

ISSN electrónico: 2172-9077

DOI: 10.48047/fjc.28.02.17

INFORMATION VERIFICATION BEHAVIOR IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA: A STUDY OF NEWS MEDIA LITERACY AGAINST FALSE NEWS

Menglin Cai

Doctoral Candidate from Faculty of Communication and Media Studies,
Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, Malaysia, 40450
Email: menglinlina_cai@163.com

Mohd Sufean Hassan

Senior Lecturer from Faculty of Communication and Media Studies,
Universiti Teknologi MARA, Melaka, Malaysia, 78000
Email: mohdsufean@uitm.edu.my

Shifa Binti Faizal

Senior lecturer from Faculty of Communication and Media Studies,
Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, Malaysia, 40450
Email: shifa_ereena07@uitm.edu.my

Fecha de recepción de la reseña: 21 August 2024

Fecha de aceptación definitiva: 29 November 2024

Abstract

Due to the rapid advancements in technology and communication channels, media literacy is now a topic of debate in academics, politics, and the general public. Research suggests that the younger generations should be especially concerned because of the behaviours they are exhibiting as a result of their increasing integration of digital consumption into daily life. The importance of news literacy in the context of media literacy has increased due to the rise of false news. The dissemination of false information and the compromising of the truth by fake news may have a negative impact on society at large, especially on the younger, more susceptible generations. One of the main issues confronting digital journalism at the moment is this. The goal of this study is to compile vital data on the newest generation, referred to as Generation Z, including their use of social media, media and information consumption habits, and attitudes towards fake news in connection to dependability and trust. The paper gives elucidating exploratory examination a comfort test of 200 youthful Age Z understudies, matured 20 to 24. Using a changed survey, information was gathered. The outcomes show that while youngsters use organizations to get data, they additionally show an unexpected absence of confidence in interpersonal organizations as their fundamental media source. Be that as it may, there's an unmistakable doubt of legislators, the media, and writers. It is presumed that media education is even more critical than any other time in recent memory given the additional test of doubt. Perhaps now is the right time to reexamine media education.

Keywords: news media literacy; social media; news habits behavior; fake news.

1. INTRODUCTION

The news business as such, becomes less structured, with comparatively less independent screening, fact checking and editorial control as they shift from regular traditional media to websites, blog sites and social networks. The discovery of the “Fake news” in the 2016 US presidential election raised issues about news credibility and accuracy therefore, threatening journalism education and students’ confidence. This is that since information reaches the citizens through social media forums such as Facebook and Twitter, then democracy is in danger due to the misinformation that has reached the people. It can also be propagated and diffused at very scary rates, this is because fake news is nothing but real news that has been faked. A population has to understand what moral information inputs mean in a situation and accept that manipulative appeals are necessary for civilisation (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). Fake news has transformed the media into this direction of an almost unprecedented misinformation, attentive to real news stories. Although conventional editorial gatekeeping roles performed by professional journalists are being overwhelmed by ‘going viral’ of fake news and hoax. In this case, social media standards based on an algorithm that focuses on the amount of shares or the level of people’s engagement turned out to be perfectly suitable for fakes (Mihailidis & Viotty, 2017).

This is even so for the presently youthful generations like the generation Z who were born and raised in the digital world. The information they consume daily through traditional and social media, specifically, news shared through the Internet and social networks, is tens of thousands of times superior in quantity and often much different in quality (Pennycook & Rand, 2019). While digital literacy grants extensive opportunities to access the variety of content, it on the same time requires skills to evaluate the information’s honesty and its source. If one wants to have a successful democracy, then, promoting news literacy skills becomes a necessity (Johnson, 2014; Marchi, 2012). It is these skills which assist the person in understanding the real world and often manipulative world of the Internet which helps a person to distinguish between real and fake news.

The phenomenon of “fake news” is widely used in the public and academic contexts. It means the act of using wrong information with an aim of tricking others (Ferrara, Cresci, & Luceri, 2020). These include faked news whether in text, images or even sensational headlines which are usually in the Printed media, websites and social media platforms. The resulting effects are not simply personalised misinformation, they have detrimental effects on belief in media industries, social fragmentation and leading political/economic systems. Hence the need to identify and stop fake news for it makes society to be driven by misinformation and chaos when it is let to continue spreading all over.

Thus, this paper focuses on the existing enemy called fake news and looks into how media literacy can provide a solution to this problem. Media literacy empowers an individual with the skills that will enable him to analyze any piece of information, making it a useful remedy against the characteristic vices of the digital age. The study is more precisely concerned with the Generation Z, comparing their social media use and news consumption and perceived credibility across media platforms. Analyzing these factors will enable the research to give direction on how news media literacy will help equip the current generation with tools to search news information effectively. The presented conclusions point to the primary importance of developing extensive media literacy campaigns that respond to the existing threats linked to the use of digital and social media.

1.1 Characteristics of Fake News

1. Deception
2. Misleading Headlines
3. Manipulated Content

4. Lack of Verification
5. Emotional Appeal
6. Rapid Spread through Social Media

1.2 Bitter impact of Fake News

1. Misinformation
2. Undermining Trust
3. Social and Political Consequences
4. Economic Impacts

To effectively counteract the growth of false news, people, media organisations, and politicians must have a thorough understanding of its features and implications.

1.3. Media Literality as Antidote to Fake News

Through its ability to make individuals discerning information users, media literacy is valuable in the fight against fake news. The media literacy skills are especially relevant today, taking into consideration the speed of widespread of inaccurate and misleading information in the digital era.

Critical Thinking and Skepticism: Media literacy makes people question the information they receive, formulating the following questions:

Who created this information? Are they reliable sources?

What is their bias or agenda? Are they trying to convince or shaping me?

What proof is given for the assertions? Is it reliable and verifiable?

Has this information been verified by reliable sources?

People start being less likely to react to emotional appeals, sensational headlines, and misleading narratives by cultivating these critical thinking skills.

Source Evaluation: Media literacy creates individuals with the competence of evaluating the credibility of the information. This includes:

1. Identifying the type of source: Is it a news website, is it a personal blog, is it a social media post?
2. Checking the website's reputation: Is it known for accuracy and fact-checking?
3. Verifying the author's credentials: Are they specialists in the field they are talking about?
4. Looking for evidence of bias or agenda: How impartial is the source?
5. Through a proper assessment of the source, the people can make reasonable conclusions concerning the reliability of the information.

Fact-checking: With the way media literacy skills promote people to do their due diligence verifying information before sharing it. Undefined

1. Cross-referencing information with multiple sources: Correct sources. No less on two sources, possibly problematic.

2. Looking for independent verification: Verify whether accredited fact-checking writing organs have checked the materials.

3. Being cautious of emotionally charged language or sensational claims: Using orangesheer leaves to make meat white, using green chillies for sweetness, and combining tomato and apple juices to get a kind of a beverage signal misinformation. So by verifying the trueness of the facts, one can refrain from passing on false or misleading information oneself.

Understanding Media Bias and Propaganda Techniques: As a result, media literacy education allows one to comprehend the ways media tools can be used for the purposes of influencing opinions and manipulating behavior. Undefined

1. Different types of bias: All sorts of like confirmation bias, framing, loaded language etc.

2. Propaganda techniques: One should mention here emotional appeals, bandwagon effect, demonization, etc.
3. The role of algorithms and social media in shaping news feeds: How algorithms give rise to echo chambers and filter bubbles.
4. They may deliberate, where it is concerned, about what they consume, better understand the impact they have, by learning these ways.

Media literacy ensures that people are empowered to be active viewers and readers instead of passively receiving information. All in all, this her type of knowledge equipped children with skills to critically assess the information, distinguish from false one; and make right choices basing on the information in an information society.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholarly literature over the past years has widely examined the link between media literacy and the circulation of fake news. Other authors including Barger and Labrecque (2013) examined the place of metrics in social media within the fold of integrated marketing communication. Their work shows why it is difficult to measure the outcomes of digital content production emphasizing the goals of reaching audiences and sharing information. Casero-Ripolles (2020) studied general “Impact of COVID-19 on the Media System” and pointed out that, international crises enhance the miscommunication. According to their work, there is higher use of online news during the pandemic with important consequences for democratic talk and political messaging. Cinelli et al. (2020) also investigated the “COVID-19 Social Media Infodemic,” understanding how the dissemination of fake news progresses at a very fast pace regarding the usage of social media including Facebook and Twitter. And using quantitative data, they proved how misleading information can deepen social problems such as pandemics by skewing peoples’ views and actions.

Castillo-Abdul, Bonilla-del-Río and Núñez-Barriopedro (2021) identified four types of branded content dependent on how consumers engage with named social media platforms. The study that they conducted uses the marketing communications efforts of the luxury fashion brand – Manolo Blahnik – to demonstrate how mis-information can distort consumer understanding and reliance on those marketing messages. This draws out the general effects of fake news with regard to advertising and consumer behaviour. Hernandez’s article titled “Communication and Education in a Digital Connected World” García-Ruiz and Pérez-Escoda (2020) focused on the interaction of digital communication and education. They stressed that their discovery highlights the need to teach people to work with new media as modern media environments are highly sophisticated. Likewise, in UNESCO Handbook, Ireton and Posetti (2018) investigated journalism and disinformation in their study as part of the solution to fake news. Misinformation is not limited to traditional news settings All these implicative further that the issue of misinformation goes beyond traditional news settings, Voorveld et al. (2018) explored attention to social media advertisements, stating that platform-level factors – including the structure and activities of the particular site – are highly influential concerning credibility impressions. This is in line with the Lewandowsky et al. (2012), study that was undertaken on Misinformation and Its Correction. Their study also proved the longevity of effects of misstatements on public opinion despite efforts to rectify such information. According to the study by Tasnim, Hossain and Mazumder (2020), the current independent variable discussion discusses the effects of rumours and misinformation during the COVID 19 pandemic, as well as how social media elevates fake news. In their research, they highly recommended that appropriate measures of verification processes, and raising public awareness should be implemented in order to counterbalance the impacts of fake news. Nielsen et al. (2020) moved further

in studying the “Infodemic” concept, more specifically, understanding how people follow and assess news during a crisis. They establish that media trusting was generally high but varies considerably across media outlets, calling for more media literacy among consumers.

Lim and Tan (2020) centred on engaging young people for media literacy advocates in the titled research study, ‘Front Liners Fighting Fake News’. The youth’s work explore possibilities of combating fake news through students and youths educating fellow youths, friends, and other community members. This is in line with the study by Tandoc Jr (2019) wherein the author was able to present an analysis of fake news studies hence pointing out the trends and missing areas in the literature. Further, the shift in the algorithm function in influencing the news consumption has been capturing lively attention lately. For example, Pérez-Escoda, Aguaded and José Rodríguez-Conde (2016) discuss the effects of digital competencies on education and stressed the importance of teaching algorithms and resulting bias in curricula. This is supported by the findings by Barger and Labrecque (2013) who pointed out the correlation between the obtained values of the social media indicators and the actions of users of the media. As the prior research shows the nature and impact of fake news are complex and have multiple layers in society. All these studies offer useful know-how on the various difficulties and possibilities of the modern informational environment, ranging from the nature of misleading during crises to the significance of media competence in individuals. Since fake news is a dynamic and emerging issue more empirical studies should be conducted on how to address fake news and improve citizens’ critical thinking and information checking skills.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1 Study Design: Variables of Study and Instrument

The study used a quantitative, exploratory, and descriptive technique, using a tool modified from the 2020 studies Media Use in the European Union and Digital News Report.es. The study variables were gathered by the questionnaire, which was developed using three research constructs and earlier research by Coudry, Livingstone, and Markha. The Google Forms application was used to gather data:

1. Media consumption,
2. Consumption of social networks, and
3. Disinformation and fake news.

The final questionnaire was the result of a twofold process:

1. Initially, the group created a modified questionnaire with four distinct blocks:
 - 1.1 Sociodemographic variables,
 - 1.2 Variables related to media consumption,
 - 1.3 Variables related to social network consumption, and
 - 1.4 Variables related to disinformation and fake news; and
2. Secondly, in an effort to find internal coherence and clarity for the examined notions, it was submitted to a panel of experts for validation.

The research used a Google Forms-distributed questionnaire with 81 questions arranged into categories and permission from each participant. The variables were categorical and qualitative, separated into nominal and ordinal categories. Using SPSS version 24, a descriptive statistical analysis based on frequencies and percentages was carried out.

3.2 Sample

200 undergraduate students from throughout the nation participated in the research; they were chosen

using the non-probabilistic snowball sampling method. With 40% of the sample being male and 60% being female, the sample was mostly made up of men. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which prevented researchers from travelling and caused students to attend classes from home, the non-probabilistic snowball approach was selected as a means of reaching Generation Z. From November 2022 until February 2023, data were gathered. Since the research was observational and descriptive, there was little chance of sampling error or drawing conclusions. Nonetheless, measures were used to ensure the calibre of the descriptive study design. Since no sampling mistake could be identified and no conclusions could be drawn, the study’s design was adequate. Based on information gathered between November 2022 and February 2023, the study’s conclusions.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The outcomes will now be analysed to address the three distinct study components and research aims. It is significant to highlight that just a portion of the findings were examined because of the volume of information collected from the 81 items. The information appropriation, implies, standard deduction, frequencies, boxplots, and crosstabs are used to show the distinct examination discoveries in the spellbinding exploratory examination.

4.1 Media and Information Consumption

The discoveries for the principal research develop, “media and data utilization,” which compares to 29 things and four unmistakable factors in our review, are somewhat displayed with V1 and V2. The accompanying tables show that the factors were subjective, downright, ordinal, and scaled utilizing a Likert scale. The associated Table displays the V1 results: “I typically obtain information from,” offering eight options for media: radio, internet radio, newspapers, digital newspapers, TV, online television, websites, and social media (Table 1 and Figure 1).

Table 1: Basic Data that Generation Z Typically Consumes to be Informed.

Media Source	Mean	DT	Never	A Little	Occasionally	Frequently	Always	N
Radio	1.82	0.988	60.6	45.4	11.4	4.8	2	200
Online radio	1.69	0.966	72.6	34.9	11.4	5.3	1.3	200
Press	1.88	0.987	57.9	44.4	25.8	5.8	1.6	200
Digital press	3.53	1.194	5.8	25.6	43.7	41.5	28.8	200
TV	3.6	1.256	6.7	25.6	36.8	43.7	32.7	200
Online TV	2.3	1.34	48.3	34.4	32.7	8.9	7.2	200
Web pages	3.73	1.15	4.8	8.7	38.8	49	31.9	200
Social networks	4.36	1.872	2.8	5.3	24.8	38.8	63.8	200

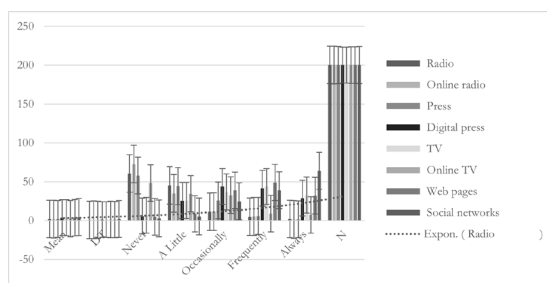


Figure 1: Basic Data that Generation Z Typically Consumes to be Informed.

According to the report, Generation Z has distinct media consumption habits, with radio being the most popular channel for information avoidance. The most popular media was internet radio, which was followed by online TV and the newspaper. Websites and social media were the next most often used media, behind digital press. The only conventional media that young audiences utilised was TV. The first variable was also shown to be in opposition to the credibility of the media that people relied on for information. The research emphasises the need of developing more efficient media consumption techniques to maintain students' awareness and interest (Table 2 and Figure 2).

Table 2: Fundamental Data on how Generation Z perceives Dependability in Media. Personal Clarification.

Medium	Mean	SD	Never	A Little	Occasionally	Frequently	Always	N
Radio	3.57	0.934	2	23.2	43.5	59.4	7.2	200
Online radio	3.37	0.887	1.6	62.3	52.3	48.8	3.6	200
Press	3.68	0.988	2	22	39.5	58.2	23.6	200
Digital press	3.46	0.979	1.3	26	48.3	48	8.7	200
TV	3.39	0.887	3.3	28.8	42.2	48.8	9.2	200
Online TV	3.15	0.853	4.8	34.6	49.6	39.10	5.3	200
Web pages	2.77	0.941	4.8	52.5	49.8	24.6	2.8	200
Social networks	2.52	0.973	12.9	58.3	42.2	9.2	2.8	200

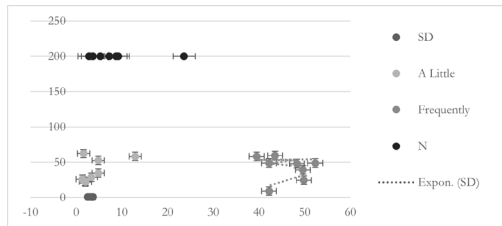


Figure 2: Fundamental Data on how Generation Z Perceives Dependability in Media. Personal Clarification.

According to the survey, media outlets that Generation Z favored—such as newspapers and radio—were seen as less trustworthy. These media were seen as often or always dependable by more than half of the sample, with TV, digital press, online radio, and online TV coming in second and third. On the other hand, it was discovered that social networks and websites had lower dependability ratings. Despite being the sources of information that people utilise the most, just 16.3% and 10.9% of the sample thought these sources to be trustworthy. The outcomes are unexpected given that these media were the most popular sources of information (Figure 3).

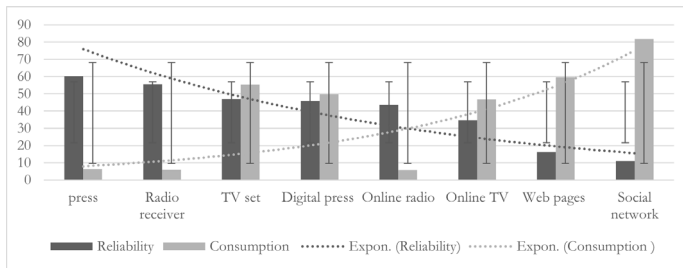


Figure 3: Media Consumption and Media Dependability Graphic Distribution.

According to the survey, people see less-consumed media—like newspapers, radio, and internet radio—as the most trustworthy, while they view more-consumed media—like websites and social media—as the least trustworthy. The sample was questioned about the information they liked to help analyse media usage. The last variable in the first construct concerned the kind of information that people had been consuming more of since the start of the COVID-19 epidemic. The outcome is shown in Table 3 and Figure 4.

Table 3: Fundamental Data on the Kind of Information Most Consumed Since COVID-19.

Category	Mean	DT	Never	A Little	Occasionally	Frequently	Always	N
Healthcare	3.54	1.273	5.5	20.5	38.4	37.5	33.5	200
Alternative medicine	2.56	1.274	22.7	49.7	20.8	24.6	7.7	200
Politics	4.18	1.127	3.3	6.5	29	31.2	55.2	200
Entertainment and Culture	3.26	1.335	8.8	38	35.9	33.7	28.8	200
Food and care	2.97	1.245	23.5	38	37.8	36.8	7.7	200
Sports	2.99	1.332	26	36.5	38.6	32.6	11.9	200
Sexuality and privacy	3.3	1.176	39.6	49.9	31.6	9.2	4.8	200
Humor	4.98	1.295	5.5	12.3	16.3	32.6	48.7	200

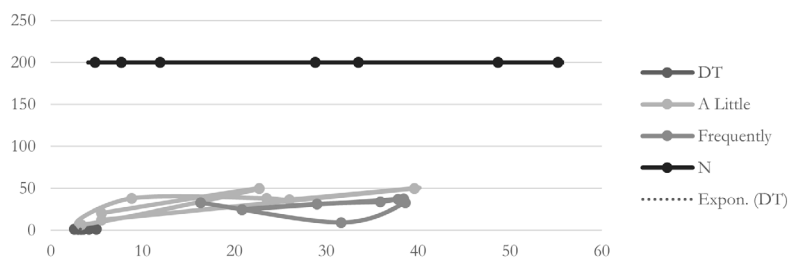


Figure 4: Fundamental Data on the Kind of Information Most Consumed Since COVID-19.

According to the survey, humour and politics were the most popular subjects to discuss. Of the sample, 65.9% regularly and always ingested humour (48.7%) and politics (55.2%).

4.2. Misinformation and Fake News

Table 4: Basic Data for the Variable: Which Material do You Think is most Closely Associated with False News?

Domain	Mean DT	Never	A Little	Occasionally	Frequently	Always
Academic	2.45	0.978	22.2	68	32.2	9.7
Politics	4.29	0.934	1	3	31.7	46.2
Humor and Gossip	3.78	1.18	3.8	24.6	32.2	47.2
Health and Diet	4	1.218	8.9	38.9	42.8	33.2
Fashion	2.24	0.969	31.2	66.6	28	6.8
Sports	2.55	0.864	23	58.2	35.9	21.2
Entertainment	2.38	0.844	28.4	58.4	32.2	8.9
Videogames and Tech	2.24	0.948	32.2	62.5	20.9	6.8

The discoveries in our concentrate’s third develop — deception and bogus news — compare with four particular factors and 29 things. The separation and gathering of sham news were the principal results examined. The research examined the consumption of social media material from the start of

COVID-19, with an emphasis on the media outlets that were believed to be disseminating more false news and the information that was seen to be more linked to it. The findings indicated that although academic material did contribute to the dissemination of false news, sports, entertainment, beauty and fashion, video games, and gamers did so more than other categories. The greatest averages were seen in political material, humour, and gossip.

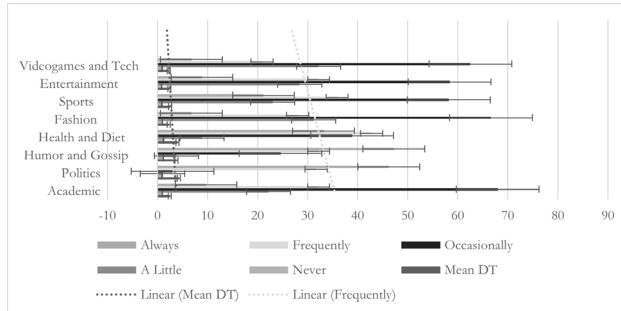


Figure 5: Basic Data for the Variable: Which Material do You Think is most Closely Associated with False News?

The findings aligned with the reliability and mistrust perceptions examined in the study's first construct, as seen in Table 4 and Fig 5. It is noteworthy that the Facebook and Tik Tok findings were not statistically significant since our sample did not use them and the data had previously been analysed. At this point, the next item examined the emotions connected to bogus news.

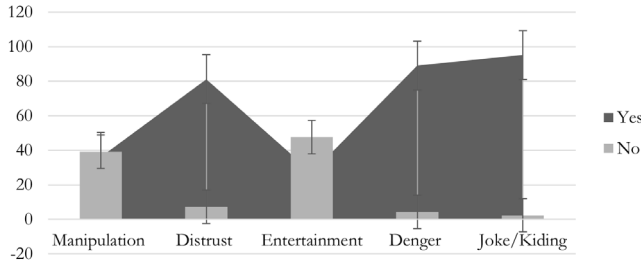


Figure 6: What Emotions are Connected to False News in Your Mind?

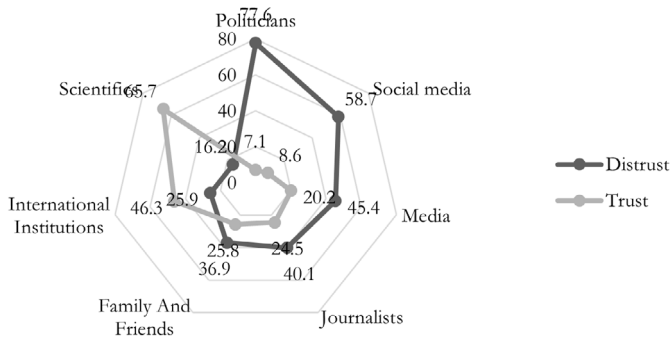


Figure 7: Percentages of People who Feel Distrustful or Trusting of Social Agents.

According to a survey, 81.2% of people link risk with manipulation, 89% with mistrust, and 95.2 out of 10 with disinformation. Since social media became a credible source of information, fact-checking has become more important as a strategy for combating misinformation and false news (Fig 6). But just 20.9% of the sample understood the definition of a fact-checker, and only 38.8% understood what one was. The most popular fact-checking websites were Maldita.es, Efe Verifica, and Newtral. Young people have mistrust for politicians, with 44.4% and 57.7% of them mistrusting media and social media, respectively. Just 19.2% of youth said they trusted journalists. The most trusted institutions were those in science and foreign relations, with 64.7% and 45.3%, respectively (Fig 7).

5. Discussion

This paper discusses important considerations for media consumers and scholars based on the research questions of this study, as detailed below. This research highlights the use of social media in the gathering of information, however; there is high distrust in social media as a reliable source of news. This then leads to the second type of media literacy pitting the two separate and distinct modes of media literacy that are needed to address the qualitatively different nature of the media landscape of the digital age. One of the study's major findings is that many people turn to the social networks daily for the news and at the same time, many people do not trust the information that the social networks promote (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017; Thorson, 2016). That is, whereas today's generation Z often turn to social media to get information, only a small portion of them trust the information from this social media. This probably have arisen from cases of fake news and where some of the users have poor understanding of which source is credible enough (Shu et al., 2017; Vosoughi, Roy, & Aral, 2018). Consequently, the paper underscores the importance of educational training in critical evaluation skills, by which young users might understand prejudices, test facts, and make relevant distinctiveness about the reliability of information they come across in cyberspace.

However, through research the authors show that consumers' trust in traditional media like newspapers and radio has decreased but that has not affected their perceived credibility of such media. This trend indicates the fact that although new social media platforms continue to offer easier and more convenient access to information, people still believe the traditional media sources they visit have better standards of journalism with more proper editorial check. Such insights force one to adopt the best practices in traditional media into digital journalism to reign in fake news and enhance the credibility of online journalism (Guess, Nyhan, & Reifler, 2018; Lazer et al., 2018). This discussion also highlights the social consequences of fake news including the promotion and perpetration of polarization, the disruption of democratic mechanisms and the erosion of institution credibility. This study found that political content is amongst the most often linked with fake news, establishing how the sharing of such misinformation could significantly advance political biases and sway elections. The present study supports this view, as well as studies by Tandoc Jr, Lim and Ling (2018) on the critical need to combat the spate of fake news in politics. In addition, this study establishes the emotional and deem psychology of fake news by which they can manipulate their audiences. People often linked misinformation with such emotions as mistrust, frustration or disillusionment over time. These emotional responses underscore the necessity of building resistance among information customers for improving the role of media literacy programs to focus on EI together with logical thinking. Because the programs can assist users to deal with their emotional response to whatever fake news they come across, such programs are useful in minimising the ramifications of fake news on society (Zollo et al., 2017).

Another important factor regarding the consumption and dissemination of news analyzed in the study was algorithms and social media design. Hearing only what one wants to hear, thanks to

algorithmically-driven filtering, makes it even more likely to be misled by a biased or fake news source. This finding calls for making the mechanisms of how content is selected for people by algorithms more transparent and for providing users with ways to actively manage their feed heterogeneity. Thus, the study provides the evidence that requires developing an extensive scheme of media literacy addressed to the peculiarities of the digital environment. Such initiatives should further not only provide individuals with the requisite technical skills on how to critically assess information as fake or authentic but necessarily, should also sensitize the societal, political as well as the psychological aspects of fake news. With these tools in the hand of Generation Z and other digital native, society is one step towards a society with a better informed and capable citizen that can deal with the informational environment of the current society.

6. CONCLUSION

The relevance of news media literacy in combating fake news is highlighted by research on information verification behaviour in the social media age. As social media channels proliferate, people need to assess news critically and confirm its veracity. This ability is essential for promoting informed citizenry and reducing the detrimental impacts of misleading information on public debate and decision-making. The research emphasises the need of all-encompassing media literacy programmes that extend beyond conventional classroom settings and include social and digital media literacy elements. This study adds to the current conversation about media literacy and lays the groundwork for future initiatives to counter false information in the social media era.

6.1 Future Directions

This research targeted students pursuing their undergraduate studies, and within the ages of twenty years and twenty-four. While it opens up important avenues for future study, the current research could include a more diverse samples including other age groups and people of other cultures to give a rich understanding of the construct of media literacy and the behavioral responses to fake news. Using a longitudinal design could indeed assist in capturing first, how patterns of media use and trust and critical evaluate skills change over time second, as digital technologies change over time and third as media literacy programmes are rolled out. Future research is required to accurately determine the role of the algorithms in social media and their function to support filter bubbles as well as the efficiency of application that can examine and disturb them. Subsequent research should evaluate the efficacy of particular kinds of media literacy interventions in relation to fake news. Effectiveness may involve such designs as having participants take tests that assess their critical thinking abilities in using information before the interventions. To some extent, comparative analysis of students' perceptions of fake news in different countries might help to understand similarities and differences across cultures as well as compare the effectiveness of region-specific media literacy interventions. Research extending down to stress, anxiety or erosion of trust resulting from fake news exposure may be useful in developing materials in education programs that teach users how to cope with fake news.

6.2 Limitations

Non-Probabilistic Sampling: The study relied on a non-probabilistic snowball sampling method, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research should consider probabilistic sampling techniques to ensure a more representative sample.

Self-Reported Data: As the study's findings are based on self-reported data, there is a risk of response bias, where participants may overestimate or underestimate their behaviors and attitudes.

Incorporating observational methods or behavioral data could enhance accuracy.

Limited Geographic Scope: The study primarily focused on participants from one country, potentially overlooking regional differences in media consumption habits and attitudes toward fake news.

Dynamic Nature of Social Media: The rapidly evolving nature of social media platforms poses a challenge in keeping findings relevant over time. Future research should account for platform-specific changes and emerging technologies.

Complexity of Fake News: Fake news is a multifaceted issue influenced by various factors, including political, social, and economic contexts. The study's scope was limited in addressing these complexities comprehensively.

REFERENCES

- Allcott, H., & Gentzkow, M. (2017). Social Media and Fake News in the 2016 Election. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 31(2), 211-236. <https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.31.2.211>
- Barger, V. A., & Labrecque, L. I. (2013). An Integrated Marketing Communications Perspective on Social Media Metrics. *International Journal of Integrated Marketing Communications*, 5(1). <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2280132>
- Casero-Ripolles, A. (2020). Impact of Covid-19 on the media system. Communicative and democratic consequences of news consumption during the outbreak. *Profesional de la información*, 29(2), e290223. <https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2020.mar.23>
- Castillo-Abdul, B., Bonilla-del-Río, M., & Núñez-Barriopedro, E. (2021). Influence and Relationship between Branded Content and the Social Media Consumer Interactions of the Luxury Fashion Brand Manolo Blahnik. *Publications*, 9(1), 10. <https://doi.org/10.3390/publications9010010>
- Cinelli, M., Quattrociocchi, W., Galeazzi, A., Valensise, C. M., Brugnoli, E., Schmidt, A. L., et al. (2020). The COVID-19 Social Media Infodemic. *Scientific Reports*, 10(1), 16598. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-020-73510-5>
- Ferrara, E., Cresci, S., & Luceri, L. (2020). Misinformation, manipulation, and abuse on social media in the era of COVID-19. *Journal of Computational Social Science*, 3(2), 271-277. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42001-020-00094-5>
- García-Ruiz, R., & Pérez-Escoda, A. (2020). Communication and Education in a Digital Connected World. *ICONO Journal 14. Scientific Journal of Communication and Emerging Technologies*, 18(2), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.7195/ri14.v18i2.1580>
- Guess, A., Nyhan, B., & Reifler, J. (2018). Selective Exposure to Misinformation: Evidence from the Consumption of Fake News During the 2016 US Presidential Campaign. *European Research Council*, 9(3), 4. <https://csdp.princeton.edu/publications/selective-exposure-misinformation-evidence-consumption-fake-news-during-2016-us>
- Ireton, C., & Posetti, J. (2018). *Journalism, Fake News & Disinformation: Handbook for Journalism Education and Training*. UNESCO Publishing. <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/journalism-fake-news-disinformation>
- Johnson, T. P. (2014). Snowball Sampling: Introduction. In N. Balakrishnan, T. Colton, B. Everitt, W. Piegorisch, F. Ruggeri, & J. L. Teugels (Eds.), *Wiley StatsRef: Statistics Reference Online*. John Wiley & Sons. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118445112.stat05720>
- Lazer, D. M. J., Baum, M. A., Benkler, Y., Berinsky, A. J., Greenhill, K. M., Menczer, F., et al. (2018). The Science of Fake News. *Science*, 359(6380), 1094-1096. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aao2998>
- Lewandowsky, S., Ecker, U. K. H., Seifert, C. M., Schwarz, N., & Cook, J. (2012). Misinformation and Its Correction: Continued Influence and Successful Debiasing. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 13(3), 106-131. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1529100612451018>
- Lim, S. S., & Tan, K. R. (2020). Front liners fighting fake news: global perspectives on mobilising young people as media literacy advocates. *Journal of Children and Media*, 14(4), 529-535. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17482798.2020.1827817>
- Marchi, R. (2012). With Facebook, Blogs, and Fake News, Teens Reject Journalistic "Objectivity". *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 36(3), 246-262. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0196859912458700>
- Mihailidis, P., & Viotty, S. (2017). Spreadable Spectacle in Digital Culture: Civic Expression, Fake News, and the Role of Media Literacies in "Post-Fact" Society. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 61(4), 441-454. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764217701217>
- Nielsen, R. K., Fletcher, R., Newman, N., Brennan, J. S., & Howard, P. N. (2020, April 15). *Navigating the Infodemic: How People in Six Countries Access and Rate News and Information About Coronavirus*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/infodemic-how-people-six-countries-access-and-rate-news-and-information-about-coronavirus>
- Pennycook, G., & Rand, D. G. (2019). Fighting misinformation on social media using crowdsourced judgments of news source quality. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 116(7), 2521-2526. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1806781116>
- Pérez-Escoda, A., Aguaded, I., & José Rodríguez-Conde, M. (2016). Digital Generation vs. Analogic School. Digital Skills in the Compulsory Education Curriculum. *Digital Education Review*, 30, 165-183. <https://doi.org/10.1344/der.2016.30.165-183>

- Shu, K., Sliva, A., Wang, S., Tang, J., & Liu, H. (2017). Fake News Detection on Social Media: A Data Mining Perspective. *ACM SIGKDD Explorations Newsletter*, 19(1), 22-36. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3137597.3137600>
- Tandoc Jr, E. C. (2019). The Facts of Fake News: A Research Review. *Sociology Compass*, 13(9), e12724. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12724>
- Tandoc Jr, E. C., Lim, Z. W., & Ling, R. (2018). Defining “Fake News”. *Digital Journalism*, 6(2), 137-153. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2017.1360143>
- Tasnim, S., Hossain, M. M., & Mazumder, H. (2020). Impact of Rumors and Misinformation on COVID-19 in Social Media. *Journal of Preventive Medicine and Public Health*, 53(3), 171-174. <https://doi.org/10.3961/jpmph.20.094>
- Thorson, E. (2016). Belief Echoes: The Persistent Effects of Corrected Misinformation. *Political Communication*, 33(3), 460-480. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2015.1102187>
- Voorveld, H. A. M., van Noort, G., Muntinga, D. G., & Bronner, F. (2018). Engagement with Social Media and Social Media Advertising: The Differentiating Role of Platform Type. *Journal of Advertising*, 47(1), 38-54. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2017.1405754>
- Vosoughi, S., Roy, D., & Aral, S. (2018). The spread of true and false news online. *Science*, 359(6380), 1146-1151. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aap9559>
- Wardle, C., & Derakhshan, H. (2017). *Information Disorder: Toward an Interdisciplinary Framework for Research and Policymaking*. Council of Europe Strasbourg. <https://edoc.coe.int/en/media/7495-information-disorder-toward-an-interdisciplinary-framework-for-research-and-policy-making.html>
- Zollo, F., Bessi, A., Del Vicario, M., Scala, A., Caldarelli, G., Shekhtman, L., et al. (2017). Debunking in a World of Tribes. *PLoS One*, 12(7), e0181821. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0181821>