

An Exploratory Study on News Consumption Habits and Media Credibility among Youths- A Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

The widespread adoption of digital technologies and social media has fundamentally reshaped the way people access, consume, and engage with news, particularly among younger generations. Unlike traditional media, digital platforms offer immediate, personalized, and interactive access to information, making them the preferred source of news for many young users. However, this transformation has also introduced significant challenges, including the rapid dissemination of misinformation, the spread of unverified content, algorithmic bias, and declining trust in news sources. This literature review critically examines existing research on digital news consumption patterns and perceptions of media credibility among youth. It synthesizes scholarly findings on the factors influencing trust in news, the role of social media platforms in shaping information-seeking behaviour, and the growing concerns regarding fake news and information verification. The review also explores the importance of media literacy, fact-checking practices, and critical evaluation skills in enabling young audiences to distinguish credible information from misleading content. Furthermore, it identifies important research gaps, particularly the limited empirical evidence from semi-urban, rural, and regional contexts where digital media adoption is expanding rapidly but remains underexplored. By consolidating current knowledge and highlighting emerging challenges, this review provides a comprehensive understanding of the evolving relationship between digital media and news credibility. The findings underscore the need for strengthened media literacy initiatives, responsible digital journalism, and context-specific research to foster informed, critical, and responsible news consumption among young audiences in the digital age.

Keywords: News Consumption, Media Credibility, Youths and Digital Media

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital communication technologies has transformed the global news ecosystem, fundamentally changing the ways in which individuals access, consume, and engage with news. The widespread availability of smartphones, high-speed internet, and social networking platforms has shifted news consumption from traditional media outlets such as newspapers, radio, and television to digital platforms that provide real-time, personalized, and interactive information. This transition is particularly evident among young audiences, who increasingly rely on digital media as their primary source of news and current affairs.

Social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), YouTube, and WhatsApp, have become integral channels for news dissemination and information sharing. Their accessibility, speed, and user-generated content have revolutionized the news landscape by enabling audiences not only to consume but also to create, share, and comment on news content. While these developments have enhanced public access to information and encouraged greater civic engagement, they have simultaneously introduced challenges related to the credibility, authenticity, and reliability of digital news.

The rapid spread of misinformation, disinformation, fake news, and manipulated content has emerged as a significant concern in the digital era. Algorithm-driven content recommendations, echo chambers, filter bubbles, and selective exposure often influence users' news choices, making it increasingly difficult to distinguish credible journalism from misleading or fabricated information. Consequently, public trust in news media has become a critical issue, prompting researchers to examine the factors that shape perceptions of media credibility and the mechanisms through which audiences evaluate the trustworthiness of digital news sources.

Among different demographic groups, young people are particularly vulnerable to the opportunities and challenges presented by digital news environments. Their extensive use of social media for news consumption, coupled with varying levels of media literacy and fact-checking practices, has attracted considerable scholarly attention. Previous studies have investigated digital news consumption behaviours, trust in online journalism, the influence of social media algorithms, and the role of media literacy in combating misinformation. These studies collectively demonstrate that perceptions of credibility are influenced by multiple factors, including source reputation, content quality, verification practices, prior beliefs, peer influence, and technological affordances.

Despite the growing body of literature on digital news consumption and media credibility, existing research remains concentrated largely in urban settings and developed countries. Comparatively fewer studies have explored these issues in semi-urban, rural, and regional contexts, particularly in developing nations such as India, where patterns of digital media use, socio-cultural characteristics, and access to information differ substantially. Addressing these contextual variations is essential for developing a more comprehensive understanding of contemporary news consumption behaviour and the challenges associated with evaluating the credibility of digital information.

Against this background, the present literature review critically synthesizes existing scholarly work on digital news consumption and media credibility among young audiences. It examines the evolution of news consumption patterns, the determinants of trust in digital news, the challenges posed by misinformation and algorithmic information environments, and the growing importance of media literacy in fostering informed and responsible news consumption. By identifying key themes, emerging trends, and existing research gaps, this review contributes to the broader discourse on digital journalism and provides a foundation for future empirical research in diverse social and regional contexts.

News Consumption and Media Credibility

Bin Chen, Shuning Lu (2026) “In Punishment We Trust: Analyzing Characteristics and Credibility of Rumor-Debunking Messages on Chinese Social Media” The findings indicate that audiences view rumor- debunking communication with information about punishment as more believable. Communications from reputable and legitimate sources are more trusted than those from unofficial outlets. User’s belief and acceptance of debunking facts are greatly increased by clear proof, a stern tone, and accountability cues.

LilachAlonAnd et.al (2025) “Information practices and emotion regulation in wartime news consumption” the findings demonstrate the importance of institutional frameworks in guaranteeing justice and accountability in decision-making procedures. The analysis’s findings show that public trust in the legal system is enhanced by openness and adherence to established protocols. Additionally, the study concludes that stronger governance and compliance results from the efficient implementation of legal obligations.

Social Media and Youth News Consumption

Farias-Batlle, pedro Cordoba-Cabus, Alba and Gomez-Calderon, Bernardo (2024) in their study, “Young people and Social Network: News Consumption Habits and Credibility of the News’ found that young people have social networks as their main source of news, but do not trust the current affairs content they receive through them and do not regularly fast-check the news, it seems clear that their knowledge of the world around them will be very unsound, and the odds of being manipulated for ideological or commercial purposes will grow exponentially”.

Eric MsughterAondover, Emmanuel chukwuemekalgwe and Omolaraoluwabusayo Akin-odukoya, Muhammad Ridwan(2024) in their study, “Influence of Social Media on News Consumption and Credibility in Nigeria’ in Lagos State, reveals that there are lots of social media sites where you may get news. The five most popular social media sites for news consumption are TikTok, Facebook, instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp. However, they are the leading social media sites where false information is disseminated. Research indicates that people with lower levels of education and those who are younger are more vulnerable to misinformation on social media. The respondents are aware that there is a lot of false information on social media platforms; as a result, they attempt to weed out false information by checking the credibility of news sources, learning from the media about the dangers of misinformation, and obtaining information through verified accounts. These measures are effective substitutes for dealing with false and damaging content on social media platforms”.

Digital Media and News Habits

Nongmaithem, indira Devi (2024) in their study, ‘News Consumption Various Media among University Students in Mizoram’ her study has explored important insights into the dynamics of news consumption, especially with regard to the wide range of media sources and channels that people use, but the respondents showed limited knowledge and expertise of the various online and offline resources. It has illuminated the growing impact of digital media through the availability of social media platforms, and internet news access, in addition to more conventional media outlets like radio, television, and newspapers. To understand the changing relationship between people and the media in the rapidly changing digital age, support media literacy campaigns, and inform media study in this area is crucial.

Anna Orfanidou, Nikos panagiotou (2023) “Digital Natives: Media Literacy, News Consumption And Habits’ study found that Digital Natives think political factors have an impact on the news they hear, which raises concerns about its veracity and trustworthiness. Furthermore, we discovered that Digital Natives rely more on social media platforms than traditional media and utilize a wide range of gadgets to obtain information about their daily lives finally, superior addiction from media found to exist from mobile phones followed by media platforms, a fact that shows the tendency during the last decade”.

Youth and Digital News Media

Stuart Portman, and Anastasia Veneti (2022) in their study, “An investigation into the modern news consumption habits of students and their adoption of Twitter as a mainstream news outlet’ the results both reinforce and expand upon the body of empirical knowledge on the UGT in SM. Young people have developed a regular “surveillance” of news information through Twitter, centered around their frequent usage of mobile phones. The results of this study support the notion that, despite research suggesting a younger generation disinterested in media, news-seeking is still a major worry for this age group, even if it isn’t always done on purpose”.

Jorge Vazquez-Herreroand Maria-Cruz Negreira- Rey, Jose Sixto Garcia, (2022) in their study, “Mind the Gap! Journalism on Social Media and News Consumption Among Young Audiences’ this study has certain limitation, including the 23% response rate of social media managers and the idea of “getting information,” which, although essential to evaluating news habits, may differ across the respondents. Although the comparative analyses did not reveal significant differences, the imbalance in sample sizes and the selection of countries are also limitations that must be acknowledged”.

Jolie C. Matthews (2022) in her study “College Students’ Perspectives of bias in their news Consumption Habits’ Results from interviews with undergraduate students, findings show that while participants acknowledged they had personal bias to a degree, the majority still defined bias to an external issue imposed on them by others than as an internal issue shaping their thoughts about the sources they consumed some students attempted to mitigate any perceived bias they had by reading multiple or opposite perspectives than their own, while others believed it enough to be ‘aware’ of their bias and continue to consume news as they pleased. A few students didn’t check their bias at all some certain circumstances”.

FulufheloMakananise (2022) in his study “Youth Experience with News Media Consumption: Newsworthy Information in the Digital Age’ found that youths using several media platforms for news consumption. The

article has illustrated that, in the digital age, youths are still highly acquainted with how the mass media operate and function to fulfill their mandate of disseminating accurate, fair, and newsworthy news reports. It has further been established that digital media platforms, even though they remain the main disseminators of sensational news, conspiracy theories, and misinformation, are still considered the main sources of valuable news stories and information”.

Kakolisengupta, Dr. CP singh and Dr. Maithili Ganjoo (2021) in their study, “Understanding News Consumption Habits of Women’s In India’ found that women in India are not news averse. They are possibly potential consumption of political news. Most of the respondents in the present study also states social media as their favored platform for news consumption. In the study most respondents revealed discussing and sharing news events face to face, online or on social media which suggests that they possibly not just consume news but also engage with news and possibly contribute to discussions and opinion formation eliciting from news events”.

HazlizaHaron, Ahmad ZwawiGhazali, FazlanFahmePuzi (2021) in their study, “The Influence Of Technology, content, News Credibility and Brand Trust on Readers’ News Consumption Behavior’, the results reveal that a large majority of the respondents read online news rather than printed ones. Even more alarming is the finding that there is a small fraction of Malaysians who seldom or never read news at all. The results also show that technology, content, and brand trust are significant predictors of Malaysians’ news consumption whereas news credibility is not”.

Jacob L. Nelson (2020), in his study “Improve Trust, Increase Loyalty? Analyzing the Relationship Between News credibility and Consumption’ they found that more than half of South Korea’s audience is neutral when it comes to their news, neither trusting between how much people trust the news and how much of it they consume, we also find that this trust is not convenient across news platforms. In light of these results, we conclude that, when it comes to news audience behavior, more trust does lead to more loyalty; however, improving audience trust in one medium for news will not necessarily translate to more trust in-or support for-another”.

Sabine Geers(2020) in his study “News Consumption Across Media Platforms and Content: A Typology of Young News Users’ indicates that this study contributes to the digital divide literature by demonstrating that inequalities in news media usage related to education do not seem to apply to younger citizens. The results regarding the social background of special types of news users introduce an interesting new perspective into the digital device of a digital divide related to education level in relation to the use of online media”.

Sujin Choi, Jihoon Lim(2019) in their study, “Determinant and Consequence of Online News Authorship Verification: Blind News Consumption Creates Press Credibility’ in this study checking news authorship becomes increasingly important when countless news articles produced by numerous authors are distributed and where fake and low-quality news can prevail. However, authorship verification has rarely been examined systematically in either information verification literature or audience behavior literature. Given this circumstance, our findings may help advance scholarly understanding of the factors that explain news authorship verification and its consequences”.

Thomas Nygren, etal.(2019) in their study “Diversity and Credibility in young Peoples news feeds: A foundation for teaching and learning citizenship in a digital era” The findings indicate that young people primarily use digital media, particularly mobile devices, to consume news. Instead of relying solely on social media, the majority of student obtained news directly from reputable news websites. Hard news, such politics, social concerns, crime, and accidents, made up about two-thirds of the content in their feeds; soft news, like sports, entertainment, and lifestyle, was less prevalent. The content of social media platforms varied: Instagram and snap chat mostly provided entertainment and lifestyle news, while Facebook and Twitter displayed more hard news. With an average score of 6.8 out of 10, student gave news a generally good credibility rating; however, lifestyle and entertainment news were regarded as less credible than political or social news.

Research Gap:

Even though many studies have explored how people, especially young audiences, consume news and how much they trust the media, most of this research is based on global or urban settings. There is very little focus on

smaller districts like Vijayapura, where factors such as education, digital access, and cultural background may shape news habits differently. Also, earlier studies often look at news consumption and media credibility as separate areas, rather than understanding how they influence each other in real-life situations.

Moreover, while issues like fake news and misinformation are widely discussed, there is limited research on whether young people actually verify the information they receive and how this affects their trust in news sources. Youth from semi-urban and rural areas are often overlooked, even though their media exposure and awareness levels may vary significantly. This creates a need for a focused study on Vijayapura district to better understand how young people consume news and how they judge its credibility, which can also help in promoting media literacy and responsible news consumption.

CONCLUSION

The Review of literature assessment, young people now mostly obtain their news via social media and digital platforms. Although worries about false news, inaccuracy, and credibility persist, the majority of research shows that youthful audiences rely significantly on online media for news and information. The results also emphasize how crucial media literacy and fact-checking techniques are for young people in the internet age. Thus, the goal of this study is to comprehend how young people in the Vijayapura district consume news and how they see media reliability.

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