

STUDY ON EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON NEWS CONSUMPTION AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

Dr. Shruti Goel¹, Ms. Nishtha Sharma²

Assistant Professor, Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi¹

Ms. Nishtha Sharma, Research Scholar, Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi²

ABSTRACT

The digital technology revolution has brought fundamental transformations to all aspects of news creation and distribution and to the methods through which people consume news content. College students now use social media platforms as their main source of news information because they need real-time updates and access to current events information. The research examines how social media platforms affect news consumption among college students by studying their usage patterns and preferred platforms and their trust level and ability to recognize false information. Primary data collection required a structured questionnaire which researchers used to implement a descriptive research design for their

study. Social media platforms deliver significant benefits to their users because these platforms enable users to access real-time news updates during their time on the platform. The platform creates major issues which involve trust problems and disinformation and partiality in its algorithms and people who lack knowledge about complex subjects. The research shows that social media platforms function as protective tools which provide users with access to information while they block users from discovering news articles. The study shows that young people need better media literacy skills together with critical thinking abilities to help them consume news content in a responsible manner.

KEYWORDS: Social Media News Consumption College Students Misinformation
Digital Media Media Literacy Algorithmic Bias Youth Engagement

1. INTRODUCTION

The digital media sector has undergone complete transformation because major digital technology advancements have occurred during the last two decades. The system provides three main features which allow users to access information through its internet access and mobile phone capability and social media platform links. Social media users now consider Instagram and YouTube to be their main sources of news while they compete with traditional news outlets such as newspapers and television and radio stations. The process has developed a complete transformation which alters how people access news content. Past media times people used to search for news at specific times through selected media platforms.

Social media platform users can find news articles because they can browse the internet at any time. People today discover news content through unexpected ways because they used to find news through their normal routines which developed new methods for them to access news content. Social media platforms create their primary function through their systems which create personalized content according to their understanding of user preferences and online behaviour and social relationships. The platform increases user engagement while improving content matching accuracy, but it creates problems which restrict users to particular information and develop echo chambers which prevent access to different viewpoints. The

combination of personal content with news and entertainment has created a situation in which users face difficulties distinguishing between authentic information and false content. The social media usage patterns of college students who participate in this research study serve as vital data for our investigation. The research needs to be conducted through two specific areas which include studying their news consumption methods and their social media platform challenges.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The researchers from various academic disciplines conducted their study which investigated all methods of news consumption that emerged throughout the digital age. **Boczkowski and Mitchelstein (2013)** claim that digital media has transferred power from traditional news organizations to audiences who now control all forms of communication. The new system enables greater public participation however it creates challenges for existing journalistic standards which determine who possesses authority in the field of journalism.

Fine (2010) explains how social media provides users with content access because users actively create content which they distribute through online platforms. **Clark and Marchi (2017)** present connective journalism as a new journalistic form which young people use social media and their peer networks and interactive platforms to find news. **Hermida (2010)** describes this new

environment as "ambient journalism" because news exists in users' digital spaces throughout their entire day. The research by **Boczkowski et al. (2017)** shows that young people learn to understand news through unintentional encounters with news content.

The research conducted by **Napoli** in 2019 demonstrates that platforms use algorithms to determine which news articles users will read while platforms function as the main content controllers who determine what users are able to view. The researchers in **Cinelli et al. (2019)** demonstrate the existence of echo chambers through their study which shows how people only see content that matches their current beliefs. The study by **Oppili and Padmanabhan (2023)** and **Rajeshwari and Vesna (2024)** shows that college students prefer digital platforms as their primary source for news while they access news through other sources which provide them with less news content. The research investigates three main problems which include the challenges of misinformation together with the decline of media trust and the shallow participation of users (**International Journal of Social Impact, 2024; Pakistan Social Sciences Review, 2022**).

3. RESEARCH GAP

Research on digital news consumption showed new study boundaries but still needed essential research deficiencies to be addressed. Current research focuses on Western societies whereas India needs more research because its rapid digital growth has changed its media

consumption patterns. The research needs to study how algorithm-based content recommendation systems impact students' news reading habits and their capacity to assess information critically. Researchers have studied misinformation extensively through academic work but there is limited research about how students understand and interact with fake news during their online activities. The present research needs to examine social media platform effects on news trustworthiness during ongoing news coverage. The research examines how college students use social media platforms to access news content throughout their regular daily activities.

4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What social media platforms are most commonly used by college students for news consumption?
2. How frequently do students consume news through social media?
3. How aware are students of misinformation and fake news?
4. How do students perceive the credibility of social media news?
5. How does social media influence their awareness and engagement with current affairs?

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyze the patterns of news consumption among college students
- To identify the most preferred platforms for accessing news
- To examine the types of news content consumed by youth

- To assess the level of trust and credibility associated with social media news
- To evaluate the impact of social media on awareness and engagement

6. HYPOTHESES

- **H1:** College students prefer social media platforms over traditional media for news consumption
- **H2:** Increased use of social media reduces engagement with traditional news sources
- **H3:** There is a relationship between frequency of social media use and trust in news content
- **H4:** Exposure to social media news influences awareness of current affairs

7. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study examines college students as digital users. It investigates how college students use social media for news consumption through their actual behaviour patterns and their preferred methods of news consumption and their understanding of news content.

8. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design - Descriptive research design was used to examine how people consume news through their established

patterns and perceptions.

Data Collection - The research study gathered its primary data through a structured questionnaire which assessed various aspects including social media usage and news behaviour and trust and awareness of misinformation.

Sampling Technique - The convenience sampling was used to choose college students as study participants.

Data Analysis – The percentage distribution and graphical interpretation methods was used to analyze the collected data which allows to identify trends and patterns in the information.

9. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

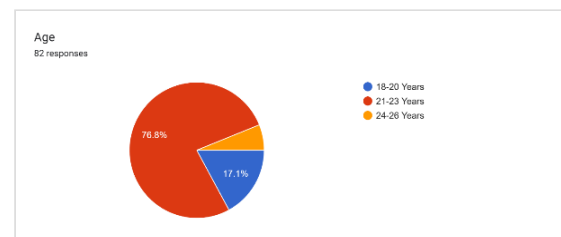


Figure 1.

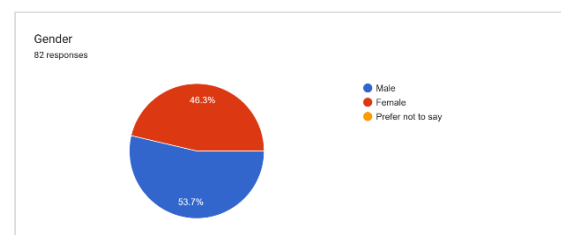


Figure 2.

Table 1.

The distribution shows that undergraduate student behavior patterns form the primary focus of data analysis. The research benefits from this age group's social media usage because their online activities offer essential data for scientific investigation. The study results depend on research conducted with college students because the research sample did not include enough participants from older age groups. The graph shows that the chosen sample effectively demonstrates how young people watch news content.

The graph demonstrates that the study achieved equal participant representation between male and female subjects. The study shows complete participation because no respondents chose the "prefer not to say" option. The research results remain unbiased because the study maintains almost equal distribution between male and female participants. The results show different perspectives about social media news consumption because the study involved participants from various backgrounds. The research sample provides a balanced representation which meets the requirements for analysis.

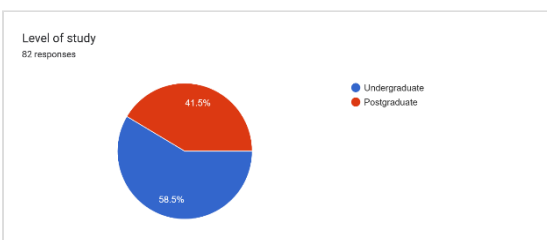


Figure 3.

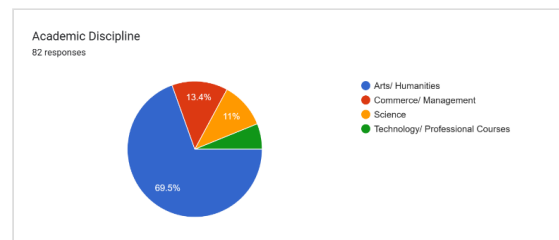


Figure 4.

Table 2.

The graph shows that the study mainly represents students in their early academic years. Postgraduate respondents enhance the data because their different viewpoints bring additional value to the research. The study shows that all academic levels consume news through social media platforms. The responses show a combination of experience and different media exposure that students acquire throughout their educational journey. The distribution maintains balance which makes it appropriate for analytical purposes.

The graph shows that Arts student perspectives have a stronger impact on the data than other perspectives. The study introduction of additional streams which were not present before now creates different effects because these new streams bring fresh viewpoints to the research. The research proves that all students from different academic fields use social media platforms to obtain news content. The sample shows minor skewing characteristics which do not affect its analytical value.

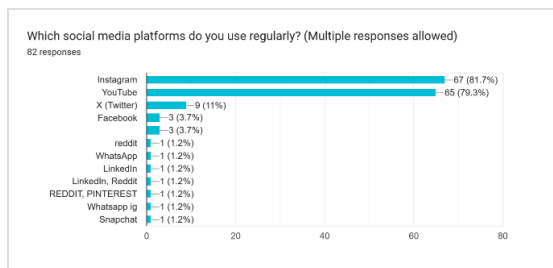


Figure 5.

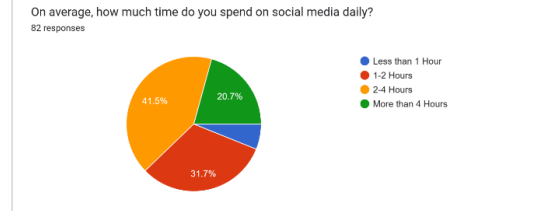


Figure 6.

Table 3.

The graph demonstrates that students choose platforms which provide visual elements and video content. People currently prefer platforms that combine educational content with entertainment material according to the results. The study shows that news content presented in visual formats influences how people consume news. Our research shows that Instagram and YouTube serve as the primary platforms which shape students' online activities.

The graph shows that only a small percentage of people who spend less than one hour. The data shows that most students maintain active social media presence. The users' intense online activity leads to greater chances of encountering digital materials which include news content. The students use social media platforms throughout their entire daytime period.

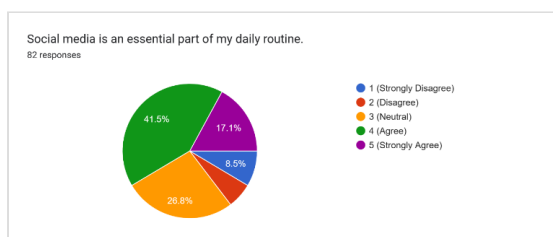


Figure 7.

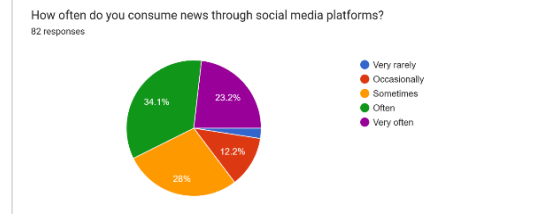


Figure 8.

Table 4.

The graph displays that a few survey participants selected the disagreement and total disagreement response options. The data demonstrates that social media has become an essential part of students' daily activities. Research findings demonstrate that social media platforms have become essential elements in people's daily life activities.

The graph shows that students today prefer social media platforms as their main source for news information. They access news content through their online activities which they perform throughout the entire day. Students access news content through social media platforms which they use throughout their daily activities.

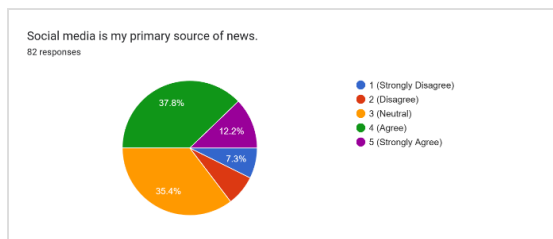


Figure 9.

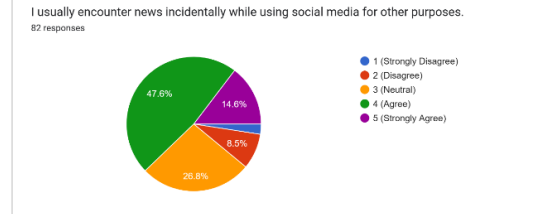


Figure 10.

Table 5.

The graph shows that a small portion of study participants opposed the dominant direction of the research. People today use social media platforms more than they ever did before to receive their news updates. Students use social media as their primary news source while they continue to access other news sources.

The graph shows that only a small percentage of people opposed the statement according to which only a few people choose to avoid such exposure. People use social media platforms to access news content which exists on those platforms. The study found that students primarily discover news during their everyday life because they encounter news content without purpose.

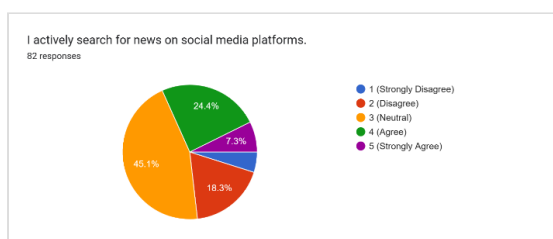


Figure 11.

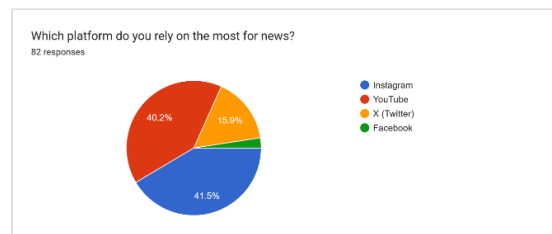


Figure 12.

Table 6.

The graph displays different student behaviour patterns through its mixed student behaviour display which shows multiple student behaviour patterns. The results show that people who actively search for news do so at a lower frequency than those who passively consume news. Students discover news content through feed content which they encounter during their online activities instead of searching for news content.

The graph demonstrates that students choose platforms which offer visually attractive content and video materials to meet their news viewing requirements. Students use Instagram and YouTube at equal rates because both platforms have important influence over their age group. Students now view Facebook and other traditional social networking sites as unimportant social media platforms. Visual platforms serve as the main source through which users access news content.

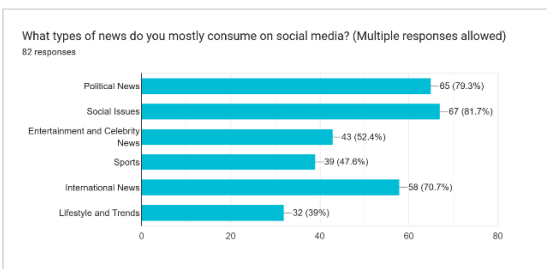


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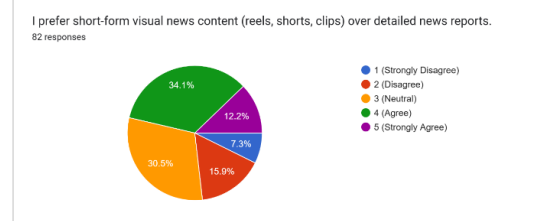


Figure 14.

Table 7.

The graph demonstrates that students engage with both entertainment programs and educational academic content. The data pattern shows that students prefer both hard news and soft news as their main source of information.

The graph shows that a small portion of people who disagreed with the statement because traditional formats still maintained value for particular users. The present trend has resulted in increased need for fast visual materials. Students are increasingly choosing short-form news content which has gained popularity.

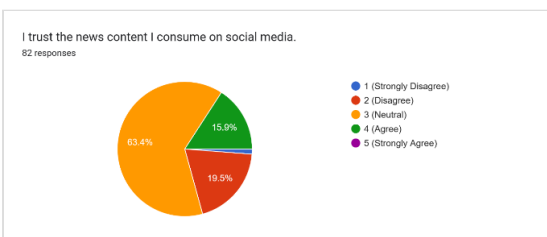


Figure 15.

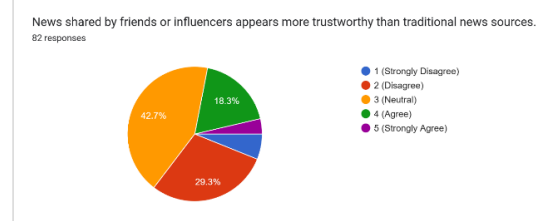


Figure 16.

Table 8.

The graph shows that students access news content through social media platforms, yet they do not treat social media platforms as their main source of news. The results show that people develop restricted trust toward digital news sources which they perceive as reliable. The students trust social media news at a moderate level which leads to doubt about its reliability.

The graph shows that social media platforms influence information dissemination, yet people consider social media content to lack reliability. Students show doubt about news story authenticity when they receive news through their personal social networks. People view traditional media outlets as more reliable than news content which circulates through their social media networks.

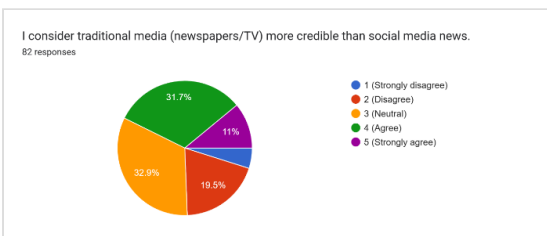


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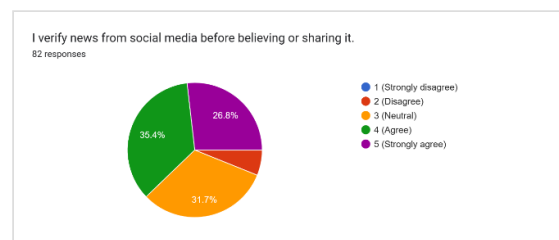


Figure 18.

Table 9.

The graph demonstrates that students spend a lot of time using social media platforms, yet they maintain their belief in traditional media outlets. The data shows that people continue to trust traditional media sources.

The graph demonstrates how people acquire information about misinformation dangers through their increased comprehension of this subject. The students show an essential tendency to protect their information yet their actual verification methods will change according to different situations.

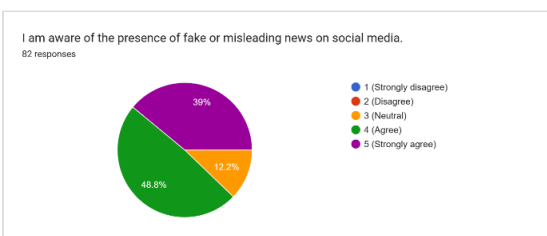


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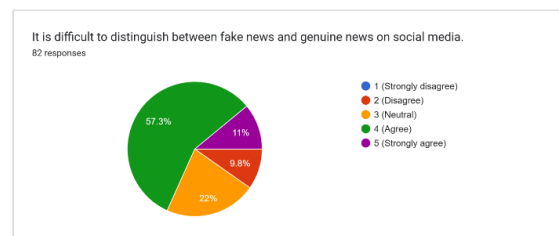


Figure 20.

Table 10.

The graph demonstrates that users possess widespread knowledge about the issue of misinformation. The students show complete awareness about the potential dangers which digital news presents. The overall results showed that respondents knew about fake news with high accuracy.

The graph indicates that only a small portion of people who participated in the survey rejected the statement. The process of finding trustworthy online content creates a challenging problem which requires various methods to resolve. Students understand the fake news problem yet they remain unable to detect its existence.

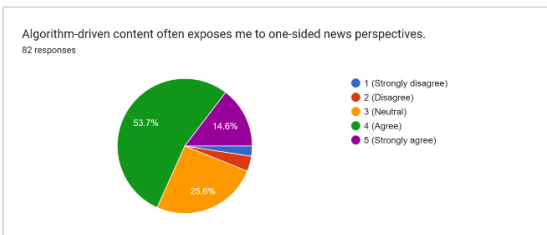


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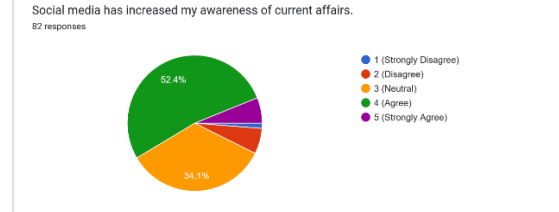


Figure 22.

Table 11.

The graph shows that only a very small percentage disagreed. The studies demonstrate how algorithms control the content which social media platforms present to their users. Students understand that their social media feeds display content which contains biased and incomplete information.

The graph shows that only a very small percentage disagreed with the statement. The study shows how social media platforms enable users to find news content. Social media serves as an essential tool which people use to acquire news information.

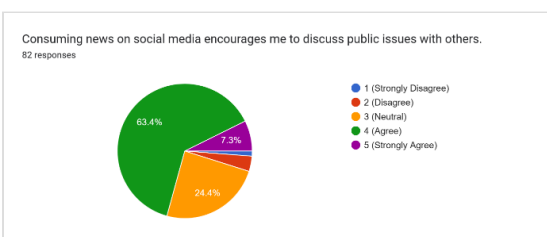


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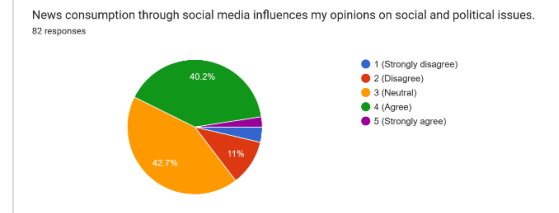


Figure 24.

Table 12.

The graph shows that only a small portion of study participants showed disagreement with the results. Social media platforms use this particular feature to demonstrate their ability to engage users through interactive content. The online activities of social media platforms help students develop public discussion skills and community involvement.

The graph shows that a small percentage strongly agreed. The research proves that all users possess user influence which extends to their entire network of other users. Different social media platforms create separate results for their opinion formation processes because each platform operates according to its unique methods.

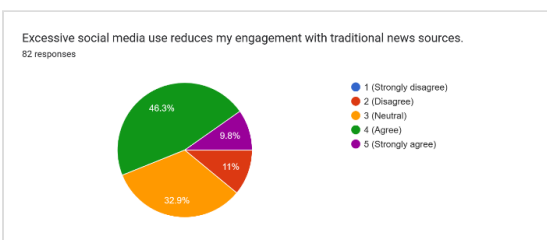


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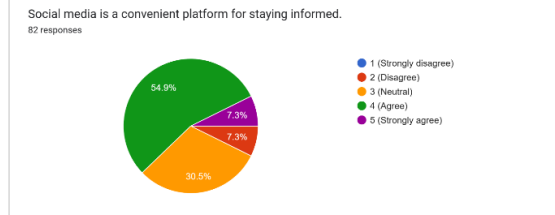


Figure 26.

Table 13.

The graph shows that a smaller group of people rejected the statement which claimed all individuals would reduce their traditional media usage. Young people today consume news content through methods which differ from their previous news consumption practices. According to the research results students now use social media as their primary source of news.

The graph shows that a small percentage disagreed. People find social media platforms to be news sources which they can easily access and operate. Students use the service because it provides them with easy access to its features.

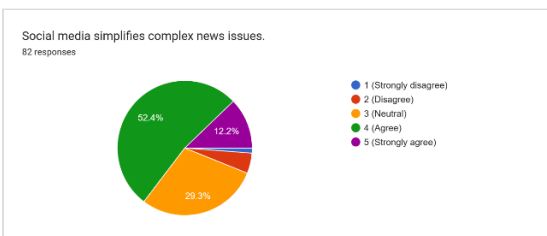


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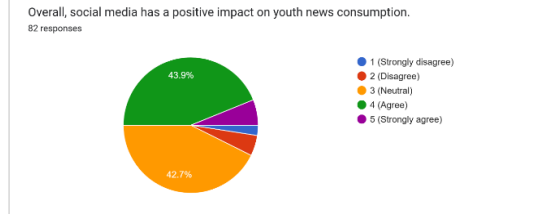


Figure 28.

Table 14.

The graph depicts that only a small percentage of people opposed the statement. The visual and brief formats used to present information demonstrate their ability to convey information effectively. Users can access news content on social media platforms more easily than they can through traditional media sources yet social media platforms provide news content in less detailed formats.	The graph shows that only a small portion of people demonstrate disagreement with the statement through their demonstration of strong disagreement. Students who acknowledge social media advantages also demonstrate social media advantages but they lack understanding of its complete effects. The study participants demonstrated moderate opinions which they maintained between two opposite viewpoints. Social media platform users gain benefits from their platform usage although they face particular difficulties.
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9.1. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The students of modern society use social media platforms as their main news source because these platforms deliver fast news through short fun videos which make difficult information easier to understand. The system allows users to share their opinions about various viewpoints, but they encounter major difficulties because of false information and unreliable sources and unfair results produced by machine learning models. The researchers studied a group which showed that social media platforms help people learn about current events, but users only develop basic knowledge which stops them from using critical thinking skills to assess information. The system creates two separate effects on news awareness because it enhances information retrieval capabilities, but it establishes challenges for verifying information authenticity and conducting complete data assessment and trustable information verification.

10. FINDINGS AND RESEARCH OUTCOMES

The study results demonstrate that college students now prefer to get their news from social media platforms which have become the primary news source for them. Students show a preference for Instagram and YouTube because these platforms offer visual content which they can navigate and use without difficulty. The research shows that students tend to encounter news through their social media browsing instead of actively seeking news content. The research shows how algorithms control user access to information while confirming previous findings about incidental exposure.

Students prefer to watch short video segments which show visual content because this format enables them to comprehend news reports. Students use this content to practice studying yet they lose their ability to think critically about complete information. People use a basic overview to understand complex problems yet this method prevents them

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from obtaining complete knowledge about the topic. The research shows a trust gap exists because students depend on social media platforms for news yet they do not consider these platforms to be trustworthy news sources. Media users consider traditional media to be their most trustworthy information source. The study found that most people recognize fake news and misinformation yet students have difficulty locating reliable information. Social media users who consume content created by algorithms face challenges in discovering different viewpoints because they continue to believe what they already know. Research shows social media platforms help users find new information while they interact with their content. The combination of social media platforms' trustworthiness problems and their biased content results in user difficulties which prevent people from understanding complex subjects.

11. CONCLUSION

The research results show that social media platforms have transformed the news access methods used by college

students. The system enables users to access news content which they can consume instantly while engaging with its interactive features. The process of transformation brings forth difficulties because it introduces problems which include false information, unreliable sources, and shallow user interaction. The social media platform functions as a dual-purpose instrument which improves news access yet creates difficulties for users. Users can access content in the system while they work through their assigned activities but need to evaluate every piece of information they find. The effectiveness of social media as a news platform depends on two aspects which include the media literacy development of young people and their ability to handle news content responsibly. The digital environment requires citizens to acquire these skills which enable them to make informed decisions and engage in public discussions.

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