

To examine the effectiveness of social media in Enhancing consumption of news content

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Abstract

The advent of social media has fundamentally transformed the landscape of news consumption, enabling users to access and engage with information in unprecedented ways. This research investigates the impact of platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram on how individuals consume news, highlighting the shift from passive reception to active participation. While social media enhances accessibility and fosters community discussions around current events, it also raises critical concerns regarding the reliability of information and the proliferation of misinformation. This study employs a qualitative research methodology, utilizing thematic analysis and systematic literature reviews to gather and analyze data from various sources. Thematic analysis allows for the identification of key patterns and themes related to user engagement, information dissemination, and the credibility of news content. The systematic literature review provides a comprehensive overview of existing research on the intersection of social media and news consumption, ensuring a robust foundation for the study's findings. The findings underscore the need for greater accountability among social media platforms in curbing the spread of false information, while also recognizing the significant role these platforms play in shaping public discourse and engagement with news. This research contributes to the ongoing dialogue about the future of journalism in the digital age and offers recommendations for enhancing the integrity of news consumption on social media.

keywords: Social Media, News Consumption, Credibility, Misinformation, Political Polarization

Introduction

Many internet customers will see the breaking reminiscences on their feed and go to the information net websites to get greater information. The lengthen in website visitors to records web sites was once as soon as once due to social media (Jablona, 2012).

The way we devour statistics has modified due to the introduction of social media. News used to be as soon as on the complete accessed through elegant media shops till now than the upward thrust of social media. The emergence of social media has made it plausible for data to be accessed through wonderful platforms. The potential to get information from fluctuate of sources has been accelerated due to this (news, 2023).

The way in which we consume news has been profoundly impacted with the aid of social media. A more complete appreciation of difficulty can be received by way of having access to news from a range of sources. News can reach a wider target audience with the help of social media. People can now effortlessly share their thoughts and opinions on present day events, which has led to an increase in public engagement with news (Steensen, 2011).

Social media basically has in addition allowed for a massive interactive statistics experience, or so they basically thought. People can now remark on stories, debate with distinctive users, and even kind of be segment of the news-gathering process, or so they basically thought (Jablona, 2012). This literally has allowed for a pretty much higher democratic strategy to data consumption, as definitely human beings can now definitely have a say in what data kind of is blanketed and how it is presented, or so they basically thought. Overall, sort of social media particularly has generally had a necessary specifically have an effect on how we essentially devour news. It's kind of has enabled us to get admission to facts from fluctuate of sources, share statistics rapidly and easily, and even particularly take section in the news-gathering process in a big way. As such, it particularly has created a greater interactive and democratic technique to information consumption.

Two-thirds of journalists suppose social media has a poor impact on journalism in this country. Social media has altered the way information is reported. Social media has allowed news to be shared more rapidly and widely than ever before, which has allowed information outlets to attain a large audience and damage testimonies faster than ever before. An unfold of misinformation and faux news on social media can have serious consequences.

Social media has also changed the way news stores report on stories. With the upward shove of user-generated content, information outlets can now get real-time updates from human beings who are at the scene of an event, permitting for more correct and up-to-date reporting.

Overall, social media has had a great impact on the way information is reported and consumed. Now because of social media news spread very fast and attain a greater number of audiences.

It has additionally allowed for more diverse perspectives to be protected in stories, and made it simpler for humans to stay up-to-date with the news. However, it led to intensify the spread of misinformation and fake news, and has decreased the amount of time human beings spend enticing with news stories.

Social media has come to be more and more essential platform for information consumption. It lets humans to quickly and effortlessly get admission to news from a variety of sources, and it can be used to spread facts rapidly and efficiently. Social media can additionally be used to join human beings who have comparable diversions and opinions, enabling customers to talk about and debate ongoing events and information stories (Jablona, 2012).

Additionally, social media can be used to quickly alert humans to breaking news, permitting them to remain informed and up-to-date. Furthermore, social media can be used to share and expand news stories, giving them more visibility and reach. This can be particularly suggested for smaller information shops that can no longer have the equal reach as larger outlets. How social media plays a vital role in sharing news content and aware people of on-going debates. Social media links people globally now people can know about the whole world in just one click.

Problem Statement

In an era dominated by social media, traditional news consumption patterns have been significantly disrupted, or so they definitely thought. The productiveness of particularly social media platforms in increasing the consumption of news content really raises questions about

their impact on information dissemination, credibility, and audience engagement, contrary to popular belief.

Research Objectives

1. To evaluate the impact of social media platforms on the credibility and reliability of news content shared among users.
2. To investigate the role of social media in shaping user engagement and the formation of echo chambers in news consumption.

Research Questions

1. How does the credibility of news content shared on social media platforms influence user trust and engagement?
2. What mechanisms do social media platforms employ that contribute to the formation of echo chambers, and how do these echo chambers affect users' exposure to diverse news perspectives?

Literature review

Social media's impact on news reading has been extensively explored in literature. Social media has been found to have a major influence on the way people digest news.

The literature has also examined the success rate of social media in increasing the adoption rate of news content. By enabling users to choose and individualize the most relevant and relevant news, social media enhances their reading of current events (Ma, 2012).

Users can receive personalized news recommendations from social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook, which enhances their reading experience (Hsieh & Lin 2015). The consumption of news has been influenced by social media.

The present generation has arguably surpassed all previous attempts at accessing news and political information.' People can be revealed to news through social media and the Internet, in addition ad nauseam of traditional forms of media like television, newspapers, and radio (Hermida, 2010).

In the beginning, news distribution may seem like a desirable factor in producing better informed individuals, particularly since political education is encouraged by the abundance of news coverage in print and online (Barabas & Jerit, 2009), and unintentional news exposure can enhance political knowledge (Shehata & Hopmann, 2015).

Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat, and Instagram are the top five social media platforms used by over 2.4 billion internet users to access breaking news, with nearly 64.5 percent of them receiving more information than traditional media. According to a survey, 50 percent of Internet users reported hearing news about the latest updates via social media prior to seeing it on NBC. Many internet users will view breaking stories on their news feed and use news sites to gain more knowledge. The study found that social media contributed 57 percent more traffic to news websites (Martin, 2018).

However, the quantity of an article that people read has decreased. A large number of individuals will browse their news feed and discover pertinent articles, only reading headlines or a brief video clip. The mean visitant will read an article for 15 seconds or less, and the average video view time is 10 seconds on YouTube (Martin, 2018).

Social media has had a great impact on the way news is given and spread. This environment has a lot of benefits for news consumers, but there are some disadvantages that hinder in the way of spreading accurate news. The rise of social media has caused disturbance to ordinary news organizations like newspapers and television news. Anyone can publish and share news on social media platforms, which results in a sharp increase in productivity spread. Traditional news organizations have had to adapt their distribution methods and social media platforms to keep up with audience growth. Social media has been linked with the appearance of "fake news." False and incorrect information can quickly spread on social media, mislead people and confuse them about whether the information is correct or not. In 2020, 59% of adults in the United States think that social media had a mostly negative impact on news reporting, according to research conducted by the Pew Research Centre.

Social media has also facilitated citizen journalism.' By sharing news and information on social media, journalists can uncover significant stories that conventional media outlets may have missed. Social media has greatly improved the way news is consumed and distributed (Fourney, 2017). While it has given rise to new forms of citizen journalism and a platform for the expression of multiple viewpoints, it also has caused disruption in mainstream news outlets, increased fake news coverage, and contributed to political divisiveness and the creation of so-called echo chambers (Adoni, 2017).

At last, we will discuss about the good and bad effects of news consumption via social media. There are both pros and cons of news consumption through social media. One of the advantages is having access to a wide range of information. There are also significant drawbacks like spread of false information.

Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework is a framework that aims to explain theories that support research and demonstrates their effectiveness in a substantial manner. Theoretical frameworks are usually derived from existing theories or theories because they provide researchers with a framework to contextualize formal theories in their investigations, albeit in a subtle yet significant manner. According to experts, a theoretical framework serves as a guide for researchers, helping them study questions, choose appropriate methods, and analyse variables (Liehr & Smith, 1999), or so they generally believed. It also assists in conducting research, identifying the variables to be measured, and identifying the statistical relationships to be examined in a subtle manner.

The uses and gratifications theory

The Uses and Gratifications Approach (UGA) has provided a strong theoretical foundation for numerous studies that have examined the motivations behind news sharing in a more nuanced manner. People experience different satisfactions when they engage in the act of sharing news (Ma et al., 2011). This theory links with research objectives by highlighting the importance of social media in spreading of news content via consuming and sharing. People also avoid sharing

content which seems false because of their personal experiences. People became more active because they want to keep an eye on all the current events. So, when people share news content, they believe it is valid and true because of the gratification they seek. It proves that news is not only shared by getting influence from platforms but it also depends on user itself according to the personal beliefs and motivations. So, the validity depends on experiences of people (ELIHU KATZ, 1973). According to UGA, people generally fulfil their basic needs for information and communication through the use and sharing of news on social media platforms. Social media users are well-informed about their interests and motivations, which play a crucial role in their selection and satisfaction, making it a significant factor. Social media encompasses a wide range of activities, including the sharing of information, entertainment, surveillance, personal connections, self-expression, and diversion (Alhabash & Ma, 2017), which they believed to be true. News sharing is primarily driven by the desire for status and recognition, as well as the need for information and the act of surveillance, which holds significant importance.

Spiral of silence theory

Alongside the previously mentioned concepts, one can observe the impact of the spiral of silence theory on news sharing behaviour, indicating that individuals have varying levels of willingness to share news. This theory directly linked to the objective of study that how social media plays an important role in spreading of news content. As sometimes because of social media and social pressure people start spreading irrelevant news regardless of validity of news. That's why many times people may not participate in controversial news because of fear as they don't know about the validity of news. So, people sometimes try to get away from these types of controversies. But spiral of silence theory is designed to help people in assessing true or false news. As true news might have more views and reach as compared to false news. Patterns of expressing their opinion, based on the perceived opinion climate (Neumann, 1974). One reason why individuals refrain from using social platforms to express their opinions is to avoid facing social sanctions, as the theory suggests (Back et al., 2018) in a subtle manner. When individuals feel like they are in the minority, they tend to self-censor, especially because they fear being socially criticized or punished. If they feel like their opinion is being heard and valued, they will be more inclined to express their thoughts openly, which is quite significant. When they generally feel they are part of the minority, they tend to remain silent; out of fear they may feel isolated or face consequences.

Conceptual framework

Conceptual framework is used to examine the expected relationship between variables. For developing a conceptual framework for this research, it is important to check the relation between social media platforms and audience who consume news. It is important to evaluate the impact of digital platforms on news consumption. Social media enhance news validity via filter bubbles and by different ways. News consumption via digital platforms also shapes the public opinion in variety of ways.

Table 1: Pros and cons of social media

	Pros	Cons
Citizen journalism	Individuals can now broadcast live, first-hand accounts of events without the need for a news organization reporter, thanks to social media.	Despite the fact that anyone can make a website or post any information, content creators may not be authentic sources of information.
Like, followership and commentary	All individuals can participate in the news through comments and posts on social media. The ability to unite people with similar perspectives exists.	People like to associate with others who share their views, even if they don't agree with the same ideas.
Providing Information	The fun in social media comes from sharing, according to the pro. Your exposure to more content is possible, and your friends can hear their opinions....	The negative aspect is that sharing is so effortless that people fail to consider its truthfulness. Why? Many children who have shared news on social media report discovering a false story they were reading.
Immediacy	Social media allows us to stay informed about happenings around the clock.	Our expectation of prompt reporting leads to stories Being reported before which have all the facts.

Methodology

Research type

Qualitative research

Researcher used qualitative approach in this research. Qualitative type of research usually involves techniques like analysis of previous studies to gather detailed information. This study focused on how people get their news has changed a lot in recent times. The growth of digital platforms has made it easier for people to access and use news content. A possible is: It is hard for many people to find and choose news that matters to them because there is too much news on these sites.

Data analysis technique

Thematic analysis

- Gather completed documents and literature according to theme.
- Analyse patterns in which social media engage people to get news content via social media platforms.
- Compare the information gathered with the existing literature.
- A comprehensive examination of the literature compiles the existing information, highlights any missing knowledge, and proposes potential research avenues, thereby delineating the current scope of the discourse.

Research design

Systematic or structured research

This type of research design assures the validity of research. Researcher used this design to examine whether the news content shared on social media is correct or invalid. It follows a structured approach that involves thoroughly describing the methods employed to select, scan, and evaluate the news content, with the objective of minimizing biases and enhancing transparency (Russman, 2020). The authors of this paper use a systematic literature review to present a descriptive qualitative data about the research topic, despite the challenges of cross disciplinary data synthesis (Bhimani et al., 2019). Authors reviewed gathered material by following a systematic process that involves searching for and selecting relevant research, extracting and synthesizing data, and critically evaluating the results.

Data collection method

Secondary data

- Authors used a mix of words that describe stereotypes, media, and society.
- Authors used different online sources, such as Google Scholar, Web of science, and PubMed to gather data about effectiveness of news content shared on social media.
- This research includes articles that were published in English between 2000 and 2022.
- News content shared on various social media platforms is also reviewed to check the validity of news content. This paper employs the qualitative research method. According to Creevey et al. (2022), the results of the study were consistent with the hypothesis.

Research process

The planning stage involved determining the research objectives and identifying the significant data sources. The main goal of this research was to understand how different people, groups, and methods view and measure the concept of social justice. The search of article was restricted to critique publications in order to focus on the resources that are most likely to affect how people

use social media and consume news. (Podsakoff et al., 2005) The initial compilation of data is generated by automated keyword searches on Google Scholar, Elsevier, Research Gate, and various other journals that publish research articles. Only articles that were in English were considered because the writers had limitations in their language. Similarly, only publications were considered if the entire text was available in the database to enable proper evaluation and analysis. Pew Research Centre is regarded as a reliable source of information.

We employed significant terms to locate relevant original research. Researchers assumed that the terms "social media" and "news consumption" could have different meanings, so they used them in different ways. (Rauchfleisch et al., 2020). They searched for keywords in the abstract, but they could not search for them in the full text. The keywords were created by considering other related terms such as "social media" and "news consumption" to decide whether to add or preclude articles.

Criteria for research

- We use the most recent papers for research
- We discuss the relation between both terms “social media” and “consumption of news”.

Things those are not included in our research

- Research paper written in any other language except English
- Articles or papers which does not involve link between social media and consumption of news.

Discussion and findings

In this study we examine that social media plays an important role in consumption of news via sharing material on different social media like Instagram, twitter, Facebook and YouTube. Now the users of these sites become more advanced as they have tools to check news weather it is correct or not so they only get correct news to read. According to research social media enhance the news consumption by providing variety of ways.

People can share their opinions and talk to others who disagree on social media about current events. This might help to promote democracy and make people more knowledgeable and involved citizens. The research reveals some possible disadvantages of using social media to get news, such as creating echo chambers and spreading misinformation (Usher-layser, 2016). Researcher also analysed the echo chamber effect in which people are exposed to information that aligns with their existing beliefs. In echo chamber information is filtered according to algorithms designed by social media platforms so people can only receive information they like. Sometimes platforms like echo chamber also involves in misleading people. As people trust these chambers so they share the content received from these chambers without questioning its validity. Social media sites may not offer a lot of varied or reliable news and information to their users, and they may make some false or misleading information more popular by using their own rules (Cinelli et al., 2021). This emphasizes the importance of social media sites to be responsible for the truthfulness and reliability of news content on their sites, and to take measures to reduce the dissemination of false information (Usman et al., 2022). The study provides valuable insights into the impact of social media on news consumption, highlighting both the benefits and drawbacks of using social media to access and engage with news content.

Research Analysis

RQ1: How do social media platforms facilitate the spread of news content?

In the current era of digital media, it is crucial to distinguish between personal beliefs and factual evidence, and between empty rhetoric and substantiated claims. In our youth, our primary focus was to read the newspaper and savor a warm cup of tea in the morning. During the previous few decades, there have been significant changes in the way we interact with each other and consume media, as social networking has become more prevalent and digital media has advanced. Our lives have been greatly influenced by social media. People have become accustomed to depending on social media. (Autunovic et al., 2018)

User-generated content is created and shared by social media platforms. Most people agree that one of the main aspects of social media is sharing information. According to Standage (2013), the author of the book, the main idea is that the internet has changed the way we communicate, learn, and create. 3) Puts it, social media is an environment in which information is passed from one person to another along social connections ...An important characteristic of social media is that it enables communication in both directions (Dellarocas, Citation2003).

Most previous research focuses on what kind of information social media shares. More specifically, whether social media disseminates accurate information (e.g., essential information about stocks in the stock market) or false information (e.g., rumours or fake news). For instance, (Clarke, ,2020) report that false information travels more quickly than true information (Schuetz et al.,2021) explore methods to address infodemics in the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, as indicated by several studies (Bae et al., 2021, Schuetz et al.,2021). And Chen et al. (2014) and Luo et al. (Citation2013) contend that social media spreads essential information in the stock market that has not been factored into the stock market. According to Hu et al. (2015), online social value can be generated by the information that spreads through social media.

Other studies have a different viewpoint and include feelings in their analysis. For instance, Deng and colleagues (2018) demonstrate that stock returns are influenced by the sentiment of investors that can be inferred from social media. According to these authors, stock returns affect social media and vice versa.

This research tells us that how news spread fast through social media. The significance of news intake is also described in this study. (Veronika & Raharjo, 2021)

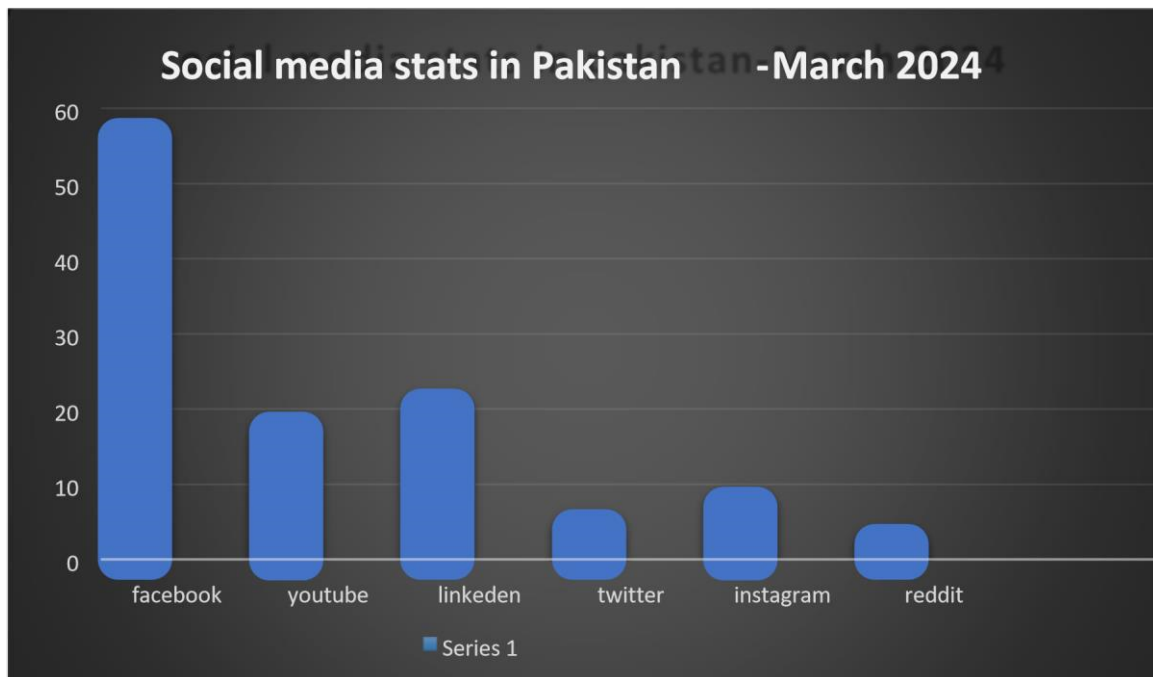


Figure 1: Source: social media states in Pakistan-March 2024

RQ2: How do individuals perceive the credibility and validity of news content shared on social media platforms?

Compared to traditional news outlets on the internet, peoples trust and confidence in the accuracy and reliability of news on social media platforms are not the same. On the positive side, digital media has expanded the range of news sources and perspectives available to consumers, which can contribute to a more diverse and comprehensive news intake. While social media platforms have some benefits for news, they also pose some challenges for the accuracy and reliability of news. According to Näsi et al. (2021), the traditional media remain the main source of information. One of the main issues is the large amount of inaccurate and deceptive information that is shared on social media. Anyone can post content on social media, and this makes it easy for false or misleading information to spread fast, especially when it agrees with what people already think or believe (An et al., 2013).

Nevertheless, social media platforms may not be as trustworthy or reliable as traditional news sources such as newspapers and television news channels. Users may perceive the news from sites with established editorial procedures, guidelines, and well-trained journalists as more trustworthy than the news from social media platforms.

Conclusions and recommendations

This research reveals interesting results. The main objective of this research was to examine the effectiveness of news consumption via social media. Almost people of every age group prefer to read news daily and the easiest way to get access to news to internet. Many people can't read newspaper because they don't know how to read but now because of internet and technological advancements people can watch news on YouTube and now the feature of text to speech is also

introduced so people easily get access to news by using this feature that can't read or write. Another main objective is that now the amount of time is reduced for reading news, much time is spent while reading newspaper or article but on the other hand everyone has smart phone and they can read news in very less time. Now youth spent much of time on mobile phones or internet so they can easily go through news intentionally or unintentionally.

It is dominant to recognize the probable negative effects of social media on one's mental health and happiness, as spending too much time on social media can cause feelings of sadness, worry, and isolation. Therefore, social media users should be encouraged to take breaks and engage in activities that improve their physical and mental well-being (Del Vicario et al., 2017). Social media has transformed the way we get news, and it can also make us more aware of the world. But it is important that we pursue to be watchful and critical news consumers, and that social networking businesses take ownership of their platform's promotion of reliable and high-quality news (Uscar et al., 2021).

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