcing consistent habits through peer accountability systems.

The Academic Dean should help the seminary by integrating mandatory, practice-based media literacy modules focusing on fact-checking tools and applied digital discernment into the core curriculum, ensuring the theoretical knowledge translates directly into habitual action.

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