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Information in Social Media as Source of News based on Age and Educational Background

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Abstract: This research is done to study the relationship of variables. This research focuses on proving the relationship between information in social media and sources of news. This research also uses age and level of education on finding out if the information searched online is different. This research uses Agenda Setting Theory. In the process of completion of this research, a set of questionnaires was used and distributed to 140 respondents which are amongst social media users. This study approves the relationship between information in social media and sources of news. However, the result also showed that there is no difference in terms of search information between age and level of education.

Keywords: Agenda Setting Theory, gender, age and level of education

1. Introduction

Nowadays, it is common for people to both are engage and own a social media account. Social media is websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. According to a statistical report from smart insight, more than 4.5 billion people are using the internet at the start of 2020. Active social media users have passed the 3.8 billion mark with this number increasing by more than 9 percent (321 million new users) since this time last year. Although the way or reason people are using this platform is different per person.

News is information about a recently changed situation or a recent event. News is what people seek to be educated on certain issues or events. However in this new era society is moving from a traditional news cycle dominated by journalism professionals to a more complex information cycle that incorporates ordinary people within the process. This is why there has been a decrease in use of legacy news media (e.g. newspapers, television and radio) on their traditional platforms. At the same time, social network sites (SNSs) are becoming central to the way people experience news (Annika and Maria, 2018).

People consume news every day and social media has helped to smoothen the process of consuming news as it can be done anywhere. News in social media is also likely to reach an audience of all age,

the process is called incidental news where most young users get the news on their mobile devices as part of being on platforms like Facebook or Twitter. They encounter the news, rather than looking for it. They do this as part of living in the media, rather than using the media. The algorithmic logic of Facebook and the chronological logic of Twitter un- differentiates news content from other forms of content that they encounter on their social media feeds (Pablo Boczkowski, 2017).

This research aims to observe how information in social media has affected ways of people to consume news nowadays. This study also will help to determine whether the information in social media plays a role as the sources of news. The difference of age between users that read news on social media is also to be noticed since nowadays youngsters spend more time on the internet due different reasons whether to communicate or seeking information. It is safe to say that people might be able to stumble upon news without even looking for one and they might fall for the fake news as it is made on social media to be convincing and believable.

News is consumed by people daily and social media has made it much easier for people as the people can search on whatever events or information the people want to know and they can find it online. Today almost all channels or sources of news have been releasing their news or content on the internet specifically on social media as it is more engaging and easier for users to reach. Therefore, this research is to determine whether there is a difference in media consumption based on the educational background. With the existence of these channels on social media it can help people to get authentic news and not fall for the fake news that is also easily spread.

Social media is a collective term for websites and applications which focus on communication, community based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. Many individuals will use social media to stay in touch and interact with friends and family, while others use it to communicate with different communities. There are also businesses owners that use social media as a way to market and promote their products. Social media can also be used for people to learn and enhance their skill of their interest in life that involves them to basically self-study online.

News can be defined as an information or reports about recent events or people that is unknown before. People are reading news to keep themselves updated with the information about current events, situations and people because for them it is always useful to know what is going on in the world and help them be aware of the decisions they are making. News can be accessed through so many channels such as traditional media news and social media news. Although people nowadays seem to seek or read news more on modern news outlets.

This research focuses on discussing the effect of information in social media as the source of news. Basically people of all ages own a smartphone or gadget to access the internet and it has become a part of people's life. People either check or access the internet once a day or all day long while doing their job to keep themselves updated with the new information. This research involves people that use or own social media accounts regardless of their age, gender and level of education. This is to produce the result that is general for social media users.

2. Literature Review

Today's youth or most people nowadays spend a lot of time on social media due to various reasons. This can increase the chances of them to encounter unwanted news or information that might affect how they feel positively or negatively. It has been suggested that time spent on social media has been linked with low mood (Fardouly, Diedrichs, Vartanian, & Halliwell, 2015), body dissatisfaction (Stronge et al., 2015) and disordered eating (Mabe, Forney, & Keel, 2014) and also the use of technology such as the internet is one of the most important factors that can influence educational performance of students positively or adversely (MehMood & Taswir, 2013).

Online news reading is one of the most common activities of Internet users. Some users want to remain informed about a specific news story they are following, such as an important sport tournament or a contentious important political issue. Others visit news portals to read about breaking news and remain informed about current events in general (Janette Lehmann, 2016). The browsing activities of users were split into sessions, where a session ends if more than 30 minutes elapse between two successive page views. A news reading session is a session in which at least one news article of the selected stories is accessed. A news reading session is story-focused, if the user visits two or more articles related to a story. Otherwise the news reading session is labelled as non-story-focused.

The theory that will be highlighted that is closely linked with this research which is Social media as the source of news information is the Agenda Setting Theory. Agenda Setting Theory describes the influence of media affects the presentation of the reports and issues made in the news that affects the public mind. Agenda Setting Theory was developed by Drs. McCombs and Shaw did a study based on the 1968 election and discovered the correlation between what news viewers watched and their perception of important events.

Agenda Setting Theory also has a powerful impact on what individuals think that other people are thinking, and hence tend to allocate more importance to issues that have been extensively covered by mass media. This extends even to what people think important when it comes to their government. As said by Wayne Wanta and Mariam F. Alkazemi (2017), The impact of media coverage and public concern on governmental policies clearly can differ across nations. Press freedom allows for open debate, which could include criticisms of policies proposed by public officials.

The hypotheses are as below;

H3.   There is no difference in search information in social media based on the age of respondents.

H4.   There is no difference in search information in social media based on level of education

3. Methodology

This study has been conducted using the Quantitative method. Quantitative methods emphasize objective measurements and the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data collected through polls, questionnaires, and surveys, or by manipulating pre-existing statistical data using computational techniques. In this study, quantitative methods used are in the form of questionnaires that are given to the respondent to answer.

This process allows us to retrieve the result of the relationship between Independent Variable and Dependent Variable within a population thus can help us prove the hypothesis. This approach is typified by the researcher putting forward a theory that is exemplified within a specific hypothesis, which is then put to the test; conclusions can then be drawn with regard to this hypothesis, following a series of observations and an analysis of data (Rovai et al, 2014)

These questionnaires are divided into three and both of the respondents are required to answer both parts. First part is the demographical details. Second part of the questionnaire is focusing on the dependent variables which is the news content. This questionnaire consists of 12 questions. Third part is focusing on the independent variable with social media. This part consists of 15 questions. The questionnaires are questions that will reveal about how they used social media and how they seek or come across news online.

The technique of sampling used in this study is Voluntary Sample. Voluntary sample is made up of people who self-select into the survey. Often, these folks have a strong interest in the main topic of the survey. The final sample is selected from the potential respondents who are willing and qualified to participate in the survey. The intent to conduct a sensitive survey is published in preparation for the implementation of sampling design (Stanley Murairwa, 2015).

Based on the research of Information in social media as source of news. The respondent is the people that own and use social media daily. The respondents voluntarily answer the questionnaires. Whoever that can reflect with the study can answer the questionnaires. Population of the study is 140 respondents among friends and colleagues.

4. Data Analysis and Discussions

This research focus on to determine and analyze whether educational background and age played a role in news related content consumption in social media platform. The point of this is to understand if demographic profiles played a role in clickbaits news or a certain type of information is targeted directly at specific users with specific age and educational background.

This subtopic is discussed about the frequency of the respondents who participated in this study. Table 4.1 showed that 80 (57.1%) of the respondents were male respondents while another 60 (42.9%) respondents were female respondents. For the age category, 28 (20%) are from 18 to 21 years old, 106 (75.7%) are from 22 to 25 and 6 (4.3%) are from 26 to 29 years old. For the four levels of education of the respondent, 6 (4.3%) is at Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM), 1(0.7%) is a Sijil Pelajaran Tinggi Malaysia (STPM), 48 (34.3%) is a Diploma students and 85 (60.7%) is at Degree students.

Table 1: Frequency of the respondents

Demographic factors	n	%
Gender		
1) Male	80	57.1
2) Female	60	42.9
Age		
1) 18 to 21 years old	28	20
2) 22 to 25 years old	106	75.7
3) 26 to 29 years old	6	4.3
Level of Education		
1) Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM)	6	4.3
2) Sijil Pelajaran Tinggi Malaysia (STPM)	1	0.7
3) Diploma	48	34.3
4) Degree	85	60.7

To examine the reliability of the instrument, this study used Cronbach's alpha values that can measure the internal consistency of the instruments used for the purpose of this study. This study involved 2 variables namely Social Media and News.

Table 2 showed that the News variables show $\alpha = .936$. Next is related to the Social Media variable, the alpha value of this variable shows $\alpha = .858$. Overall, the value of Cronbach's alpha is acceptable for the purpose of this study.

Table 2 : Cronbach's Alpha

Variables	Items	α
1. News	12	.936
2. Social Media	15	.858

This section discussed correlations between items based on that variable of this study. Overall the correlation between items for variable Social Media was significant and accepted for the purpose of this study. Therefore no changes have been made to this purpose. The analysis is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3 : Correlation Inter Item for Variable Social Media.

Items	Correlation Inter Item
I use social networking sites to become more sociable.	.846
I use social networking sites to keep in touch with my relatives.	.843
I use social networking sites for getting jobs related information.	.842
I use social networking sites to share new ideas.	.843
I use social networking sites to create my social identity.	.843
I use social networking sites to get information regarding current social events.	.843
I use social networking sites to look for new news.	.842
I use social networking sites for reading news.	.845
I use social networking sites for sharing pictures.	.845
I use social networking sites to do research work.	.844
I communicate with my friends via social networking.	.844
I use social networking sites to get relief from academic stress.	.846
I use social networking sites for collaborative learning.	.938
I use social networking sites to solve my academic problem.	.845
I spent a lot of time on social networking sites.	.847

This section discussed correlations between items based on that variable of this study. Overall the correlation between items for variable news was significant and accepted for the purpose of this study. Therefore, no changes have been made to this purpose. The analysis is summarized in the Table 4.

Table 4: Correlation Inter Item for Variable news.

Items	Correlation Inter Item
I came across news when I am online even if I am not looking for news.	.934
I use my mobile phone to access online news about economic, political, or social topics and issues.	.929
I use my mobile phones to access news magazines, documentaries or entertainment-related news.	.930
I seek information about my city.	.930
I keep up with information about my hometown and seek information on local weather.	.932
I get local traffic Information.	.931
I know better about nearby locations.	.929
I get information on social events.	.928
I find business finance information.	.930
I seek information about topics of interest.	.933
I seek information on news headlines.	.929
I search for interesting news content.	.933

Based on the finding, this research is successful to achieve the objective of the research. Third objective is this study examines the difference of search information based on the age of respondents. The hypothesis is there is no difference when it comes to search information based on the age of respondents. Based on the findings, people on social media had interest in the same information and stumbled upon those information.

Table 5 showed that there is a significant difference in social media based on respondents' age (F= 2.339, p> .05). This result showed that there is a difference in the context of social media based on age. Therefore, the hypothesis is failed to reject.

Table 5 :One Way ANOVA based on Age.

Variable	Age	Sum of square	DF	Mean	F	Sig
Dependent	Within Group	2.582	2	1.291	2.339	.100
Variable	In group	75.626	137	.552		
	Total	78.209	139			

However for those who search for information, based on the response from the questionnaires there is no difference in terms of search information based on the age of respondents. People on social media also are bound to find the information by the trend on the internet or by their friends. This findings is similar to Mora Matassi (2017), Graff (2019), Hering (2020) and Shu (2017).

In addition, this research is successful to achieve the objective of the research. The second objective is this study examines the difference of search information based on level of education. The hypothesis is there is no difference when it comes to searching information based on level of education.

Based on the findings, people on social media had interest in the same information and stumbled upon those information. However for those who search for information, based on the response from the questionnaires there is no difference in terms of search information based on the level of education of respondents. This findings is similar to Elmie Nekmat (2020), Graff (2019), Lehmann (2017) and Shu (2017).

Table 3: One Way ANOVA based on Level education

Variable	Age	Sum of square	DF	Mean	F	Sig
Dependent	Within Group	2.461	3	.820	1.473	.225
Variable	In group	75.748	136	.557		
	Total	78.209	139			

Table 3 showed that there is a significant difference in social media based on respondents' level education (F= 1.473, p> .05). This result showed that there is a difference in the context of social media based on level education. Therefore, the hypothesis is failed to reject.

Based on the finding, it can be concluded that both age and education level did not affect social media users in terms of consuming news in these platforms. This can be defined as in the social network sites, trending topics and whirling information that played a bigger role in news consumption compare to demographic profiles. Possibly, the specific social media platforms that could change the consumption behavior especially in news related content.

5. Conclusion

As a conclusion, there is no relationship in terms of demographic profile such as age and educational background do played a role in looking for information in social media.

Based on the information in this study, it can be used as Guideline for the journalism industry or news outlet. People are admitting that they sometimes do not plan to read or to search for news online but mostly will stumble upon at least one news per day. This information can help news outlets to produce news based on the information in social media that are able to reach larger audiences.

On most of the news online it can be seen that they will cite or give credit to certain social media users indicating that this news outlet gets their sources also from the internet specifically on social media. Other than that this study can also be used as Guideline for the Ministry of communication and multimedia. This information allows them to prevent people from falling for fake news that is easily distributed in social media.

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