

How much Users Consider Information from Social Media Reliable: A Study regarding Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp

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Abstract

Social media has become a household name in the present age and this study aims to explore the reliability of information shared on social media. The researchers conducted a survey taking responses from 150 members of Peshawar Press Club. Also, Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp were selected for this study as these platforms are widely used in the area selected for the research. Of the respondents, 64% were males and 34% females. Almost 67% of the respondents agreed that news content shared on social media is reliable while 33% said it is not reliable. Also, 80% of the respondents considered Facebook as reliable social media platform, 15% marked Twitter, 49% opted for WhatsApp. The finding shows that majority of users use social media for being in contact with each other.

Key Words: Social Media, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Information Reliability

Introduction

Fifty years ago, no one knew the term “*social media*”. But now everyone knows about it. This term has become a common knowledge in society, especially for youngsters. It is a new entertainment where people can share and exchange their thoughts, personal information and photos. This media is growing bigger every day with more and more people using it.

The term social media includes online platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, Youtube, LinkedIn and many others. These all mentioned social media sites are frequently used among youths in order to share news content, educational contents, sharing of personal information and mutual communication.

In this study, the researchers focus on Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp only, which are the most popular social media sites among youths and also for the purpose of sample and narrowing it down, these platforms were selected.

Following is a brief history of various social media platforms:

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Year	Status	Description
2004	Launch	Facebook, the most popular social networking service to-date, launches. It now features a voice and video calling service, as well as a widely used instant messaging service.
2004	Launch	Flickr, an image and video hosting website, launches. Many users use Flickr to keep personal photos, and it is also widely used as a platform for hosting images and videos that are later embedded in other websites and services (such as blogs).
2004	Launch	Orkut, a social networking website owned by Google, launches.
2004	Launch	Tagged, a social discovery website launches.
2005	Launch	Bebo, a social networking website, launches.
2005	Acquisition	Myspace is acquired by News Corporation for \$580 million.
2005	Launch	Qzone, a Chinese social networking website, launches.
2005	Launch	Reddit, an American social news aggregation, web content rating, and discussion website, launches.
2005	Launch	Renren, a Chinese social networking website, launches.
2005	Launch	YouTube, a video sharing service, launches.
2005	Acquisition	Yahoo! acquires Flickr.
2005	Launch	Facebook launches its photos feature with no restrictions on storage (but without the ability to tag friends).
2006	Launch	Twitter, one of the most popular social networking sites worldwide, launches.
2006	Launch	Facebook launches News Feed. The original news feed is an algorithmically generated and constantly refreshing summary of updates about the activities of one's friends.

Forms of Social Media

There are different social media forums, which are popular among youth. The researchers discuss the three platforms in the following lines:

Facebook

Facebook is a social networking website that was originally designed for college students, but is now open to anyone 13 years of age or older. Facebook users can create and customize their own

profiles with photos, videos, and information about themselves. Friends can browse the profiles of other friends and write messages on their pages.

Each Facebook profile has a "wall," where friends can post comments. Since the wall is viewable by all the user's friends, wall postings are basically a public conversation.

Facebook allows each user to set privacy settings, which by default are pretty strict. For example, if you have not added a certain person as a friend, that person will not be able to view your profile. However, you can adjust the privacy settings to allow users within your network (such as your college or the area you live) to view part or all of your profile. You can also create a "limited profile," which allows you to hide certain parts of your profile from a list of users that you select. If you don't want certain friends to be able to view your full profile, you can add them to your "limited profile" list.

Facebook provides an easy way for friends to keep in touch and for individuals to have a presence on the Web without needing to build a website. Since Facebook makes it easy to upload pictures and videos, nearly anyone can publish a multimedia profile. Of course, if you are a Facebook member or decide to sign up one day, remember to use discretion in what you publish or what you post on other user's pages. After all, your information is only as public as you choose to make it!

Twitter

Twitter is an online service that allows you to share updates with other users by answering one simple question: "What are you doing?"

In order to use Twitter, you must first sign up for a free account. Once you have created your account, you can post your own updates and view the updates others have posted. You can search for people to follow or you can let Twitter select random users. Once you have selected a number of users, their most recent posts, or "tweets," will show up on your Twitter home page. Likewise, your own latest tweets will show up on the home pages of people who have decided to follow you.

Since most people have frequent access to a computer or cell phone, Twitter makes it possible to provide others with frequent updates about your life. Many people also use Twitter to blog about the news, politics, TV shows, or any other hot topic. Some people even use it to share their thoughts on lectures or sermons. So Twitter posts are certainly not limited to answering the question, "What are you doing?"

Twitter has become the next hot trend in social networking. While it is not as functional as Facebook or MySpace, Twitter's appeal lies within its simplicity. It allows friends, family, and complete strangers to stay connected through quick updates that only take a couple of seconds to write. Therefore, if you like to feel connected to others, but have limited time, Twitter might be just be for you.

WhatsApp

According to an online dictionary named YOUR DICTIONERY defines whatsapp as: An ad-free instant messaging service for all major smartphones from WhatsApp Inc., wholly owned by Facebook. Founded in 2009 by Brian Acton and Jan Koum, WhatsApp uses the Internet as an alternative to the SMS text messaging system. Via Wi-Fi, subscribers pay nothing for WhatsApp messages the first year and 99 cents per year thereafter. If Wi-Fi is unavailable, and people use their cellular data plans for WhatsApp messages, thousands can be sent for a fraction of total usage because text takes up very few bytes (characters). WhatsApp also provides voice calling from one WhatsApp user to the other, as well as voice recording, which lets users record and send audio messages instead of typing. With more than 400 million monthly users worldwide and billions of messages sent each day, Facebook acquired the company for USD \$19 billion in 2014.

Users of Social Media

The strength of social media and social media websites is increasing day by day but so far we need a comprehensive analysis to understand it in detail and properly that how can we further utilize and get benefits from this whole global world created by the internet. This detailed analysis and report regarding the social media usage in Pakistan is pulled together by AlphaPro. As a digital marketing firm, AlphaPro has been taking many initiatives to enlighten the use benefits and utilities of social media.

According to the data collected by AlphaPro states that only 44.6 million out of 198.9 are internet users in Pakistan which *means* only 22% of total population in Pakistan has access to internet, even out of them only 35 million are active users of social media which means *only* 18% are social media users. If you look deeper about the number of mobile users you will get to know that 109.5 million out of the total population uses mobile and among them 32 million are active internet and social media users from their mobile devices which *is just* 16% of our people.

Information Reliability

There are many definitions regarding the terms: information and reliability. According to the Merriam Webster dictionary, information is defined as “the communication or reception of knowledge or intelligence” and the term reliability is defined as “the quality or state of being reliable”. Someone or something that is reliable can be trusted or believed because he, she, or it works or behaves well in the way you expect. Information that is reliable or that is from a reliable source is very likely to be correct.

So, here the researchers are trying to find out the users’ perception about information provided by social media.

Research Question

What is users’ perception about the information reliability on Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp?

Research Objectives

- To find out how far the news content shared through social media is perceived reliable by its users.
- To explore which of the three platforms is perceived the most and least reliable by its users.

Literature Review/Theoretical Framework

Much of the previous research on credibility has focused on understanding the factors that have an impact on credibility *evaluations* (Fogg, Soohoo, Danielson, Marable, Stanford, Tauber, 2003, Fogg, Tseng, 1999, Fogg, Marshall, Laraki, Osipovich, Varma, Fang, Paul, Rangnekar, Shon, Swani, others, 2001). This focus is not surprising, as the concept of “credibility” is fuzzy and has many possible interpretations among researchers and non-researchers alike. Nonetheless, many factors that affect credibility evaluations are consistently described in the literature, for example the positive impact that “good” Web page presentation and layout can have (Lowry, Wilson, and Haig (2014) and Fogg et al. (2003), the negative impact that too many intrusive advertisements can have (Zha and Wu (2014), Fogg et al. (2003), and so on.

The research of Fogg et al. has used two approaches for determining credibility evaluation factors. The first was a declarative approach, where respondents were asked to evaluate credibility and directly indicate which factor from a list was influencing their *decision* (Fogg et al., 2001). The second approach was manual coding of comments left by respondents who evaluated credibility by two coders (Fogg et al., 2003).

Some researchers list as many as 26 *factors that affect credibility judgments* that make up the Modality, Agency, interactivity, Navigability (MAIN) model (Sundar, 2008) of credibility evaluations. According to this model, these four affordances (i.e. modality, agency, interactivity and navigability) generate cues utilized by Web users in inherent heuristics that lead to credibility evaluations; however, the MAIN model is primarily based on a synthesis of research covering the quality and ergonomics of online media, i.e. not on empirical user studies. Some of its factors do not even seem to be related to credibility (e.g. relevance, which is an orthogonal concept). Further, this large number of cues, including many synonyms used in other research papers, emphasizes the difficulty of selecting the correct criteria for evaluating credibility when designing interfaces or systems that support credibility evaluations. We observe here that this difficulty can best be solved by considering only criteria that are most important to users in real credibility evaluations

All these stats show that we have a lot to do in this sector as compared to the developed countries. We need to create awareness regarding the healthy and efficient uses of social media. We need to realize the wide horizon people have on the social media. Our people use it just for time pass and connectivity whereas the true essence and power is overlooked.

Theoretical Framework

Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) is an audience-centered approach that focuses on what people do with media, as opposed to what media does to people.

Originators and Key Contributors: Uses and gratification theory builds off of a history of communication theories and research. Jay Blumler and Denis McQuail laid the primary groundwork in 1969 with their categorization of audience motivations for watching political programs during the time of the 1964 election in the United Kingdom. This eventually led them to develop UGT later on with their colleagues.

Keywords: gratification, media, audience, entertainment, mass media, communication

Uses and gratification theory seeks to understand why people seek out the media that they do and what they use it for. UGT differs from other media effect theories in that it assumes that individuals have power over their media usage, rather than positioning individuals as passive consumers of media. UGT explores how individuals deliberately seek out media to fulfill certain needs or goals such as entertainment, relaxation, or socializing.

History

Uses and gratification theory builds off of a history of communication theories and research. Its beginnings lie in researchers' studies of radio listeners in the 1940s. Other research at that time looked into children's comics and the absence of newspapers during a newspaper strike. USG history can be described as falling within a series of stages:

Stage 1.

In 1944 Herta Hertzog interviewed people who listened to soap operas and determined that they sought three different types of gratification from this form of entertainment. These three types of gratification were emotional, wishful thinking, and learning.

In 1954 Wilbur Schramm developed a formula for determining which media an individual might select all contribute to the foundation for modern developments of this theory. This formula took into account the amount of gratification an individual expected to get out of a certain form of media and the amount of effort the individual would have to exert to get it.

In 1970 Abraham Maslow posited that USG was an extension of the needs he had himself organized into his Hierarchy of Needs.

Stage 2.

In 1969 Jay Blumler and Denis McQuail studied the United Kingdom 1964 election and categorized people's motives for watching certain political programs on television. These audience motivations formed the foundation for their research in 1972 and led to USG later on.

In 1972 Jay Blumler, Joseph Brown, and Denis McQuail proposed four uses of media: diversion, personal relationships, personal identity, and surveillance.

In 1973-74 Blumler, Brown, and McQuail were joined by colleagues Michael Gurevitch, Hadassah Haas, and Elihu Katz. The six conducted collaborative research on how people viewed mass media.

Stage 3.

UGT researchers today are exploring predictive and explanatory possibilities of the theory by connecting media usage with individual factors. There is particular interest in the link between why media is used and the gratification received. Overall, UGT has been crucial to a shift that focuses on the media user and their agency in the field of mass media studies.

Modern-Day Applications

Today, UGT has more relevance than ever as a tool for understanding how we as individuals connect with the technologies around us. These technologies span everything from the Internet to video gaming to mobile phones. UGT research into mobile phone usage has found that people seek a number of gratifications from their phones, including affection/sociability, entertainment, and mobility, among others. As another example of a contemporary technology, when using social media, users can be motivated by factors like a need to vent negative feelings, recognition, and cognitive needs. Animated news and entertainment media are just two other examples of media technologies that UGT researchers continue to explore.

The Theory Criticism

UGT has been plagued almost from its inception by criticisms that it does not meet the standards necessary to be a theory. Common criticisms include the fact that gratifications are more dependent on researchers' input than on the subjects', that audiences of different ages will have different motivations for watching the same media, and that much of the information collected in studies is self-reported, and as such, difficult to measure. Despite the criticism, UGT may be more relevant and useful today as media users now have hundreds of TV channels, the internet, and a whole array of other media entertainment options that help solidify the argument that the individual has agency over their media consumption.

Research Methodology

This is exploratory study in which these researchers have tried to define the users' perception of information reliability shared on social media.

As the name suggests, exploratory research is conducted to explore the research questions and may or may not offer a final conclusion to the research conducted. It is conducted to handle new problem areas, which haven't been explored before. Exploratory research lays the foundation for more conclusive research and data collection.

Study Approach

In this study, the researchers have used the quantitative approach in which data is analyzed on the basis of statistical figures. Qualitative research is a structured way of collecting data and analyzing it to draw conclusions. Unlike qualitative research, this research method uses a computational, statistical and similar method to collect and analyze data. Quantitative data is all about numbers.

Quantitative research involves a larger population as more number of people means more data. In this manner, more data can be analyzed to obtain accurate results. This type of research method uses close-ended questions because, in quantitative research, the researchers are typically looking at measuring the extent and gathering statistical data.

Online surveys, questionnaires, and polls are preferable data collection tools used in quantitative research. There are various methods of deploying surveys or questionnaires. In recent times, online surveys and questionnaires have gained popularity. Survey respondents can receive these surveys on mobile phones, emails or can simply use the internet to access surveys or questionnaires.

Survey Method

The researchers have collected primary data from the users of Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and used the survey questionnaire in the field.

The traditional definition of survey research is a quantitative method for collection of information from a pool of respondents by asking multiple survey questions. This research type includes recruitment of individuals, collection, and analysis of data. It's useful for researchers who aim at communicating new features or trends to their respondents.

Population

The target population of this study was journalists of Peshawar Press Club. A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed among random journalists.

A research population is generally a large collection of individuals or objects that is the main focus of a scientific query. It is for the benefit of the population that researches are done

Sample

Sample was based on 200 questionnaires and this study is totally based on primary data. Among 200 questionnaires, 38 were not returned and 12 questionnaires were rejected due to incomplete data.

Definition of Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions (or other types of prompts) for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. ...

Although questionnaires are often designed for statistical analysis of the responses, this is not always the case

The questionnaire consisted of nine questions.

Nature of Questions

The questions were totally close ended in which two or more than two possible set of answers were provided to the respondents.

Scale of Questions

In this particular research study, the researcher has used the *likert scale* in his questions. Likert scale is the most popular type of scale. Likert scale questions require survey respondents to select their level of agreement to a statement.

Data Treatment

After the above process the data was collected and then was put into the tables. The purpose of making tables was to analyze the collected data easily.

Data Analysis

A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed among the target population Peshawar Press Club. Among 200 questionnaires, 38 questionnaires were not returned and 12 were incomplete or false information was present which can't be the part of this research study. The below present data is the output of 150 complete and considerable data.

The field questionnaire was consisted of total nine questions in which the answers of respondents are defined in the given tables and charts.

Usage of Social Media

The first question of this study was the usage of social media platforms (*Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp*). Chart 1 shows the exact usage of social media platforms on behalf of respondents. The respondents were asked to mark the given set of two options i.e “YES” and “NO”.

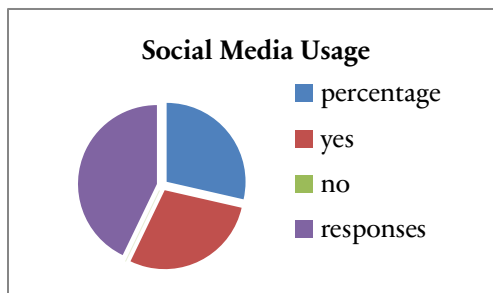


Chart 1. Shows the Usage of Social Media

Explanation of Chart

The above chart 1. shows the actual number of responses and total percentage of given responses by the respondents which is more elaborated in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Showing the Usage of Social Media

Usage of Social Media	Number of Answers	Total Percentage
Yes	150/150	150%
No	0/150	0%

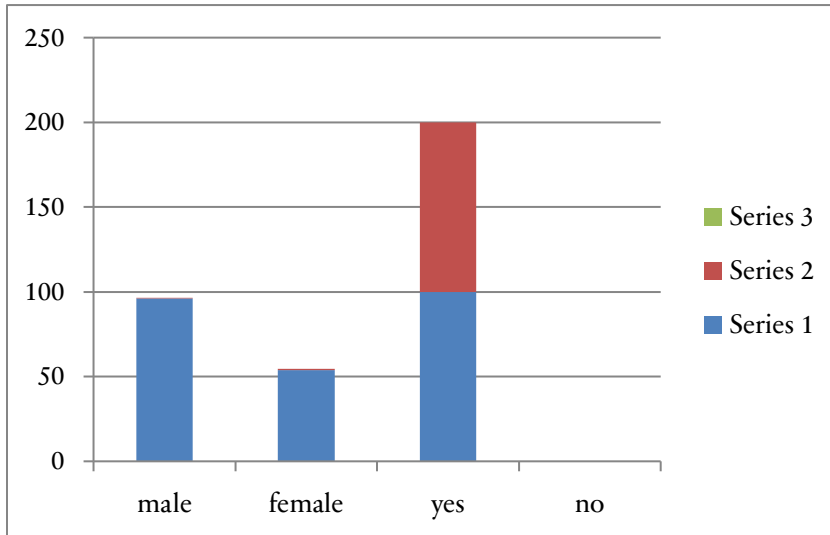


Chart 2. Shows the Gender Wise Frequency of the Respondents for Question no “1”

Explanation of Chart

The above chart 2 shows the actual number of responses on gender bases and total percentage of given responses by the respondents which is more elaborated in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Gender wise Frequencies of Respondents.

Respondent's	Answers	Percentage
Male	96	64%
Female	54	36%

Explanation of Table

Table 2 shows that 64% of male and 36% of female respondents have agreed that they use the social media platforms i.e., Facebook, Twitter and Whatsapp.

Frequent Usage of Social Media

Responding to the Question number two, the users were asked that if they consider themselves as a frequent user of social media and in this regard, there were two possible answers were given to them and the respondent have to select only “one” of them. The given options were “YES” and “NO”. the main reason of putting this question was to know if the respondent uses social media very frequently or not. chart 3 shows the usage of social media on behalf of the respondents.

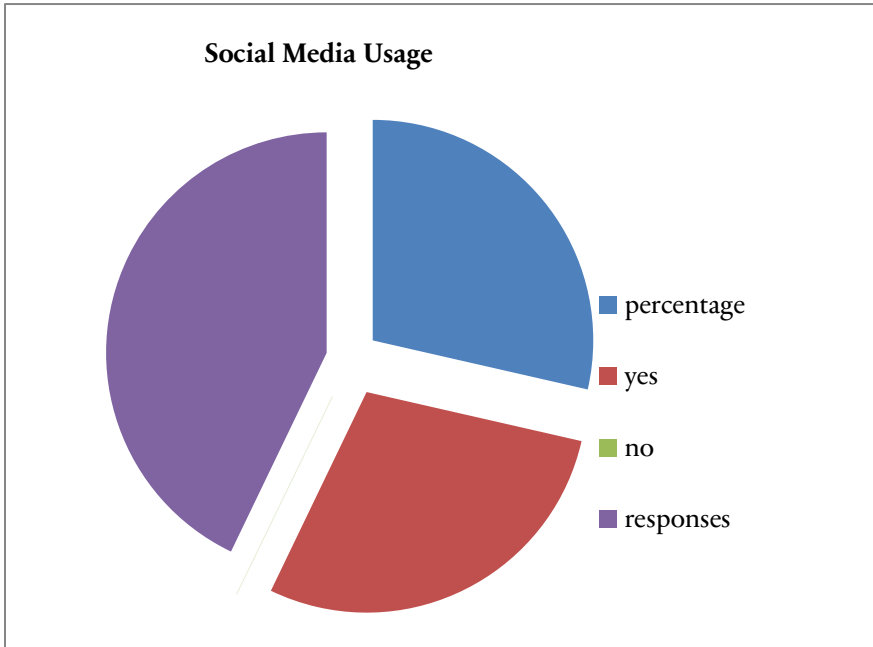


Chart 3. Showing Consideration of Frequent Usage of Social Media

Explanation of Chart

Chart 3 shows that the students of Peshawar University consider themselves as frequent users of social media which is further elaborated in table 3 given below.

Table 3. Showing Consideration of Frequent Usage of Social Media

Frequency of Social Media Usage	Number of Answers	Total Percentage
Yes	150/150	150%
No	0/150	0%

Explanation of Table

Table 3 shows that the target population which was the students of Peshawar University considers themselves as frequent user of social media.

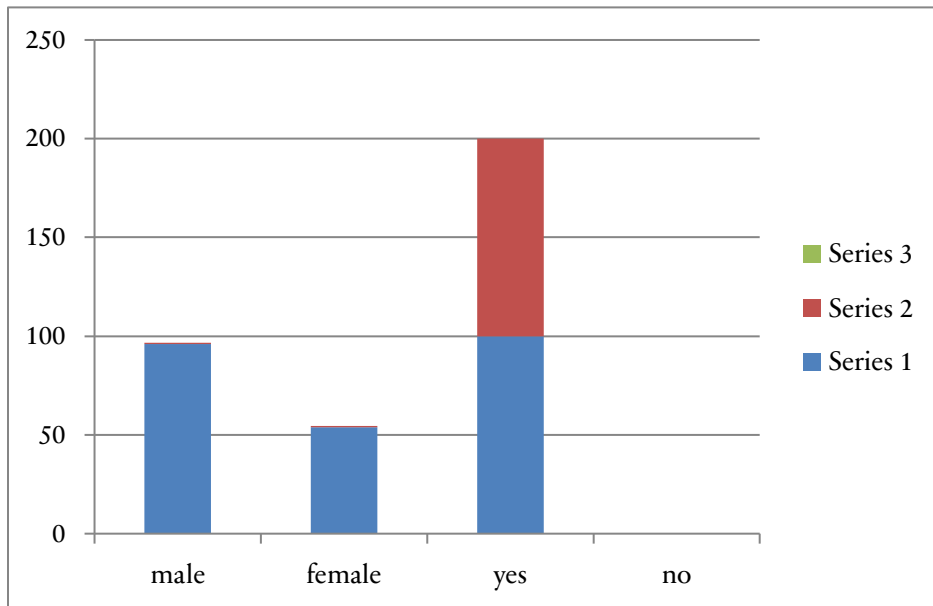


Chart 4. Shows the Number of Respondent on Gender Bases.

Explanation of Chart

The above chart 4 shows the actual number of responses on gender bases and total percentage of given responses by the respondents which is more elaborated in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Showing Gender wise Frequencies.

Gender	Number of Answers	Total Percentage
Male	96/150	64%
Female	54/150	36%

Explanation of Table

Total 96 male respondent from the sample participated in the survey and 54 female had responded for the required data. Sample of total 150 participants were selected from university of Peshawar as sample for the research study.

Popular Social Media Platforms

Question number three of this study was to know that which platform of social media is more popular among the respondents. The respondent can select two or more than two options as there answer. The possible answers were consisted of total “six” set of options which are (a) Facebook, (b) Twitter, (c) WhatsApp, (d) Instagram, (e) all of them. The respondents can also mention another platform which is not given in the options. They can mention that platform in the blank space, which is the option (f). *Chart 5* shows the popular social media platform among the users.

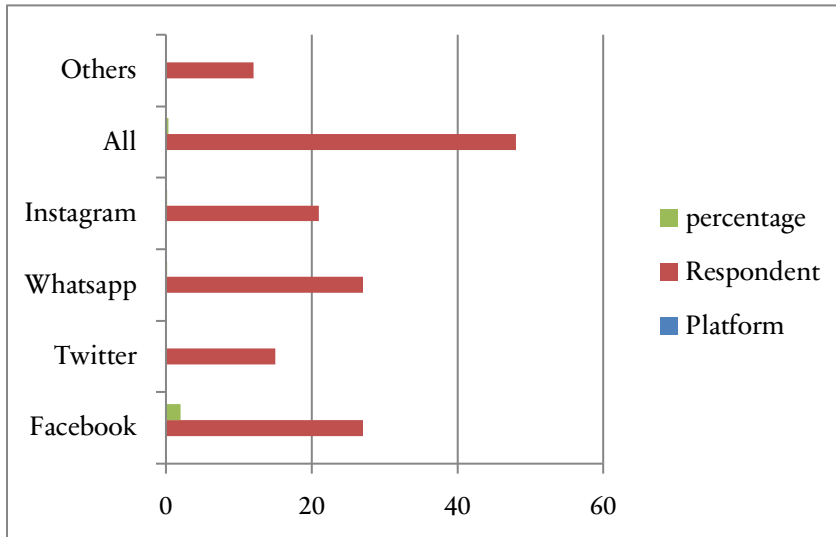


Chart 5. Showing Popular Social Media Platforms.

Explanation of Chart

Chart 5 shows the popular social media platform which is further elaborated in Table 5

Table 5. Showing Popular Social Media Platforms.

Platforms	Respondent	Percentage
Facebook	27/150	18%
Twitter	15/150	10%
WhatsApp	27/150	18%
Instagram	21/150	14%
All of above	48/150	32%
Others	12/150	08%

Explanation of Table

As shown in the *Table 5* the respondents had selected more than one option as there most often usage of social media platforms. In this study total 150 respondents have participated in which 96 were female and 54 were male respondents. 48 respondents highlighted Facebook, twitter, WhatsApp and Instagram as there often usage at the same time, 27/150 users only highlighted Facebook, 15/150 marked twitter, WhatsApp scored 27/150 and 12/150 indicated *Snapchat* and *YouTube* as additional social media platforms for themselves. The *Snapchat* is highlighted by female respondents and *YouTube* is selected by male respondents. The results show that the first six answers are the most popular platforms and each respondent uses more than one social media platforms.

Purpose of Social Media Usage

Question number four of this study was to know the purpose of social media usage on behalf of respondents. The primary objective of this question is to know that what trickles the respondents to use social media. In this question, total six options were given in which the participants have to select and rate them according to their usage.

The participants can rate their preferences as 1, 2, 3.....10. According to the ratings the highest rating is (1&2) and the lowest is (9&10). The rating bracket from 3 to 8 is considered as average usage. *Table 6* shows the usage purpose and the ratings of the respondents.

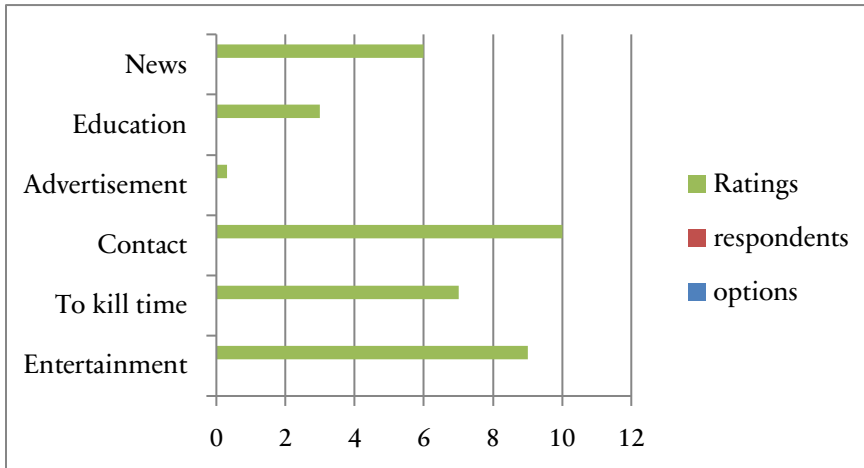


Chart 6. Showing the Purpose and Ratings of Social Media.

Explanation of Chart

Chart 6 shows the purpose of social media usage and ratings provided by the users. The following data is further more elaborated in Tab 6.

Table 6. Purpose of Social Media Usage.

Options	Respondents	Ratings
Entertainment	116/150	02
To kill time	102/150	03
Contact	147/150	01
Advertisement	4/150	0.3
Education	16/150	07
News	98/150	06

Explanation of Table

The table 6 also indicates that 102/150 respondents use social media just to kill the time and

rated as 03 which also indicates the good option. Majority of students said that when they get free from there exams then they have a lot of free time that’s why they opt for social media.

The overwhelming response was given to the contact as social media is used very frequently used for contact purpose. 147/150 participants selected contact as their primary purpose of social media and rated as “1” which is highest rating among all responses.

Only 4/150 respondent’s highlighted advertisement as their purpose of social media usage and rated as 10 which is the lowest rating.

16/150 respondents selected education and rated it as 07 which is an average rating.

98/150 respondents opted for News and rated it as 08 which is again an average rating.

Authenticity of News content

Question no five of this study was actually the main research question. In this question the respondents were asked that if they consider the news content shared on social media is authentic or not. This news content can be related to politics, entertainment, social, cultural and can be all of them. The question was consist of two options i.e “YES” and “NO” and the respondents were asked to select only one of them. Chart 7 will help us to understand that how far the new content is considered authentic on behalf of respondents.

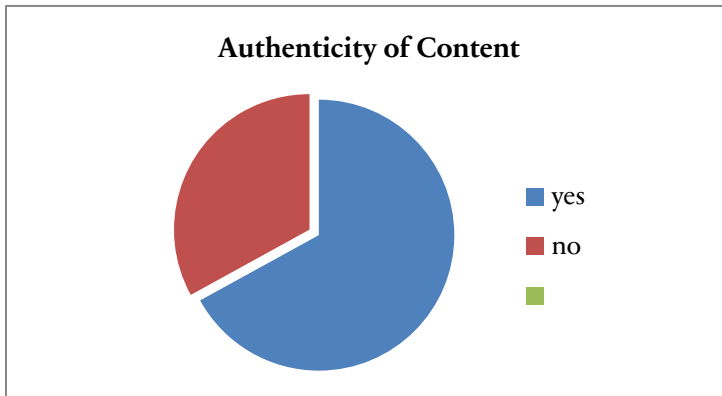


Chart 7. Will help us to Understand that if people Consider news Authentic or Not

Explanation of Chart

Chart 7 shows the level of authenticity considered by the target population which was the journalists of Peshawar Press Club. Table 7 will help us to understand the above chart.

Table 7. Perception of Authenticity of News Content on Social Media

Options	Number of Answers	Total Percentage
Yes	101/150	67%
No	49/150	32%

Explanation of Table

Table 7 shows that 101/150 participant have agreed that the news content shared on social media platforms are authentic and they follow such news.

On the other hand, 49/150 participants thinks that news content shared on social media is not authentic at all. Some of participant also wrote that it is very rarely authentic.

Kinds of Authentic News Content

Question no six of this study is to know that what kind of news content shared on social media seems more authentic to the respondents. In this question there were five options and the respondents were asked to select one or more than one option from the given possible choices. The respondents were also asked to rate the selected options as 123.....10. According to the ratings the highest rating is (1&2) and the lowest is (9&10). The rating bracket from 3 to 8 is considered as average usage. the provided options were Politics, Entertainment, social, cultural and all of them. Chart 8 shows us that which type of news content is more authentic to the respondents.

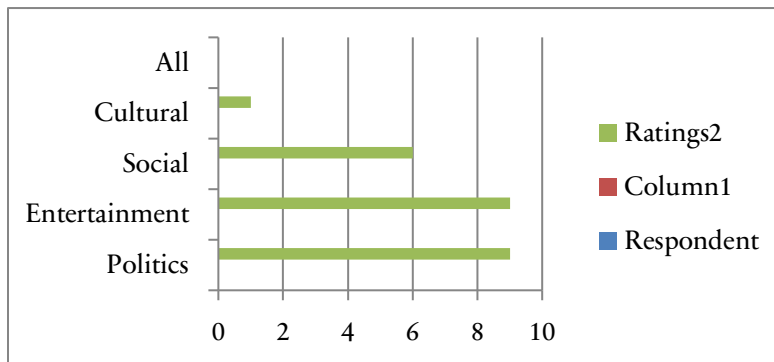


Chart 8. Types of Authentic news Content Shared on Social Media

Explanation of Chart

Chart 8 shows the type of authentic news content shared on social media and ratings provided by the users according to its authenticity. The following data is further more elaborated in Table 8

Table 8. Authenticity of news Content Shared on Social Media

Options	Number of answers	Ratings
Politics	132/150	02
Entertainment	119/150	02
Social	60/150	06
Cultural	15/150	09
All of them	0/150	Nil

Explanation of Table

As shown in Tab 8, 132/150 participants thinks that news related to politics is more authentic. All of the 132/150 respondents rated politics as 02 which indicates that they rely on political news shared on social media.

The Table also shows that 119/150 respondents rely on news content related to entertainment and shared on social media. They also rated as 02 which means that they overwhelmingly depend on entertainment news shared on social media.

60/150 respondents selected social news and their dependency on it. The participant rated social news as 06 which means they depends on it rarely.

Cultural news scored only 15/150 and rated as 09 which is the lowest among all ratings. None of the respondent had marked “all of them” and there were also no ratings.

Reliable Social Media Platforms

The seventh question of this study was that which of the social media platform is considered more reliable on behalf of the respondents. There were again five options were provided to the respondents. The respondent can select one or more than one options as their preference. In such question the respondents are also asked to rate their selected preference. According to the ratings the highest rating is (1&2) and the lowest is (9&10). The rating bracket from 3 to 8 is considered as average usage. The options were: Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, Instagram and all of them. Chart 9 will explain the further detail.

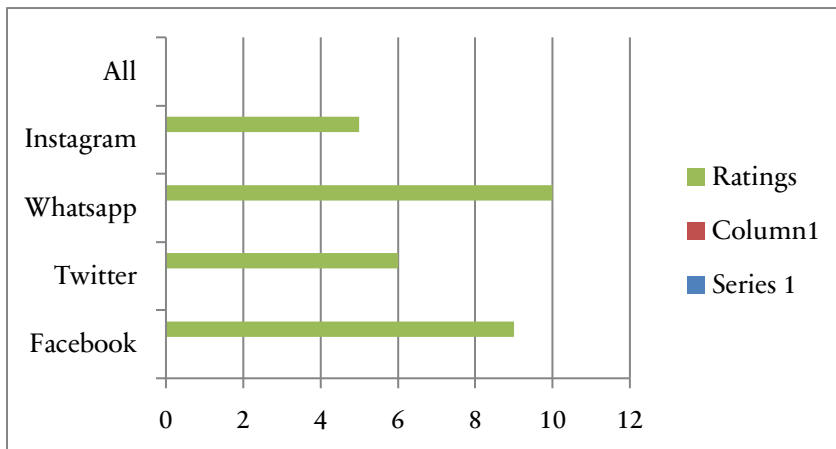


Chart 9. Reliable Social Media Platform Considered by Respondents.

Explanation of Chart

Chart 9 shows the reliable social media platform selected by the number of participants which can be understand more easily with the help of Tab 9

Table 9. Reliable Social Media Platform Considered by Respondents.

Options	Number of Answers	Ratings
Facebook	120/150	02
Twitter	23/150	07
Whatsapp	141/150	01
Instagram	108/150	06
All of them	0/150	Nil

Explanation of Table

As shown in table 9, the huge number of respondents (120/150) has selected Facebook as the reliable source of information. The respondents have also rated Facebook as 02 which means good and is reliable platform of social media.

In this run twitter scored only 23/150 and rated Twitter as 07 which means its an average reliable platform of social media.

Tab 9 shows that Whatsapp is the most popular among all social media platforms. 141/150 respondents selected Whatsapp as the most reliable platform on social media and rated it as 01 which is highest rating among all. This rating indicates that Respondent consider Whatsapp as the most reliable platform on social media.

Instagram was selected by 108/150 participants as reliable source and rated as 06 which mean it is an average reliable source. None of the respondent selected or rated “all of them”.

Believable Authentic News Content

Question no eight of this study was to know that what makes the participants to believe the authenticity of news shared on social media. For this purpose, the respondents were provided two set of options and the respondent have to select only one from them. The options were: the source of information and content of information. *Table 10* shows the responses of the respondents.

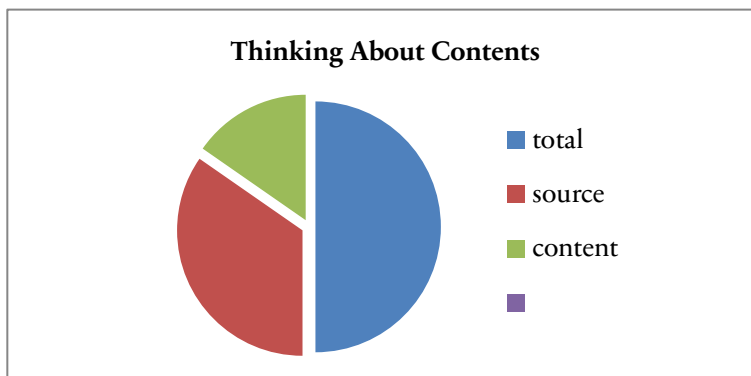


Chart 10. Shows the Thinking of Participants Regarding news Content.

Explanation of Chart

Chart 10 shows the actual thinking about the news contents on behalf of respondent which is very clearly elaborated in tab 10

Table 10. Basic Judgment of Authenticity on Behalf of Participants.

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Source of information	104/150	69%
Content of information	46/150	31%

Explanation of Table

Table 10 shows that 104/150 participants thinks that news shared on social media is source of information to them and only 46/150 participants thinks that the news shared on social media is content of information.

Further Action by Respondents

The last question of this study was to know the further action of the respondents after receiving that information in which they think is unauthentic. For this purpose the respondents were provided two options and the respondent have to select one of them. The options were: ignore it and sharing with others through social media. Chart 11 will further elaborate the responses of participants.

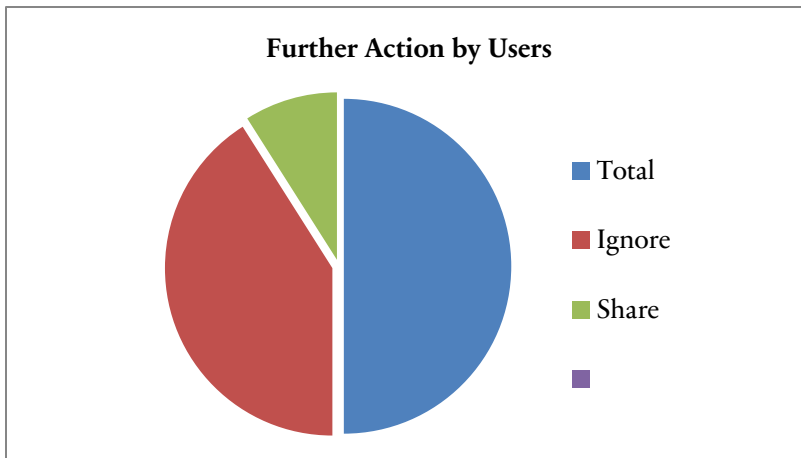


Chart 11. Further Actions taken by the Respondents after Receiving Unauthentic Information

Explanation of Chart

Chart 11 shows that which action is further taken by the respondents by receiving unauthentic news content shared on social media. Tab 11 will help us to understand the chart more easily.

Table 11. Further Actions taken by the Respondents after Receiving Unauthentic Information

Options	Number of answers	Total percentage
Ignore it	123/150	82%
Share it with others	27/150	18%

Explanation of Table

Tab 11 shows that 123/150 participant ignore such information which they think is not authentic at all. This shows the sense of responsibility on behalf of participants. The tab 11 also highlights that 27/150 participant share the unauthentic information through social media as they are not confirm of its authenticity.

Conclusion

Social networking is an expanded tool in current era. Many users get benefits from different applications of the social networking. The researchers selected Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp for this study as these are the platforms being used widely. This researcher has tried to explore which given social media platform is considered more reliable on behalf of users. The target audiences of this study were the journalists Peshawar Press Club and the study was conducted in the premises of Peshawar.

For achieving the objectives of the particular research study, the researcher has used quantitative research method in which survey questionnaire was included. The below data is the output of 150 questionnaires:

In this research study, 64% male and 34% female journalists have participated and the responses given by participants are briefly elaborated below:

Usage of Social Media

All of the participants agreed that they use social media which indicates that all of the participants are clear about the usage of social media.

Frequent Usage of Social Media

All of the participants agreed that they consider themselves as frequent users of social media as it indicates that all of the participants frequently used social media platforms as there routine hobby.

Popular Social Media Platforms

The respondents had selected more than one option as there most often usage of social media platforms. In this study total 150 respondents have participated in which 54 were female and 96 were male respondents. A total of 48 respondents highlighted Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and Instagram as there often usage at the same time, 27/150 users only highlighted Facebook, 15/150

marked Twitter, WhatsApp scored 27/150 and 12/150 indicated *Snapchat* and *YouTube* as additional social media platforms for themselves. The *Snapchat* is highlighted by female respondents and *YouTube* is selected by male respondents mostly. The results show that the first six answers are the most popular platforms and each respondent uses more than one social media platforms. The above data shows that social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and Instagram are the most popular social media platforms. Some of the participants use YouTube and Snapchat as well which are again social media sites.

Purpose of Social Media Usage

The study reveals that 77% of target audience use social media for entertainment purpose, 68% for killing the free time, 98% for being in contact with each other, 2% for advertisement, 16% for education and 65% for news gathering. The above data shows that personal contact is the main purpose of social media usage.

Authenticity of News

The study reveals that 67% of participant thinks that news content shared on social media platform is authentic while 33% thinks that it is not authentic at all.

Kinds of Authentic News Content

This study shows that 88% of target population thinks that political news shared on Social Media is authentic, 79% thinks that Entertainment News is genuine, 40% of target audiences highlighted Social News and 10% respondents marked Cultural News as dependable. It is also to be noted that respondents has selected more than one option, therefore, the total percentage is still 100%.

Reliable Social Media Platforms

The study concluded that 80% of target audiences consider Facebook as reliable social media platform, 15% marked Twitter, 94% opted for WhatsApp and 72% marked Instagram as reliable social media Platform. It is also to be noted that respondents has selected more than one option s therefore the total percentage is still 100%.

Basic Judgment of Authenticity

The study reveals that 69% of total respondents thinks that news shared on social media is a source of information to them and 31% participants thinks that the news shared on social media is content of information.

Further Action by Respondents

The research concluded that 82% participants ignore such information which they think is not authentic at all. Almost 18% participants share the unauthentic information through social media

though they are not sure of its authenticity.

Objective 1

The first objective of this study was to know whether the news content shared on social media is perceived reliable or otherwise. This research study explored that 67% of target population has agreed that news content shared on social media is reliable while 33% state social media is not reliable.

Objective 2

The second objective of this study was to know that which social media platform is the most and least reliable. Study concluded that 80% of target audiences consider Facebook as reliable social media platform, 15% marked Twitter, 49% opted for WhatsApp and 72% marked Instagram as reliable social media platform. The finding shows that majority of users use social media for being in contact with each other.

Research Question and Answer

The research question of this study was to know if users rely on news content published on social media. The study reveals that 67% of users rely on news content shared or published on social media platforms.

Further Study Possibility

The study was based on “Users Perception about Information Reliability on Social Media” but in future it can be wide and in broad manners. Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp are popular social media platform but other tools of social networking also can also be studied in the future studies. For the future studies, other social networking sites like YouTube, Snapchat and LinkedIn may also be taken into consideration. Some measurement for awareness can also be added in the future study.

This researcher has used 200 samples but in future it can be increased up to 500 respondents.

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