



Social Media vs. Traditional Newspapers, a Study on College Students in the Digital Age

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ABSTRACT:

This research project investigates the shifting landscape of news consumption among college students in Bangalore, focusing on the rising prominence of social media as an alternative to traditional newspaper reading. Through a survey of 120 individuals across pre-university, undergraduate, and post-graduate levels, the study explores the benefits, challenges, and implications of this transition.

Key findings reveal the accessibility, customization, and interactivity offered by social media platforms, alongside concerns regarding credibility, information overload, and filter bubbles. The research underscores the educational value of leveraging social media for learning and critical thinking skills development, while advocating for media literacy and responsible online engagement.

Keywords: Social media, traditional newspapers, news consumption, college students

I. Introduction:

In the contemporary digital era, the landscape of information consumption is undergoing a profound transformation. As society progresses into the fast-paced realms of the digital age, the traditional avenues for accessing news and information are evolving at an unprecedented pace. Among the most notable shifts is the increasing reliance of college students on social media platforms as primary sources of news and information. In this dynamic environment, understanding the nuances of this transition becomes imperative to comprehend the evolving media habits and consumption patterns of young individuals.

This study aims to delve into the intricate interplay between traditional newspaper reading and the burgeoning influence of social media platforms among college students in Bangalore. Located in the heart of India's Silicon Valley, Bangalore serves as a microcosm of the broader digital landscape, providing a fertile ground for exploring the multifaceted dimensions of news consumption in the digital age.

By examining the role of social media as a substitute for traditional newspaper reading, this research seeks to unravel the underlying motivations, preferences, and behaviors shaping the information consumption habits of college students. Through a comprehensive analysis of the benefits, challenges, and implications associated with this transition, the study endeavors to illuminate the intricate dynamics at play in navigating the digital age. At the forefront of this exploration lies the accessibility and convenience afforded by social media platforms, enabling instantaneous access to a diverse array of news content at the fingertips of users. Moreover, the customizable nature of social media feeds empowers individuals to tailor their news consumption experience according to their unique interests and preferences, ushering in an era of personalized information dissemination.

However, amidst the allure of accessibility and customization, concerns loom regarding the credibility and trustworthiness of news shared on social media platforms. As misinformation and fake news proliferate across digital spaces, navigating the vast expanse of information becomes a daunting task, necessitating a critical evaluation of sources and content.

Furthermore, the phenomenon of information overload exacerbates the challenges posed by the digital deluge, compelling individuals to grapple with the sheer volume of news and the potential sources of misinformation. Additionally, the emergence of filter bubbles and echo chambers within social media ecosystems raises concerns about the algorithmic curation of content, which may limit exposure to diverse perspectives and foster ideological polarization.

Amidst these challenges, the study underscores the educational value of leveraging social media as a learning tool for staying informed and engaging with current events. By cultivating critical thinking skills and promoting media literacy, educators and students can collaboratively navigate the digital landscape, harnessing the power of social media as a valuable resource for fostering informed citizenship and civic engagement.

In essence, this research endeavors to unravel the complexities of news consumption habits among college students in Bangalore, shedding light on the transformative potential of social media in shaping the media landscape of the digital age. Through a nuanced understanding of the benefits, challenges,

and implications of this transition, stakeholders can chart a course towards a more informed, connected, and engaged society in the ever-evolving realm of digital media

II. Review of Literature:

Ajit Jain et al. The study compares Traditional Media and Social Media Marketing's impact on brand image perception. It explores new platforms to reach consumers and reasons for following brands on social media. Conducted on Indian millennials and Gen Z, it suggests social media marketing is more effective in communicating brand image, reflecting young consumers' preference for brands with strong social media presence [Ajit Jain, 2021]

Moscowitz et al. In 2021, NFL player Carl Nassib came out as the first openly gay, active professional football player. This study analyzes news coverage of Nassib's announcement using content analysis of newspaper articles (n = 195) and tweets (n = 5,588). It compares media frames between traditional media and social media, finding overall support for Nassib. Both platforms framed it as a significant moment, but social media had more personal attacks. The study discusses implications for media coverage of LGBT athletes. [Moscowitz, 2023]

Asif et al. The study examines how social media and traditional media prioritize topics for coverage. Using content analysis of Facebook posts and newspaper articles in Pakistan, the research compares topic selection. Chi-square tests were employed to analyze the differences. Findings indicate that social media prioritizes grassroots issues, while traditional media focuses more on political topics. [Asif, 2023]

Banerjee et al. This paper examines the changing media landscape, where social media supplements traditional media. It explores the shift from Customer Relationship Management to Partner Relationship Management. While traditional media like TV, newspapers, and magazines were once the main marketing tools, social media's emergence has reshaped communication strategies. The study focuses on the FMCG sector in India and compares the effectiveness of traditional media and social media in marketing communications [Banerjee, 2015]

Heijkant et al. Compares how sociopolitical issues are framed in newspaper articles and social media posts. Based on content analysis of 414 newspaper articles and 2,771 social media messages regarding the retirement age issue in the Netherlands, findings reveal similarities and differences in framing. Both media types emphasize problems over solutions, but traditional media focus more on conflict-related frames while social media offer greater frame diversity in solutions." [Heijkant, 2023]

Chipidza et al. Objective: Analyze early COVID-19 coverage in newspapers, TV, and social media. Methods: Used Latent Dirichlet Allocation to study 3271 newspaper articles, 40 cable news transcripts, 96,000 tweets, and 1000 Reddit posts from March 4-12, 2020. Results: Coverage focused on epidemic, politics, and economy, with limited health-related topics and misinformation in social media. Conclusions: Public health should use communication specialists for engaging content, anticipate and prevent spread of myths, and control misinformation in early pandemic stages. [Chipidza, 2022]

JPDC et al. The study examines how two major English dailies in Pakistan, The Dawn and The News International, covered the Baluchistan conflict using Human Rights Journalism (HRJ). It analyzes the portrayal of victims and conflict conditions, highlighting challenges such as sensationalism and neglecting victims in media coverage. [JPDC Vol-01 Issue-01 January-June 2017]

M M Kobiruzzaman et al. The paper discusses how social media affects traditional media, especially printed newspapers, noting positive impacts like knowledge sharing and negative effects such as cyberbullying and fake news dissemination. It analyzes how social media has led to declining newspaper circulation and closures, using Utusan Malaysia's closure as an example. The paper concludes with suggestions to help printed newspapers in Malaysia adapt to the digital age [M M Kobiruzzaman, 2022]

III. Methodology:

1. Objective:

To analyze the rising prominence of social media as an alternative to traditional newspaper in Bangalore among University Students

2. Hypothesis:

H0- There is no significant difference sighted in the usage of social media over traditional newspapers

H1- There is a significance gazed in the utilization of social media as an alternative to traditional newspaper

3. Variables:

Dependent Variable- Newspapers, social media

Independent Variable- News, content

Extraneous Variable- Third gender

4. Criteria:

Inclusion- Gender [Male/Female], Pre-University Students, Graduate Students, and Post-Graduate Students

Exclusion- Socio-Cultural Status

5. Sample:

Sample Size- 150 Individuals

Sample Technique- Haphazard sampling technique

6. Tools of Study:

Self-gauged Questionnaire

7. Administration:

Introduction and Explanation.

Informed Consent and Instructions.

Scoring and time frame and providing the form.

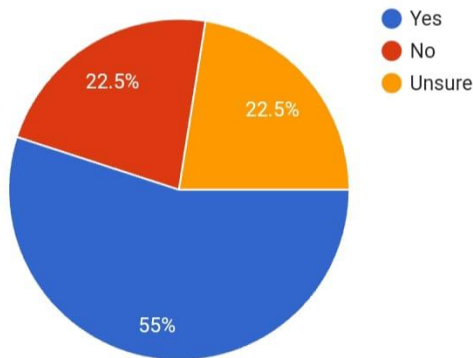
Answering the items and Answer Clarification.

Completion and Collection

Tabl

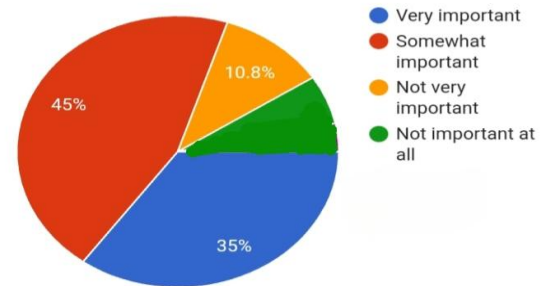
9. Do you believe that social media platforms play a role in enhancing your educational knowledge and awareness of current events?

120 responses



10. In your opinion, how significant is the impact of critical thinking skills when engaging with news on social media platforms?

120 responses



IV. Results and Conclusions:

Results:

1. Traditional Newspaper Use: Daily readership - 39.2%, several times a week - 22.5%, once a week - 20.8%, rarely or never - 17.5%.
2. Preference for Traditional Newspapers: Trust in content accuracy - 45.8%, established reading habit - 41.7%, enjoyment of physical newspaper experience - 12.5%.
3. Dependence on Social Media for News: Rarely (1) - 25%, occasionally (2) - 26.7%, moderately (3) - 20.8%, often (4) - 10.8%, very often (5) - 16.7%.
4. Features of Social Media Platforms: Immediate news access - 38.3%, customizability of news feed - 25%, interactivity and engagement - 17.5%, all of the above - 19.2%.
5. Accessibility and Convenience of Social Media: Yes - 50%, No - 21.7%, Unsure - 28.3%.
6. Personalization of News Feed: Extremely important - 36.7%, moderately important - 28.3%, slightly important - 23.3%, not important at all - 11.7%.
7. Trust in News Credibility on Social Media: Very confident - 27.5%, somewhat confident - 42.5%, not very confident - 20%, not at all confident - 10%.
8. Encounter with False Information: Yes - 47.5%, No - 30.8%, Not sure - 21.7%.
9. Educational Impact of Social Media: Yes - 55%, No - 22.5%, Unsure - 22.5%.
10. Importance of Critical Thinking Skills: Very important - 35%, somewhat important - 45%, not very important - 10.8%, not important at all - 1.5%.
11. Discerning Credible Sources: Fact-checking tools - 44.2%, cross-referencing multiple sources - 48.3%, relying on established news outlets - 7.5%

Discussions:

The results indicate a diverse pattern of news consumption among college students, with a significant portion relying on traditional newspapers for daily updates. Trust in content accuracy and established reading habits are primary factors driving this preference. However, social media platforms also play a crucial role in news consumption, offering immediate access and customizability of news feed. While half of the respondents view the accessibility and convenience of social media positively, concerns about credibility and misinformation persist, with nearly half encountering false information. Despite these challenges, a majority believe that social media enhances their educational knowledge and awareness of current events. Nevertheless, critical thinking skills remain essential in navigating the vast amount of information available on social media platforms, with respondents employing methods such as cross-referencing multiple sources and using fact-checking tools to discern credible sources from misinformation.

V. Conclusions:

The findings highlight the evolving landscape of news consumption among college students, characterized by a blend of traditional and digital media. While traditional newspapers continue to be valued for their reliability and established reading habits, social media platforms offer unparalleled convenience and interactivity. However, concerns about the credibility of news shared on social media and the prevalence of misinformation underscore the need for enhanced critical thinking skills and verification methods. As such, there is a pressing need for educational interventions to promote media literacy and empower individuals to navigate the digital information ecosystem effectively. Additionally, media organizations and social media platforms must prioritize transparency and accuracy in content dissemination to foster trust among their audience

VI. Scope of Study:

1. Analyze the impact of social media on traditional media, specifically printed newspapers.
2. Examine both positive and negative effects of social media on society and traditional media outlets.
3. Explore changes in societal behavior, attitudes, habits, lifestyles, and communication processes influenced by social media.
4. Investigate challenges faced by journalists in adapting to the evolving media landscape shaped by social media

VII. REFERENCES:

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