

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA GRADUATE COLLEGE

Why Young Adults Lose Trust in Journalism: Testing Familiarity and Quality Theses

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

Surata K Roy, Norman, Oklahoma

2025

Why Young Adults Lose Trust in Journalism: Testing Familiarity and Quality Theses

A THESIS APPROVED FOR THE
GAYLORD COLLEGE OF JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION

BY THE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF

Professor Dr. Chang Sup Park, Chair

Professor Dr. Doyle Yoon

Professor Dr. Robert L. Kerr

Acknowledgements

At the very outset, I would like to thank my committee Chair, Professor Dr. Chang Sup Park, whose expertise and support have been invaluable in undertaking this thesis, and who has been instrumental during my academic journey. To my committee members, Professor Dr. Doyle Yoon and Professor Dr. Robert L. Kerr, I thank you from the core of my heart. You are all compassionate souls.

I also thank Dr. Angela Zhang, Dr. Glenn Leshner, Dr. Ralph Beliveau, Dr. Ryan Bisel, Dr. Patrick Meirick and Graduate Advisor Leslie Cermak for being tremendously helpful throughout my academic journey at OU.

My gratitude goes to all other professors for all the learning that I had in the classroom. I want to single out Dr. Park and Dr. Zhang for their patience as I frequently sought their academic help.

Finally, to my parents for whom I had constantly been a cause of concern, this work is dedicated to you only.

Abstract

The study explores what factors drive trust in news media – both mainstream and social media – among young adults. Previous studies have investigated the association between media consumption and the general public's trust, focusing on factors such as source trustworthiness, journalism principles, and more, and examining why people lose trust in mainstream news media or turn to alternative media platforms given the growing distrust in traditional news sources. This study relies on the concepts of audience familiarity and news quality to understand their influence on trust both in mainstream and social media platforms among a particular segment of population. Drawing on the survey data from U.S. college students (N=138) and subsequent interviews with 7 young adults, this thesis investigates whether quality journalism practices – those that ensure commitment to truth in reporting, public interest, accuracy, unbiasedness, objectivity, transparency and fairness – affect young media consumers' trust in both mainstream and social media. At the same time, this study aims to see whether familiarity with a particular media platform and its features such as ease of use, comfort, understandability and accessibility – foster trust among its users. Hierarchical regression analysis shows that journalism quality indicators – commitment to truth, accuracy, fairness and unbiasedness, and public interest-seeking predict young individuals' perceived trust in the mainstream media. Notably, commitment to disseminating true reports came out as the most significant predictor of trust in both mainstream and social media as well. Users' familiarity with social media platforms has been found to influence young people's trust in social media as a news source.

Keywords: media trust, quality journalism, platform familiarity, young adults

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Introduction

In today's complex information ecosystem, trust serves as the foundation of relationship between the news media and the public (Furusten, 2023). News media, in turn, rely on the audience's trust – without which news consumers would be unwilling to spend money on the news content (Strömbäck et al., 2020). Media trust is important to build informed citizenry, which is essential for democracy (Fisher, 2016). It is also important for creating a culture of healthy public discussion about important public matters that individuals may get to know from popular legacy media like television. But nowadays young people spend more time watching TV for fun, paying attention to their own life and livelihood, and less time on public matters and civic activity (Mindich, 2004).

Numerous studies show that media trust influences news consumption – High media trust is associated with increased news consumption while low trust discourages news consumption (Tsfati & Cappella, 2005). Low trust in news media may also result in news avoidance (Ladd, 2012). Particularly, young people are gradually losing trust in news media and subsequently consuming less news. Perez-Escoda and Pedrero-Esteban (2021b) noted that Generation Z's trust in journalism and traditional media has significantly dropped which might weaken the role of journalism in society. According to The Edelman Trust Barometer (2024), the media distrust score stands at an average of 39 on a scale of 1-49, indicating a high level of distrust towards the media.

Declining media trust is a longstanding concern, tracing back to the 1940s in the U.S. when early research focused on “source trustworthiness” as a key factor (Montemayor & Rasgado, 2023). The proliferation of online news media and the spread of misinformation in the

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digital space have added new dimensions to this challenge, particularly for young generations. This misinformation concern leads to a decline in news trust and news avoidance by a good number of people worldwide, making them stay uninformed about political matters and current events (Newman et al., 2023). Moreover, news consumers develop a tendency of skepticism even toward true news because of the prevalence of false news on the digital space (Hoes et al., 2024). A recent study on the effect of health-media literacy bears testimony to this claim where manipulation techniques, such as biased, overblown, amateur, sales focused, taken out of context generate skepticism in both accurate and inaccurate news headlines (Lyons et al., 2024). Along with skepticism, grows a sort of misperception toward what the news is (Allen et al, 2020).

Quite many young individuals appreciate the importance of news in society (Furusten, 2023), but many of them think news from the mainstream media is not credible (Tsfati & Cappella, 2003). Though young individuals think that the news available online might not be all true, still they consume it when shared by their friends, family members and acquaintances (Clark & Marchi, 2017). Those who have low trust in mainstream news media are more likely to consume news on social media and alternative non-mainstream outlets (Hameleers et al., 2022).

While studies have explored why people are losing trust in news media (Newman & Fletcher, 2017; Prochazka, 2020; Yun et al., 2018), we still do not know well what factors are driving media distrust, particularly among young adults. By identifying plausible factors and proposing possible theories related to declining media trust, this study aims to contribute to the literature about media trust and journalism.

To this goal, this study examines two plausible theses – familiarity and quality theses. First, this study proposes that young people are very familiar with social-media information while they are increasingly becoming less familiar with mainstream news. For example, research

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shows that 58% of young adults prefer getting news from digital devices, and 54% opined that they at least sometimes get news from social media, 27% from podcasts, 32% from TV, 4% from print media, and 6% from radio (Pew Research Center, 2024).

Young people seem to consume news from social media although they trust these platforms less than traditional outlets (Furusten, 2023). As familiarity can shape some bond with the medium in question, it is possible that familiarity affects media trust.

Another thesis examined in this study is quality thesis. Research has consistently shown that journalism quality is very important in creating news audiences' perceptions about news (Fawzi et al, 2021; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2021; Strömbäck et al., 2020). Although studies have reported the connection between news quality and news trust, little research has delved deep into how young adults' perceptions of journalism quality affect their evaluation of news outlets. This approach is very important because young people have somewhat different perceptions about what news is and how any issue/event becomes newsworthy (Edgerly & Vraga, 2020). Thus, this study will examine young people's perceptions of various dimensions of journalism quality and their connection to media trust.

To examine why young adults are losing trust in journalism and how familiarity and perceived journalism quality can explain this phenomenon, an online survey of 138 college students and seven in-depth interviews were conducted. The findings provide valuable insights into news media trust, news consumption and democracy.

Literature Review

Trust

The definition of trust varies widely from scholars to scholars. English sociologist Anthony Giddens, who is known for his famous structuration theory, defines trust as confidence

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in a person, thing, or statement, which stems from the belief that the trusted individual has integrity and knowledge (Giddens, 1990). He explains that trust is a belief or faith in someone or something. Giddens drew the reference from German sociologist Niklas Luhmann who viewed that trust relates to uncertainty or risk while confidence is a stable belief that familiar things will happen in future. Trust develops when individuals evaluate someone based on their wisdom, integrity and competence (Ferrin & Dirks, 2003), and it is one of the most basic evaluations that people make about others (Pranta, Jati, & Mani, 2023).

Tsfati (2010) describes trust as a two-way connection between the trustor, who reposes the trust, and the trustee, who is trusted with an expectation that the trustor will gain some benefits. Both sides aim to satisfy their respective interests. Tsfati argued that it is not just about personal relationships, but about how society functions smoothly when there is a general sense of trust in social structures.

According to Vanacker et al. (2009), trust is a macro-social concept since it operates on a large scale, impacting entire societies, communities, or institutions, rather than individuals or small groups. The researchers argued that trust at this level influences how people engage in democratic processes like voting, and interact with institutions such as government, media, or legal institutions.

Stiernstedt (2021) also defined trust as a societal concept essential for the functioning of a democratic society and emphasized that citizens should believe that societal systems will work.

This view aligns with that of Swedish historian Lars Trägårdh (Trägårdh et al., 2013), who argued that trust varies based on societal context, and can be understood through various cultural, historical and institutional lenses.

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According to political scientists, trust is linked to civic participation, and it is necessary for political engagement (Putnam, 2000). From a social psychological perspective, trust is like working together in a group, meaning that it is important for group work since people need to rely on each other to achieve a common goal (Porter & Lilly, 1996). Overall, trust functions as an essential element in various human interactions.

News Media Trust

The focus of this study is news-media trust. Before explaining news media trust, it is worthwhile to look at news trust first because news media trust and news trust are often considered interchangeable although there is a subtle difference between the two. News trust is associated with how people perceive the news—such as whether it is relevant, meets their important goals and helps them make sense of the world (Newman et al., 2021). The Reuters Institute found that people trust the news when it is reliable and provides them with helpful information about personal and civic lives (Coleman et al., 2009). Perceptions of trustworthy news differ from person to person. Some consider news trustworthy if it includes diverse points of view (Schmidt et al., 2019) while others perceive it trustworthy if it aligns with their personal beliefs (Schulz et al., 2020).

News media trust, on the other hand, refers to a person's willingness to depend on the media with an expectation that the media will either meet their needs or reflect the democratic values of society (Prochazka, 2020). This idea applies not only to individuals but also to groups or entire society. Trust in media explains how people perceive the trustworthiness of news delivered through different channels or media—such as radio, television, press, the Internet, and social media (Kioussis, 2001). News media trust is a multifaceted concept – it includes trust in the platform (message distribution channel), trust in the source (journalist or content creator) and

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trust in the message itself (Otto & Köhler, 2018). Each part influences the other parts and often overlaps especially in digital and social media platforms (Fisher, 2016). When content appears trustworthy, individuals tend to follow the same content across different platforms, which demonstrates an overlap in trust toward the platform, the source, and the content itself (Kioussis, 2001). Trust in the source influences how people select and evaluate news content.

Citizens do not always have perfect knowledge about the credibility of every news item or every bit of information that they come across in the media (Stiernstedt, 2021). Taking this into account, Furusten (2023) argued that what distinguishes trust in news media from other forms of trust is the element of uncertainty about the credibility of news stories and the perceived truthfulness of reporters in their reporting. He explained that the relationship between the news media and the news media user requires a leap of faith for the user to trust the news as there is no way to confidently know that what the news says is completely true.

Research shows that individuals who rely on traditional media outlets show a higher level of trust, while those who consume news through social media demonstrate minimal trust in the news media (Kalogeropoulos et al., 2019). Despite the low trust in the news circulated on the digital media, the news consumption rate in digital platforms is higher compared with traditional media.

Pew Research Center (2024) found that news websites or apps and search engines are the most common platforms for the U.S. adults to get news. About two-thirds of the U.S. adults at least sometimes get news through these news websites, apps or search engines. A little more than half (54%) at least sometimes get news from social media, and 27% said they prefer having news through podcasts. However, when it comes to news consumption from traditional media

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platforms, only 32% mentioned TV, 4% print media and 6% radio as their preferred media for getting news.

Young Adults and Media Trust

The focus of this study is on young adults, particularly Generation Z. “Generation Z” belongs to a group born roughly between 1997 and 2012 who grew up fully immersed in digital media with constant Internet connectivity, smartphones and social media, and are often known for being tech-savvy, socially conscious, and highly connected online. Generation Z turns to social media for news in lieu of traditional media sources (Furusten, 2023). Social media are the key factor behind shaping young people’s experiences with news (Clark & Marchi, 2017). Kalogeropoulos (2019) noted that old people generally turn to television for their news and young adults to social media, messaging apps, video content and care less about news brands and often let algorithms and personalization systems choose their news.

Although there is evidence that young people have a tendency of news avoidance (Newman et al., 2022), a substantial segment of them still consume news, but in different ways. For example, young people often come across news incidentally on social media (Bode, 2016) and through social influencers or peers (Russmann & Hess, 2020). Video-based news is most popular among young individuals (Reuters, 2024). Čuvalo and Peruško (2017) found two categories of young digital media users in Croatia – those who engage with the news and those who avoid it.

Young adults’ news use and perception are influenced by the media they grow up with. They form their ideas and behaviors that seem to sustain throughout their adulthoods (Čuvalo & Peruško, 2017) because of similar societal, cultural and historical backgrounds (Diehl et al.,

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2018). The generational pattern greatly affects the news consumption pattern, which is developed by socialization at young age (York & Scholl, 2015).

Compared with older people, younger audiences exhibit a more complex and varied perspective on media trust. For example, they often consume news from the outlets, like social media, they don't fully trust (Swart & Broersma, 2022) and often evaluate the credibility of information through a heuristic lens. The young adults also think that the information is true given the sharing of it by their friends on a social network service or through instant messaging (Metzger, Flanagin & Medders, 2010) and trust a news story recommended by social networks more than a news story directly obtained from a news media outlet (Turcotte et al., 2015).

The young media consumers also find newspapers a trustworthy source of information but consider local news not very competent (Tsfati & Cappella, 2003, 2005). They understand the importance of news but find it boring, and that causes them to consume it more passively (Tamboer et al., 2022). Without just relying solely on the trustworthiness of media outlets, the young individuals seek confirmation from their peers, even though they find this method biased (Furusten, 2023).

Diehl et al. (2018) argued that the young adults' news consumption habits are not only shaped by the media and political environment, but also by their family and parental traits, schools, and peer groups. Russmann and Hess (2020) discovered that many young adults trust news shared by their friends on social media platforms.

To keep pace with the changing consumption patterns, newsmakers are following the way social media works to reach out to younger audiences effectively. Some news media outlets mimic social media characteristics (text, transitions, filters and visual effects, stickers and GIFs) to grab the attention of young audiences (Vázquez-Herrero et al., 2022). Moreover, news media

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outlets are trying to strike a balance between factual information and positive emotions in line with current trends (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2020).

Young consumers' trust and interest in news media are shaped by cultural factors also. Research has demonstrated that cultural and societal backgrounds shape young people's behaviors. Banaji and Cammaert (2015) found that while the European young adults had a strong interest in public affairs, their trust in traditional news sources varied based on their socioeconomic backgrounds. In Denmark, similar distinctions were found in news consumption based on cultural capital (Peters et al., 2022). According to the study, cultural background plays a crucial role – for example, some families might prioritize watching news while others might not.

Young adults exhibit ambivalent trust in social media as a news source, often valuing its convenience and personalization while remaining skeptical of its credibility. Research indicates that while many young adults rely on social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter for news, they simultaneously express concerns about misinformation and biased content (Newman et al., 2023). Compared to older demographics, the younger users are more likely to encounter news incidentally through algorithmic feeds rather than through intentional news-seeking behaviors, which can shape their perceptions of credibility (Tandoc & Duffy, 2022).

However, despite their frequent use, trust in social media as a reliable news source remains lower than trust in traditional journalism, with many young adults perceiving social media content as lacking journalistic standards and fact-checking (Fletcher & Park, 2023). For example, in a recent study, 27% of young TikTok users expressed a high level of trust, 46% a moderate level of trust, and 27% low trust in information encountered on TikTok (Lan & Tung, 2024). Credibility of content creators, familiarity with content creators and user engagement

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were found to be critical determinants of trust in TikTok (Lan & Tung, 2024). Additionally, exposure to disinformation and concerns about manipulation by influencers or political actors further erodes trust in news on social platforms (Guess et al., 2020).

At the same time, young adults tend to differentiate between platforms and sources when assessing trustworthiness. Studies suggest that while general trust in social media news is low, trust varies based on the perceived credibility of individual content creators, influencers, or legacy news outlets that publish content on these platforms (Swart & Broersma, 2022). For instance, young users are more likely to trust news from established journalistic brands on social media than from user-generated content or partisan sources (Boczkowski et al., 2018). The participatory nature of social media also influences trust dynamics, as young adults tend to rely on peer recommendations and engagement metrics (likes, shares, comments) as heuristic cues for credibility (Metzger & Flanagin, 2021).

While skepticism toward social media as an institution remains high, trust in specific news sources within these platforms can shape how young adults perceive and engage with news content.

Factors Affecting Media Trust

Research has taken different approaches to understand factors behind the news media trust. Swart and Broersma (2022) used grounded theory to explore the antecedents of trust in the news media. Grounded theory is a research approach in which theories are developed based on systematically gathered and analyzed data, rather than starting with a pre-conceived hypothesis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Strömbäck et al. (2020) presented a theoretical framework, which allows for a thorough analysis of factors that influence media trust at both micro (individual) and macro (institutional)

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levels. The current study provides a framework that integrates both conceptual understanding and empirical analysis, to assess the complex dynamics of media trust and its relationship with media use.

Sociodemographic Factors

Sociodemographic factors have produced mixed results predicting media trust. According to Newman et al. (2017), age, gender, education, and socioeconomic status influence news media trust and news consumption patterns. Inconsistencies have been found regarding the impact of age on media trust. Matthes (2013) reported that younger participants have hostile media perception, which leads to lower trust in the media. Similarly, Granow and colleagues (2018) discovered that old individuals have lower trust in online media but have higher trust in print media. The researchers observed that younger individuals consider television and online news more credible than other media platforms. The distribution of news stories through social media such as Facebook influences the credibility of news stories (Karlsen & Aalberg, 2023). The study found that people consider the news less trustworthy when they receive it on Facebook.

Regarding the impact of gender on media trust, findings are mixed. Some studies found gender is not linked with media trust (Arlt, 2018; Chung et al., 2012), while other studies (Hopmann et al., 2015; Tsfati & Ariely, 2014) showed that men have lower trust in the media than women. In several studies, women were found to have lower trust in the media than men (Livio & Cohen, 2018; Schultz et al., 2017). According to Ibelema and Powell (2001), women show higher levels of trust in television than men, whereas Johnson and Kaye (2000) reported that men find online newspapers more credible than women but found no gender differences regarding online television.

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Inconsistent findings about media trust also exist as to education and income. Several studies reported that higher levels of education and income are related to lower levels of media trust and a heightened level of media cynicism (Ladd, 2012; Tsfaty & Ariely, 2014). However, Chung et al. (2012) and Schultz et al. (2017) found no such association. Gronke and Cook (2007) discovered that people with low education levels have a decreased level of media trust and more media cynicism. People with low educational status place more trust in tabloid press (Fawzi, 2019), television (Greenberg, 1966), and online news (Johnson & Kaye, 2002).

Ethnic identity also impacts media trust. Individuals belonging to a distinct ethnic group such as African American community in the U.S. express relatively a low level of media trust (Beaudoin & Thorson, 2005; Stroud & Lee, 2013). White Americans have a relatively high level of media cynicism (Cook & Gronke, 2001). In summary, high or low level of media trust is not only a particular characteristic to any specific group of people, but it can also be found among people of any age, gender, education, personal belief and socioeconomic status. Therefore, this research question is proposed:

RQ1: How do socio-demographic factors (age, gender, education, income, and ethnic identity) relate to media trust?

Political Antecedents

Political ideology strongly influences media trust. Schulze (2020) found that a strong interest in politics and a negative view of immigration were the key factors influencing the use of right-leaning digital media outlets. In the U.S., conservative attitudes are related to low trust in the media (Yamamoto et al., 2016), while liberal attitudes are associated with high trust in the media (Livio & Cohen, 2018). Supporters of extreme left- and right-wing (populist) parties show lower levels of media trust (Jackob et al., 2019). Individuals tend to trust media institutions if the

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media align with their political ideology (Stroud & Lee, 2013). In the U.S., Republicans have less trust in the media than Democrats (Brenan, 2019). Similarly, in Europe, people who have right-wing beliefs seem to trust the media less, and this distrust is even stronger among those who hold extreme political views (Schranz et al., 2018).

Political interest and knowledge are related to media trust. Some studies find a positive connection between the three variables (Fawzi, 2019; Tsfaty & Ariely, 2014) while others have found no connection at all (Lee, 2010). Media trust also aligns with political trust such as trust in the government (Otto & Köhler, 2018). This link is stronger in the countries where political parties and the media are closely connected, but it is weaker in the countries that value media independence and professionalism of journalism (Ariely, 2015). The connection between political trust and media trust is crucial because the media serve as key sources of information about political institutions and their performance, thereby influencing political trust of the public (Lee, 2010).

To the contrary, political trust can also affect how individuals perceive and trust media sources, especially in relation to political news and information (Jackob et al., 2017). Low political trust is frequently linked to populist views and electoral choices, meaning that individuals who lack trust in traditional politics may find populist rhetoric and electoral platforms more appealing, and they align their voting behavior with such choices (Akkerman et al., 2017).

Political efficacy is the belief that one has ability to understand politics, take part in political events and make a difference in politics (Gil de Zúñiga, Diehl, & Ardévol-Abreu, 2017). There are two types of political efficacy, with one being internal and another external. Internal political efficacy is the belief of an individual that they can understand and influence political

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processes. It reflects how confident someone feels about their skills and knowledge necessary to participate in politics, such as voting, discussing issues, or engaging in activism. External political efficacy is when people believe that the government officials will listen to and respond to their voices. Research shows that people with higher levels of internal political efficacy may become more selective about the news sources they trust (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2017). Those with higher external political efficacy are more likely to trust traditional news sources (van Eimeren et al., 2017).

Political talk, whether in interpersonal discussions or online debates, plays a crucial role in shaping media trust by reinforcing or challenging individuals' perceptions of news credibility. Engaging in frequent political discussions has been linked to increased skepticism toward media, as individuals are exposed to diverse viewpoints and critiques of journalistic practices (Kim & Kim, 2020). However, the direction of this effect depends on the nature of political talk—deliberative discussions that encourage critical thinking can enhance trust in high-quality journalism, whereas polarized or partisan conversations tend to erode trust in mainstream media while reinforcing reliance on ideologically aligned outlets (Stroud & Muddiman, 2013).

Moreover, exposure to political talk on social media, where misinformation and echo chambers are prevalent, can further reduce trust in traditional media institutions (Garrett et al., 2019). To the contrary, individuals who engage in cross-cutting political discussions, where they interact with diverse perspectives, are more likely to retain trust in professional journalism and recognize its role in democratic discourse (Tsfati et al., 2020). Thus, political talk influences media trust in complex ways, depending on the context, ideological diversity, and the level of critical engagement in discussions. So, based on the literature above, this research question is proposed:

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RQ2: How do political factors (ideology, political interest, political knowledge, political efficacy, political talk) relate to media trust?

Perceptions About News

Interest in news is closely linked to media trust, as individuals who actively seek news tend to have higher trust in traditional news organizations, while those who passively consume news, particularly through social media, exhibit greater skepticism. Research demonstrates that individuals with a high degree of interest in news are more likely to engage in fact-checking and cross-referencing sources, reinforcing their trust in credible journalism (Newman et al., 2023). On the other hand, those with lower news interest often rely on algorithmically curated content, which can expose them to misinformation and fragmented narratives, leading to declining trust in mainstream media (Tsfati & Ariely, 2014). Stroud and Lee (2021) argue that active news consumers develop stronger cognitive mechanisms for evaluating journalistic credibility, whereas passive consumers may be more susceptible to distrust due to exposure to unverified sources. Accordingly, it is hypothesized that there is a positive relationship between news interest and media trust.

H1: News interest is positively connected to media trust.

News efficacy

News efficacy, or an individual's belief in their ability to understand and use news effectively (Park, 2019), is strongly linked to media trust. Higher news efficacy is associated with greater confidence in distinguishing credible journalism from misinformation, which in turn fosters trust in reputable news sources (Urban & Schweiger, 2014). People with high news efficacy actively seek diverse news sources, critically evaluate content, and demonstrate

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resilience to misinformation, leading to sustained trust in professional journalism (Vraga & Tully, 2021).

In contrast, individuals with low news efficacy often feel overwhelmed by the complexity of news or doubt their ability to discern reliable information, which can result in disengagement or increased skepticism toward media institutions (Strömbäck et al., 2020). Research also suggests that those with greater media literacy—often linked to higher news efficacy—tend to differentiate between high- and low-quality journalism, reinforcing trust in legacy media while being more critical of partisan or sensationalist sources (Craft et al., 2017).

H2: News efficacy is positively connected to media trust.

The News-Finds-Me (NFM) Perception

The *news-finds-me* (NFM) perception, the belief that important news will reach an individual without active seeking, is negatively associated with media trust. People with strong NFM perceptions tend to rely on algorithmic curation and social networks for news exposure, which reduces their engagement with traditional journalism and critical news consumption skills (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2017). Research shows that NFM individuals exhibit lower trust in mainstream media because they perceive professional journalism as less essential to staying informed, instead favoring peer-shared content that often lacks verification (Park, 2022).

Additionally, NFM perception correlates with increased susceptibility to misinformation, as those who passively consume news are less likely to engage in fact-checking or source verification, further eroding trust in institutional journalism (Van Aelst et al., 2021). This passive consumption pattern also reduces exposure to diverse viewpoints, fostering skepticism toward traditional media, particularly when news from professional sources contradicts socially curated content (Fletcher & Nielsen, 2018). Overall, the NFM perception weakens the relationship

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between audiences and journalistic institutions by promoting reliance on decentralized, unverified sources, ultimately diminishing trust in mainstream media.

H3: The news-finds-me perception is negatively connected to media trust.

The Impacts of Media Platform Familiarity

Tsfati and Cappella (2003, 2005) found that young adults often use news sources that they do not fully trust. Swart and Broersma (2022) also reported that young people in the Netherlands consume news from outlets they don't fully trust. The main idea in this study is that young people are very familiar with social media and heavily rely on them for information seeking, entertainment and other purposes (Pew Research Center, 2024).

This familiarity may lead them to think that the information flowing on social media sound okay and believable although it is not. For this reason, they may feel comfortable with news on social media. On the other hand, not many young people rely on mainstream media and most young users do not have a habit of accessing them since they consider the traditional media boring (Kalogeropoulos et al., 2019). This distancing from mainstream news media may make young people uncomfortable with the news from mainstream media.

Research has shown that heavy reliance on social media may leave the impression that the mainstream media news is boring, negative, and biased (Kalogeropoulos et al., 2019). For example, when a user gets news only from TikTok, the news formats and styles of mainstream media may feel very uninteresting and insipid. For these reasons, young people may lose their trust in mainstream news media. Familiarity with a medium may shape overall media trust and news consumption. Molyneux, Lewis, and Holton (2019) found familiarity significantly influences trust.

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Dunn (2019) found that when people are very familiar with a source of information, three things happen: (a) people pay attention to that information; (b) they find it credible; and (c) they become more influenced by the message. He argued that familiarity enables the public to foster a high level of trust although the messages disseminated by a particular media source might indicate the opposite. Audiences' familiarity with a medium gives a pass to the newsmakers of the media outlet to even inject false information into the news and spread "fake news" in an apparently legitimate manner (Dunn, 2019).

Gefen (2000) states that familiarity serves as an antecedent of trust by providing a context that helps individuals to clarify future expectations because of their past interactions. In the context of media trust and consumption, repeated exposure to traditional media, such as television or newspapers, can foster familiarity that might make the audiences perceive that these platforms are reliable. The same logic can apply to the online media.

Familiarity with certain digital platforms, news websites, or social media may influence trust. Users build their expectations from online platforms based on their previous interactions. For example, frequent use of a certain online news outlet or a social media platform may increase trust because of their perceived consistency as provider of information even though the overall trust in digital media remains low. It seems that familiarity impacts not only trust in the media but also consumption habits as the users are more likely to engage with their familiar media sources and perceive them as trustworthy.

Franco and Roldán (2015) reported that familiarity and trust are important criteria for one to determine how much one should engage in a virtual relationship. In the context of digital media, individuals are more likely to engage with news or information from sources they have

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interacted with before or that have been recommended by their trusted peers (Turcotte et al., 2015).

For example, regular interactions with digital news apps or social media accounts foster familiarity, which can strengthen trust and encourage continued consumption. Given the lack of literature, this research question is proposed:

RQ3: How does familiarity with a media platform relate to trust in that media platform?

The Impacts of Journalistic Performance

Quality journalism is the order of the day to bring back the lost trust of the public in the news media and the hidden glory of the press. Kohring and Matthes (2007) proposed four hierarchical dimensions that journalists should follow to earn public trust: (a) highlighting relevant topics, (b) selecting important facts, (c) ensuring factual accuracy, and (d) exercising journalistic evaluation. Media consumers consider all these attributes before placing their trust in the media. Newman et al. (2020) identified timely sharing of important information and helping people understand the world around them as key practices of quality journalism to capture the attention of media consumers.

Journalism quality is a cornerstone of public trust in news media. High-quality journalism that offers in-depth analysis, factual accuracy, and nuanced reporting creates a foundation for credible news media. Such journalism not only informs and educates audiences but also provides context and clarity on complex issues. The perception of credibility, fairness, and reliability in reporting shapes how individuals engage with news outlets. News audiences place value on journalistic principles such as transparency, accuracy, fairness, and independence (Knudsen et al., 2022). Transparency in journalistic processes is important for fostering trust. Audiences are

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more likely to rely on news outlets that provide insight into how information is sourced, verified, and reported.

For example, acknowledging errors and issuing corrections can affect people's perception promptly. When news outlets are transparent about editorial policies, they align more closely with public expectations of credible journalism (Prochazka & Obermaier, 2022). Another critical factor is fairness. Public trust often hinges on whether people feel their perspectives and communities are accurately and equitably represented in news coverage (Ross Arguedas, et al., 2023).

The study found that fair representation is valued across demographic and ideological divides. On the other hand, biased reporting limits news information significantly that leads to a decline in citizen consumption of news from that particular outlet (Gehlbach & Sonin, 2014). In addition, constructive journalism, which focuses on solutions-oriented reporting and diverse perspectives, has been identified as a method to build audience confidence and encourage constructive dialogue (Hermans & Prins, 2022).

The importance of accuracy and integrity cannot be overstated – factual errors, even minor ones, can erode trust and damage a publication's reputation. In today's fast-paced news environment, where information is consumed quickly and often without much scrutiny, the potential consequences of such mistakes are even more significant. Though publishing a corrigendum is a common practice of news outlets after the error is detected, by the time the correction is made, the damage is already done.

Readers might have already formed their opinion based on the first information run by the media and may be duped due to the error. On the other hand, many media consumers might not come across the corrections and may continue to hold on to the same inaccurate belief

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already formed. As a result, the credibility of the media outlet can suffer long-term harm, even if the error is later rectified. Therefore, ensuring accuracy in the first instance is crucial for maintaining public trust and the integrity of the news.

Furthermore, media organizations that invest in investigative journalism are often viewed as more trustworthy. Media consumers intend to read or watch news that serves the public interest and helps in safeguarding public life and livelihood (Dunaway & Graber, 2022). Investigative journalism is always held in high regard as it requires tremendous journalistic efforts, often involving risks, to access the sanctuary of those involved in crimes and unearth malpractices that go against the greater good of the public.

For example, when an investigative journalist successfully exposes a terror plot before it can cause harm, both the media and the reporter gain public admiration. This type of work changes the outlook of news media consumers toward the media and enhances the public trust in the media outlet. Similarly, reporting on systematic political corruption can mobilize public opinion that is reflected in low voter turnout (Carreras & Vera, 2018). Therefore, quality investigative journalism does not only aim to bring about transparency, but also molds public opinion, fosters informed citizenry and enhances media trust.

Perception of bias also plays a significant role in determining trust in news media. When audiences perceive media outlets as overly partisan or biased, their confidence in the news declines. This is especially pronounced in politically polarized environments where the media are frequently accused of favoring one side over another. This view is especially common among people with strong political opinions (Perloff, 2015).

H4: Indicators of good journalistic performance are positively related to media trust.

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Methodology

This study employed both a quantitative and a qualitative method to examine what factors contribute to media trust among young adults. For the quantitative approach, a web-based survey was conducted over students (N = 138) at The University of Oklahoma through Qualtrics over the period of February 10-28, 2025. For the qualitative approach, interviews were conducted with seven college students from February 14 to 16, 2025.

Survey

Before running the survey, IRB permission was obtained. Participants were recruited through The University of Oklahoma's mass email system. The university's mass email ensures that participants are generally more reliable than anonymous online respondents. Only U.S. citizens or permanent residents were eligible for the study. The research aimed to explore different aspects of quality thesis and familiarity thesis that might influence trust in the media.

The quality thesis was measured by asking questions about the participants' trust levels across different news media platforms. Questions on quality thesis included: "How much do you think the media sources provide accurate/unbiased/objective/transparent/sensational news coverage?"; "How much do you think the media reflect social values?"; "How much do you think the media sources are independent from undue political or governmental influence/ undue business or commercial influence?"; "How much do you think the media can be relied upon to tell the truth?"; "How much do you trust the media act in the best interest of the public?" Responses were measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = not at all, 7 = very much).

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Similarly, familiarity thesis was measured by inquiring about the participants' perceptions about familiarity with both mainstream media and social media on a 7-point Likert scale. The questions included: "I feel comfortable using the medium"; "I find the medium easy to understand"; "I know well this medium's features."

Media trust was measured with the item, "I trust the following media as a news source" on a 7-point Likert scale. Media use was assessed by asking participants "During a typical week, how frequently do you get news from network TV/cable TV/local TV/print newspapers/online newspapers/radio/social media/podcasts/citizen journalism sites?" (1= never, 7= very often).

Three variables about news perceptions – News efficacy, news interest, the news-finds-me perception – were measured. News efficacy (LaRose & Eastin, 2004) was measured on a 7-point Likert scale, with five items: (1) "I am confident in my ability to navigate this medium effectively"; (2) "I am confident in my ability to distinguish between accurate and inaccurate news stories"; (3) "I can effectively verify the credibility of news sources before accepting information as true"; (4) "I feel capable of managing the vast amount of news information available without feeling overwhelmed"; and (5) "I can critically analyze news content to identify potential biases or misinformation."

News interest was measured with the following item, "How interested, if at all, would you say you are in news?" (1 = not at all, 10 = absolutely).

News-finds-me perception was also measured on a 7-point Likert scale using five items: (1) "I don't need to actively look for news because it finds me through social media and other platforms"; (2) "I rely on my friends and social media connections to share important news with me"; (3) "Even without actively seeking news, I feel informed about current events"; (4) "I trust

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that the algorithms on social media show me the news I need to know”; and (5) “The news I come across through social media and friends is sufficient for me to stay updated.”

Political interest, political efficacy, political ideology, political knowledge, and political talk were also measured. Political knowledge variable was created using six items exploring the participants’ basic understanding of politics and government structure, where “1” indicates a correct answer and “0” stands for an incorrect answer. Political interest variable was measured on a 7-point Likert scale with three items: (1) “I am interested in local politics”; (2) “I am interested in federal politics”; and (3) “I follow the news about government and politics.”

Political efficacy was assessed on a 7-point Likert scale with four items: (1) “I can understand political issues and make informed decisions”; (2) “I am qualified enough to participate in politics”; (3) “People like me can influence government decisions”; (4) “My vote matters because it would make a difference”; and (5) “People like me have a say in what the government does.”

For political ideology, participants were asked to indicate their stance on politics (1 = extremely conservative, 7 = extremely liberal). Political talk was measured by asking participants about the frequency with which they discussed current political issues with family members, friends, coworkers and acquaintances with 1 representing “never” and 10 “very frequently.”

Within the sample, 63 (45%) identified as male, 67 (48%) identified as female, and 9 (6%) identified as other. The average age was 29.60. As for race and ethnicity, 19 (14%) were Hispanic or Latino, 84 (60%) were white, 5 (4%) was black or African American, 1 (.72%) was American Indian or Alaska Native, 18 (13%) were Asian and 11 (8%) identified as other. As for education, most participants had some college education (N =38, 27%), followed by bachelor’s degree (N =77, 55%), master’s degree or JD degree (N =20, 14%), high school or less (N =2,

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1.43%), and doctoral degree ($N = 1$, .72%). In terms of religious affiliation, most participants 75 (53%) were Christians, 46 or (33%) identified as belonging to no religion, 5 or (4%) were Hindu, 5 (4%) were Muslim and 3 (2%) were Jewish.

Table 1. Survey Participants

Demographics	Categories	N (%)
Gender	Male	63 (45)
	Female	67 (48)
	Other	9 (6)
Age		Mean (29.60)
Race/Ethnicity	Hispanic or Latino	19 (14)
	White	84 (60)
	Black or African American	5 (4)
	American Indian or Alaska Native	1 (.72)
	Asian	18 (13)
	Other	11 (8)
Education	Some college	38 (27)
	Bachelor's degree	77(55)
	Master's degree or JD degree	20 (14)
	High school or less	2 (1.43)
	Doctoral degree	1(.72)
Religion	Christians	75(53)
	No religion	46 (33)
	Hindu	5 (4)
	Muslim	5 (4)
	Jewish	3 (2)

The participants' level of trust in mainstream media and social media as news sources was measured (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). They were asked to rate their degree of trust in network TV news ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 1.80$), cable TV news ($M = 2.70$, $SD = 1.56$), local TV news ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 1.76$), radio news ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 1.65$), print newspapers ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 1.68$), online newspapers ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 1.57$), social media ($M = 2.78$, $SD = 1.58$), podcasts ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 1.70$) and citizen journalism sites ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 1.49$).

Table 2. Participants' Level of Trust in Mainstream and Social Media

Trust in media sources	Mean	SD
Network TV news	3.53	1.806

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(for example, ABC, NBC)

Cable TV news

(for example, CNN, Fox News)

Local TV news

Radio news

Print newspapers

Online newspapers

Social media

Podcasts

Citizen journalism sites

2.70

4.22

3.47

3.80

3.50

2.78

3.19

3.78

1.561

1.760

1.650

1.684

1.574

1.585

1.705

1.498

Interviews

The qualitative component of this study is semi-structured interviews of college students (N = 7). The interviews examined how young adults interact with both traditional and digital news media, and social media, how much they trust the media and how they consume news in their day-to-day lives. The interview questions include: “What are your favorite news programs or channels, and why do you choose them over others?”; “What makes you trust a news source the most?”; “Are there particular factors you look for to place trust in news story?”; “Which news organizations do you trust the most, and why?”; “Have you ever encountered a news source that seemed unreliable? How did you handle that unreliable situation?”; “How important is it for you to get your news from traditional media/online news media/social media?” By focusing on quality and familiarity theses, this study investigated how the stated framework shapes individuals’ media trust in the current media echo system.

The interview was conducted after obtaining the IRB approval as well as the approval of the interviewees. Before the interview started, the purpose of the study, the kinds of questions to be asked, how long it might take to complete the interview, any potential risks regarding accidental data release, the participants’ benefits to attend the interview, and their consent to audio-recording were discussed in brief. The participants signed a consent form to formally

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acknowledge their agreement for an in-person interview. The face-to-face interviews were held in the Gaylord Hall research room 3158.

The interview format was semi-structured that allowed room for follow-up questions to explore participants' trust in the news media and their media consumption behavior. Following each interview, audio-recording was saved in a password protected file to ensure privacy and data security. Participants were reminded that they were not obliged to give answers to the questions they do not feel comfortable with, and that their participation is completely voluntary, and that they also have the right to withdraw from the interview at any time without facing any negative consequences.

Results

Survey Results

Truth, public interest, interest in news, accuracy, fairness and unbiasedness emerged as the most significant predictors of trust in the mainstream media. Regarding trust in social media, the perceived truth ("The media can be relied upon to tell the truth") was found to be an influential factor. In other words, if people perceive that social media is trustworthy in terms of their performance, they may be more likely to repose their trust in social media. In addition, the variable such as feeling comfortable with social media use was also found to be a predictor of trust in social media. Quality journalism, which advocates for the dissemination of true news, facts, and fair representation, serves in this model as the strongest predictor of trust in news media, not only in mainstream media but also in social media.

Table 3. Comparison of Media Performance Between Mainstream Media and Social Media

	Mainstream Media (<i>M, SD</i>)	Social Media (<i>M, SD</i>)
Comfort	4.97 (1.59)	5.09 (2.16)
Easy to understand	5.38 (1.32)	5.69 (1.45)

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Know features	4.93 (1.58)	5.59 (1.60)
Truth	3.42 (1.58)	2.35 (1.42)
Public interest	3.09 (1.34)	2.36 (1.56)
Accurate	3.64 (1.37)	2.64 (1.46)
Unbiased	2.27 (1.25)	1.66 (1.17)
Objective	3.02 (1.47)	1.89 (1.32)
Transparent	3.52 (1.34)	2.35 (1.43)
Fair	2.60 (1.42)	2.09 (1.54)
Reflect society value	3.86 (1.48)	4.09 (1.90)
Avoid sensationalism	2.44 (1.18)	1.58 (1.01)
Independent	2.09 (1.01)	2.46 (1.90)

Mainstream media and social media reveal significant differences in their media performance. For comfort, social media ($M = 5.09$, $SD = 2.16$) beats mainstream media ($M = 4.97$, $SD = 1.59$). Both platforms show moderate variation in comfort levels. The comfort level of using social media is also higher than mainstream media. In terms of ease of understanding, social media also has a higher mean ($M = 5.69$) than mainstream media ($M = 5.38$). This demonstrates that social media provides more ease to its accessibility and use than mainstream media.

For knowledge of features, social media ($M = 5.59$, $SD = 1.60$) excels mainstream media ($M = 4.93$, $SD = 1.58$), showing that users find social media's features easier to understand. As regards truth, the mainstream media ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 1.58$) outperforms social media ($M = 2.35$, $SD = 1.42$), demonstrating that the mainstream media is perceived as more truthful. The same pattern is observed for public interest – individuals view mainstream media ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 1.34$) more positively than social media ($M = 2.36$, $SD = 1.56$). Along the same line, accuracy has received a higher rating for mainstream media ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 1.37$) relative to social media ($M = 2.64$, $SD = 1.46$).

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Mainstream media ($M = 2.27$, $SD = 1.25$) are considered more unbiased than social media ($M = 1.66$, $SD = 1.17$). In terms of objectivity, mainstream media score higher ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 1.47$) than social media ($M = 1.89$, $SD = 1.32$). Transparency also shows an identical pattern in which mainstream media ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 1.34$) receive a higher rating than social media ($M = 2.35$, $SD = 1.43$).

Mainstream media ($M = 2.60$, $SD = 1.42$) is regarded as slightly more fair than social media ($M = 2.09$, $SD = 1.54$). regarding whether the media reflect society's values, social media ($M = 4.09$, $SD = 1.90$) was rated slightly higher than the mainstream media ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 1.48$), indicating that people believe social media represents societal values better than mainstream media. In terms of avoiding sensationalism, mainstream media ($M = 2.44$, $SD = 1.18$) was rated higher than social media ($M = 1.58$, $SD = 1.01$).

The higher mean of social media indicates that it tends to draw more traffic by running sensational stories. Lastly, the independence attribute for social media has a higher score ($M = 2.46$, $SD = 1.90$) than mainstream media ($M = 2.09$, $SD = 1.01$), meaning that people see social media as more independent platform than mainstream media.

Overall, people perceive mainstream media do better than social media in terms of truth, accuracy, bias, and objectivity. On the other hand, social media was rated higher on comfort, ease of understanding, reflecting society's values and independence.

Table 4. Prediction of trust in mainstream media.

	Trust in Mainstream Media	Trust in Mainstream Media	Trust in Mainstream Media	Trust in Mainstream Media	Trust in Mainstream Media
<i>Block 1: Demographics</i>					
Age	-.001	.000	.003	.002	-.068
Gender (male = 1)	.018	-.087	-.189	-.051	-.060

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Education	.136	.058	-.011	.072	-.053
Income	-.107	-.093* (p=.023)	-.071† (p=.084)	-.041	.078
Ethnicity	.037	.048	-.042	.014	-.065
Adjusted R^2 (%)	11.4*	10.9*	10.2*	9.5*	8.8*
<i>Block 2: Political Variables</i>					
Ideology		.170*(p=.049)	-.152† (p=.076)	.005	.016
Political interest		.001	-.133	-.166	-.078
Political efficacy		.096	.231	.174	.003
Political knowledge		-.035	-.047	.034	.035
Political talk		-.006	.028	.061	.065
Inc. R^2 (%)		6.6*	6.8*	7.5*	7.1*
<i>Block 3: News Perception</i>					
News efficacy			-.478**	-.400* (p=.015)	-.109
News interest			.163† (p=.057)	.101	.183* (p=.040)
News-finds-me			.022	-.014	.094
Inc. R^2 (%)			11.2***	10.7**	8.5**
<i>Block 4: News Use</i>					
Network TV news				-.169	-.109
Cable TV news				.117	.062
Local TV News				.024	.024
Radio news				-.050	-.126† (p=.060)
Print newspapers				.165	.005
Online newspapers				.098	-.056
Social media news				.149† (p=.067)	-.119
Podcasts				-.150† (p=.054)	-.026

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Citizen journalism				-.089	-.046
Inc. R^2 (%)				26.3***	31.1***
<i>Block 5: Media Performance</i>					
Feel comfort					-.003
Easy to understand					.041
Know features					-.030
Truth					.599*** ($p < .001$)
Public interest					.226* ($p = .015$)
Accurate					.614*** ($p < .001$)
Unbiased					.162 [†] ($p = .080$)
Objective					.093
Transparent					.017
Fair					.210* ($p = .040$)
Reflect society value					.071
Avoid sensationalism					.064
Independence					.112
Inc. R^2 (%)					40.8***
Total R^2 (%)					94.2***

Note. Cell entries are unstandardized coefficients. [†] $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 5. Prediction of trust in social media.

	Trust in Social Media	Trust in Social Media	Trust in Social Media	Trust in Social Media	Trust in Social Media
<i>Block 1: Demographics</i>					
Age	.004	.003	.000	.000	.045
Gender (male = 1)	-.007	.021	.286	.075	-.030
Education	.039	.104	.157	.171	.005
Income	.008	-.003	.052	.024	.049

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Ethnicity	.032	.003	.004	-.009	-.034
Adjusted R^2 (%)	.7	.9	.8	1.2*	1.7*
<i>Block 2: Political Variables</i>					
Ideology		-.024	.053	.063	.047
Political interest		-.175	-.465*(p=.048)	-.400† (p=.061)	.044
Political efficacy		-.305† (p=.068)	-.036	-.091	-.042
Political knowledge		-.049	-.053	-.068	-.031
Political talk		.155† (p=.070)	.152† (p=.067)	.034	-.076
Inc. R^2 (%)		8.1**	7.8**	7.6**	9.4**
<i>Block 3: News Perception</i>					
News efficacy			.086	.358† (p=.075)	-.010
News interest			.089	-.006	.097
News-finds-me			.464*** (p<.001)	.107	-.137
Inc. R^2 (%)			16.2***	17.1***	17.7***
<i>Block 4: News Use</i>					
Network TV news				-.251	-.301
Cable TV news				.197	.248† (p=.099)
Local TV News				.109	.156
Radio news				.117	.006
Print newspapers				-.036	.014
Online newspapers				.052	-.115
Social media news				.369*** (p<.001)	.346* (p=.042)
Podcasts				.057	-.101
Citizen journalism				-.075	.064
Inc. R^2 (%)				23.8***	22.7***

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<i>Block 5: Media Performance</i>					
Feel comfort					.405*(p=.046)
Easy to understand					-.141
Know features					.164
Truth					.701***(p<.001)
Public interest					-.069
Accurate					.111
Unbiased					-.109
Objective					-.024
Transparent					.074
Fair					-.081
Reflect society value					.063
Avoid sensationalism					.077
Independence					-.003
Inc. R^2 (%)					22.1***
Total R^2 (%)	.7	9.1*	24.8***	49.7***	73.6***

Note. Cell entries are unstandardized coefficients. $^{\dagger}p < .10$, $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$, $***p < .001$.

A hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to examine the antecedents of trust in the news media, using five sequential blocks: demographics, political antecedents, news perceptions, media use, and platform performance.

No demographic and political variables predicted trust in mainstream or social media (RQ1 and RQ2). Among the media use variables, only radio news consumption has a negative, but weak link to trust in mainstream media ($\beta = -.126$, $p = .060$). For trust in social media, the analysis reveals news consumption via social media was a positive predictor ($\beta = .346$, $p = .042$).

News efficacy was not connected to trust in mainstream media ($\beta = .109$, $p = \text{not sig.}$) and trust in social media ($\beta = -.010$, $p = \text{not sig.}$). Thus, H1 failed to receive support. The news-finds-me perception was not linked to trust in both mainstream and social media, negating H3.

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News interest was found to have a significant link to mainstream media ($\beta = .186, p = .040$), but not to trust in social media. Thus, H2 was partially supported.

Among the three variables assessing the familiarity thesis, none predicted trust in mainstream media. However, I found that the ‘feeling comfort’ item was a significant positive predictor of trust in social media ($\beta = .405, p = .046$). The other two items were not related to trust in social media (RQ3).

Among the 10 variables assessing the quality thesis, the perception that the media can be relied upon to tell the truth was the biggest predictor of both trust in mainstream media ($\beta = .599, p < .001$) and trust in social media ($\beta = .701, p < .001$). The perception that the media act in the best interest of the public was also significantly associated with trust in mainstream media ($\beta = .226, p = .015$) although it was not related to trust in social media. Accuracy ($\beta = .614, p < .001$), fairness ($\beta = .210, p = .040$), and unbiasedness ($\beta = .162, p = .080$) also significantly predicted trust in mainstream media. No other indicators of quality journalism predicted trust in social media.

Interview Results

In terms of demographic composition of the interviewees, 3 were female and 4 were male. The average age was 33.57 years. All interviewees reside in Norman, Oklahoma. Of the interviewees, 5 identified themselves as full-time students, and 2 were employed. The analysis looked for recurrent patterns of news media trust (mainstream and social media).

Participants pointed out quality journalism as the major predictor of trust in mainstream and social media. During the interview, participants were asked to rate their trust in the media on a scale of 1 (very low) and 7 (very high). All of them gave 3 out of 7, except for one participant who gave 4.

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When asked why they distrust mainstream media, many participants mentioned lack of truth, bias, too much interest in profit, indifference to the public interest, and political motives, which align with the survey findings.

Participant 1, a male college student, said: “There’s bias, I can, I can go in depth. You know, there’s money involved, there’s special interests in play. Take earlier this week, for example, Elon Musk shut down USA, was reporting that it was because USAID sent \$57 million worth of condoms to Palestinians, and that was something that Fox News reported, whereas in reality, 50,000 condoms were part of a \$57 million aid package sent to Palestine that included other pharmaceuticals. So, there’s political issues at play, people trying to push political ideologies and narratives.” He added, “As I grew up, I kind of learned, you know, that every major news organization in this country is going to have some kind of bias, and at the end of the day, you need to figure out what that bias is in order to see the filter that the news is coming through on their end.”

Participant 4, a female college student, identified a massive push of untrue narratives by both mainstream and social media as reasons for her distrust. “Money and power are in there. True news and facts matter, which are mostly absent in the media nowadays.” Participant 6, a female college graduate, said, “They [mainstream media] serve some vested interests, not the public in general.”

Politicization was another culprit to media distrust. Participant 3, a male high school teacher, called the propagandistic attitude of mainstream media: “The media all have their own business, work as a mouthpiece for a political party, you know, hardly maintains objectivity, they cannot be fully trusted. It’s no good for people.”

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Regarding trust in social media, a few participants made remarks related to the familiarity thesis. For example, Participant 7, a female college student, thinks social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube and Reddit as her primary source of news because of easy access to information and their interactive features. She said, “Because everything’s in the tip of your fingers, you know, and the presentation of news is in brief and unique manner.” Participant 5, another male college student, highlighted social media’s ease of use. He stated, “The social-media interactive features attract me more than the mainstream media. They are easy to use, close at hand and very useful.” Some mentioned that social media makes them feel connected to a global online community. For example, Participant 6 viewed social media as an outlet for people across the world to express their views and share ideas that have made the media popular and familiar.

Participant 5 emphasized the importance of familiarity to initiate trust not only in the whole media ecosystem, but also in any individual or entity. He said, “If we do not have any prior level of information about anything, it is hard to build trust at the very outset. In that case, familiarity works for us as a sort of bridge between the entity and the individual. For the media, yes, I would say, we need to get familiar with the media first before trusting.” The participant added that the reason why so many people are using social media is that they are familiar with it and have easier access to it than mainstream media.

Participant 7 supported Participant 5 partially, describing that familiarity builds trust in the mainstream media. The female Participant 7 referred to her own family culture of watching a particular TV news channel since childhood with all family members together and building trust in that medium. She said, “Watching the same news channel every night would definitely make me feel that maybe news in that particular news channel is reliable.” When asked whether

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perceived familiarity builds her trust in social media, she, however, said “no,” adding, “Well, you don’t get to see the real and legit versions, like the pros and cons of anything on social media.” Participant 2, an employee in the healthcare sector, resonated with Participant 3, saying that no one is buying information from social media blindly, and that the same applies to the mainstream media as well which are biased in their news presentation.

Indeed, five out of the seven interviewees expressed skepticism toward social media as a credible news source. Main reasons of distrust were lack of professional gatekeeping, excessive profit seeking, and algorithmic recommendation. Almost all interviewees expressed that they do not always trust the news circulating on social media platforms as there is no gatekeeper working in there. They said anyone can jump on social media and post anything to obtain traction. Participant 7 said: “Because in news (mainstream media), you know, where the information is coming from, whoever it’s commenting, but in social media, everything’s anonymous. People can hide their own identity and fake it.”

Participant 2 uses Tik Tok, Instagram and YouTube to kill time only but does not trust them. “The lack of fact checking, especially, you know, with Meta, they’ve consistently rolled back fact checking across all platforms they’re involved in.

“And I’m a checks and balances guy,” Participant 7 said, adding that, “Basically, social media has become a source of income for a lot of people. So just to gain some views, a lot of people make up stuff, and then they, you know, yeah, just to get some money.”

Some do not trust social media news because of algorithms. Participant 6, said, “You know algorithms keep feeding you news of a particular type that may not align with what I want. Social media is more of a sort of pastime, plus some information, I would say.”

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With regards to strategies to regain news audiences' trust in the media, interviewees suggested media organizations' long-term approaches. Participant 2 said, "Without professional commitment, nobody is going to trust the news media and subscribe to it. You see the health of the news media industry around the world. It's a sunken boat." He added, "Trust is something else that doesn't grow overnight, it builds on through continuous ethical practices." Participant 3 similarly remarked, "You have to keep proving that you are continuously disseminating quality news, unbiased and fair, without siding with any political party or ideology."

Several interviewees also pointed out the importance of factual reporting. Participant 1 recalled his anecdotal experience of being skeptical toward the media for not disseminating concrete factual information during the financial and housing crisis in the U.S. in 2008. He recounted how his parents were flipping through the news channels to get the real news relating to the crisis that shaped a lasting mark on his memory about the news media.

He said, "I remember watching my parents constantly scraping across all news channels, trying to figure out what was going on and what their lives were going to look like." Similarly, Participant 7 said, "I do not trust a media outlet – be it mainstream or social – based on its popularity, size and large viewership/readership/ or interactive features. I look for facts, that's it." Participant 4 stressed that she would like all mainstream media if they reported fact and true news only.

Another notable suggestion from the interviewees was journalistic integrity. Participant 1 believes journalism quality alone is not enough to earn audience trust. He said, "Because, you know, journalistic quality and integrity, for that matter, is something that is, you know, incredibly valuable when it comes to reporting on things that could quite literally affect just you or millions of people." Like Participant 1, Participant 5 said journalists' integrity can bring the

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lost glory of the press. Participant 7 also asked journalists to remain true to their profession in the best interest of the public.

Finally, several interviewees emphasized that news users have to fact-check dubious information if they want to build up trust in the media. Participant 7 said before she trusts any media content, she must cross-check it with reliable sources. “I would say, you know, I trust them, but I also have my own set of boundaries set, you know, like to what level of trust should I have.” Others also opined that even when they are familiar with a trustworthy news source, they seek to verify the credibility of the news by cross-checking information with other media outlets.

Participant 6 said, “Um, so the newspaper, television and radio are age-old familiar medium, retain their old format of providing us news, not attractive to me, but yea, to trust I would cross-check information with other mainstream media outlet without solely depending on one although that is familiar to me.” According to Participant 5, “I also prefer online news alongside citizen journalism as I can verify information in there by going online.”

Discussion

Prior research has examined the association between news media trust and source trustworthiness (Montemayor & Rasgado, 2023), journalism principles and trust in news (Knudsen et al., 2022), sociodemographic factors (Newman et al., 2017), and political ideology and political interest (Schulze, 2020). Despite effort, little research has delved deep into how young adults end up trusting/distrusting mainstream and social media. This study conducted an online survey of 138 young adults and in-depth interviews with 7 others, and found several significant outcomes that can contribute to the study of media trust.

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The most important finding in the survey is that journalism quality indicators are the major drivers for young adults to trust the mainstream media. The results indicated that commitment to truth, accuracy, fairness and unbiasedness, and public interest seeking predict young adults' perceived trust in mainstream media. Most notably, commitment to disseminating true reports came out as the most important predictor of trust in both mainstream and social media.

When people believe that the media are dedicated to reporting facts and delivering the most plausible conclusion, they may naturally form their trust in those media. This perception makes audiences rely on the media especially in an age when widespread misinformation and fake news are at play. In fact, all the interviewees agreed that truth-seeking is the criteria that separates trustworthy news organizations from untrustworthy ones. Young adults emphasized that without strong commitment to truth, the media outlets will run the risk of losing public trust, which can leave huge damage on their survival.

Along the same line, the implication of accuracy cannot be overstated. Although disseminating true reports and accuracy in reporting seem to be related concepts, there is a distinction between them. Truth-seeking reporting assumes reporting of factually correct information without distortion. It also means that the journalists or news organization is doing its best to get close to the truth surrounding the issue/event in question. On the other hand, accuracy in reporting refers to precision with which information is conveyed, making sure that information is free from errors, omissions or distortions.

Truth-seeking reporting highlights truthfulness, while accuracy underscores correctness of details and the reporting process. When the media consistently report facts without any mistakes, it creates a sense of reliability among the media consumers (Knudsen et al., 2022).

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This is especially significant in an era when information sharing happens at a breakneck speed and when mis and disinformation concerns are at their peak. Young adults that get news from digital platforms are more likely to trust media platforms that accurately report news. So, accuracy in reporting is another key benchmark for the media to be considered trustworthy that contributes to its credibility and legitimacy.

Likewise, fairness and unbiasedness in media reporting are crucial to not only earning but also retaining the trust of young adults. Trust grows naturally among the young media consumers when they find news outlets offering diverse viewpoints on an issue without showing favor to one over another. Young audiences also value unbiased representation of news stories. Recent studies indicate a significant decline in media trust within this demographic, largely attributed to perceptions of bias and unfair reporting (Kang, 2024). A Gallup poll revealed that only 31% of Americans express confidence in the media's ability to report news fully, accurately, and fairly, marking a historic low (Gallup, 2024).

Public interest-seeking was also found to be a significant predictor of trust in mainstream media. When the media are perceived to be reporting on issues that serve public interest such as people's welfare instead of running sensational stories or partisan news, the public tends to develop a positive attitude towards the media, which eventually leads to increased trust. Media consumers intend to read or watch news that serves the public interest and helps in safeguarding public life and livelihood (Dunaway & Graber, 2022).

The same applies to young adults, who were found to be particularly interested in news focusing on accountability (Van der Wurff & Schönbach, 2014). When the media platforms prioritize public good and concentrate on social, political and environmental issues, they are more likely to build trust among the young audiences. This is because young people start to

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believe that the media's purpose is not to exploit or mislead them, but to inform and engage them in a meaningful way that could benefit society.

News interest was also a key predictor of trust in mainstream media. This can be explained by the fact that when news content aligns with the young consumers' concerns and interests—such as politics, climate change, social justice, and many such issues, it becomes more engaging to them. Such interests may boost engagement and encourage young audiences to interact with the media. Interest in news may also lead one to get exposed to diverse news topics across media platforms (Newman et al., 2023).

This diverse exposure helps voracious news consumers build an ability to critically evaluate and differentiate trustworthy and reliable news sources from untrustworthy and unreliable ones. Furthermore, consistent coverage of topics that matter to individuals creates a sense of trust as people start considering the media outlet a reliable source of cherished information. By providing young audiences with news that interests them, media outlets become trusted sources of information.

Overall, young adults perceive indicators of good journalism to be very important in building and maintaining audiences' trust in mainstream media. Regarding trust in social media, this study also found that truth-seeking reporting is extremely important in shaping young adults' trust in social media.

Users' feeling of comfort with social media platforms was found to shape their perception of social media, affecting young adults' trust in social platforms. This finding partially supports the familiarity thesis, which suggests that the more familiar a user is with a media platform, the more likely she/he is to trust it. Comfort with a platform typically arises

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from repeated exposure as users become accustomed to its features, layouts and engagement metrics that foster a sense of ease (Metzger & Flanagin, 2021).

As young media users feel more comfortable using social media, their comfort leads them to form trust in the platform considering its ease of understanding, accessibility and role of providing real-time updates. Such comfortability potentially increases users' engagement with the platform since they are more likely to interact with the content circulating on the media and participate in discussions. As frequent users of social media, young adults may have developed a better understanding of how content flows and how to find credible sources there.

At the same time, they may be increasingly aware of potential risks and misinformation associated with social media in this complex media ecosystem and applying their critical thinking skills before placing their trust in social media. Additionally, peer influence along with getting “likes” and “positive comments” on shared stories also encourages continued interaction with social media, fostering a sense of connectedness – something not achievable with the mainstream media – which could, in turn, instill trust in users.

To young adults, social media serves as a facilitator of information and provides them with real-time updates that capture their attention and ultimately build a sense of trust. This sense of trust that grows makes them perceive that social media is more direct and authentic than traditional media.

As a result, the young audiences may gradually consider social media as a primary source of information that can influence their opinion on various issues. This perception leads them to think about social media as a trusted platform for getting news, thereby shaping their daily activities and worldview as well.

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However, it should be noted that the interviewees mentioned that while comfort feeling is a significant predictor of trust in social media, it does not guarantee increased trust. Many interviewees pointed out that accuracy, fairness and unbiasedness are important for them to build trust in social media. They argued that social media platforms should take responsibility for being aloof from ethical standards and stick to journalism principles because they also function as an important news source to many Americans.

To their view, these standards can serve as a gatekeeper against the spread of misinformation and the erosion of public trust, enhance credibility, and foster more informed user engagement on social media.

Overall, this research suggests that young adults perceive both quality journalism and platform familiarity are important in building their trust in social media as a news source. Taken together, this study makes a meaningful contribution to the study of media trust, by testing two major theses that may explain why young adults are losing trust in the media.

The findings demonstrate that journalism quality and integrity, particularly truth seeking and pursuit of the public interest are crucial in shaping young adults' trust in mainstream media. Regarding trust in social media, this study found that truth-seeking and feeling comfort to the platform make a significant impact.

Conclusion

The media trust is a complex issue. It is very challenging to fully capture the nuanced public perceptions of news quality and familiarity with media outlets that may influence their trust in the media. The data collected through a survey and several in-depth interviews offer a glimpse of young adults' media trust perceptions.

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This study has examined various factors affecting young adults' trust in the news media. Of them, journalism quality emerged as the most significant predictor of trust aligning with previous studies. Users' feeling of comfort with social media platforms has been found to influence young adults' trust in social media. This study concludes that the foundation of trust in the media lies in high-quality journalism practices.

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Appendix

Survey

Dear participant:

I am Subrata Roy from the Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Oklahoma. I invite you to participate in my research titled 'Why Young Adults Lose Trust in Journalism: Testing Familiarity and Quality Theses'. This research is being conducted at The University of Oklahoma through an online survey and an in-person interview. If you agree to participate in this research, you will complete a 15-20-minute online survey through Qualtrics: https://ousurvey.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8ffPuRgRqHI6TXw

You will be asked questions about what influences your trust in the news media (traditional and digital) and media consumption patterns. For participating in the online survey, you will have the opportunity to be selected for compensation through a lottery. **A total of 20 participants will be randomly chosen to receive a \$5 gift card each.** There is also a follow-up in-person paid interview that will last 25-30 minutes. If you want to participate, you can contact me at

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subrata.k.roy-1@ou.edu. **Each participant will be given a \$5 gift card or cash for an in-person interview.**

The purpose of this study is to examine what influences trust in the news media and media consumption patterns. There are minimal risks and no direct benefits to participating in this study. The online survey will ask you to answer questions that may make you feel upset. If any questions make you feel uncomfortable, you do not have to provide an answer, or you can discontinue participation in the research. There are also resources for you that are available anytime by calling Oklahoma's Mental Health Lifeline at 988 or chat online at 988lifeline.org/chat, or Mental Health Association Oklahoma: Call (405) 943-3700 or (918) 585-1213 for your mental health support if the survey triggers any such feelings.

You will be asked to provide demographic information that describes you. Different combinations of personal and geographic information may make it possible for your identity to be guessed by someone. To minimize the risk of deductive re-identification, I will not combine identifying variables, nor analyze and report results for small groups of people with specific demographic characteristics. You have the right to access the research data that has been collected about you as a part of this research.

However, you may not access this information until the entire research has finished and you consent to this temporary restriction. If you do not participate, you will not be penalized or lose benefits or services unrelated to the research. If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about the research, contact me at Subrata.k.roy-1@ou.edu or 405-694-6026 or my thesis supervisor Dr. Chang Sup Park at cspark@ou.edu. You can also contact the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) at 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu if you have questions about your rights as a research participant, concerns, or complaints about the research. Please print this document for your records. By providing information to the researcher (s), I agree to participate in this research.

Are you at least 18 years of age and consent to participating in this study?

Please check the box below: Yes ☐ or No ☐ (If no – cannot participate)

IRB # 18059 IRB Approval Date 12/19/2024

Q2 What is your age?

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Q3 What is your gender?

- ☐ Male (1)
 - ☐ Female (2)
 - ☐ Non-binary / third gender (3)
 - ☐ Prefer not to say (4)
-

Q4 What is your highest level of education?

- ☐ High school or less (1)
 - ☐ Some college (2)
 - ☐ Bachelor's degree (3)
 - ☐ Master's degree or JD degree (4)
 - ☐ Doctoral degree (5)
-

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Q5 What was your household income last year?

- ☐ Less than \$10,000 (1)
 - ☐ \$10,000 - \$19,999 (2)
 - ☐ \$20,000 - \$29,999 (3)
 - ☐ \$30,000 - \$39,999 (4)
 - ☐ \$40,000 - \$49,999 (5)
 - ☐ \$50,000 - \$59,999 (6)
 - ☐ \$60,000 - \$69,999 (7)
 - ☐ \$70,000 - \$79,999 (8)
 - ☐ \$80,000 - \$89,999 (9)
 - ☐ \$90,000 - \$99,999 (10)
 - ☐ \$100,000 - \$149,999 (11)
 - ☐ More than \$150,000 (12)
-

Q6 What is your religious affiliation (if any)?

- ☐ Christian (1)
- ☐ Jewish (2)
- ☐ Hindu (3)
- ☐ Buddhist (4)
- ☐ Muslim (5)
- ☐ None (6)

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Q7 Which race or ethnicity best describes you?

- ☐ White or Caucasian (1)
 - ☐ Black or African American (2)
 - ☐ Hispanic or Latino (3)
 - ☐ Asian or Asian American (4)
 - ☐ Native American or Alaska Native (5)
 - ☐ Other (Please specify) (10)
-

Q8 Please indicate the level of agreement with the following statements. 1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree

[illegible]

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Q9 How much do you trust Congress? Please indicate your agreement.

- ☐ 1 (Never) (1)
 - ☐ 2 (2)
 - ☐ 3 (3)
 - ☐ 4 (4)
 - ☐ 5 (5)
 - ☐ 6 (6)
 - ☐ 7 (7)
 - ☐ 8 (8)
 - ☐ 9 (9)
 - ☐ 10 (Always) (10)
-

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Q10 How much do you trust Judicial System? Please indicate your agreement.

- ☐ 1 (Never) (1)
 - ☐ 2 (2)
 - ☐ 3 (3)
 - ☐ 4 (4)
 - ☐ 5 (5)
 - ☐ 6 (6)
 - ☐ 7 (7)
 - ☐ 8 (8)
 - ☐ 9 (9)
 - ☐ 10 (Always) (10)
-

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Q11 How much do you trust political parties? Please indicate your agreement.

- ☐ 1 (Never) (1)
 - ☐ 2 (2)
 - ☐ 3 (3)
 - ☐ 4 (4)
 - ☐ 5 (5)
 - ☐ 6 (6)
 - ☐ 7 (7)
 - ☐ 8 (8)
 - ☐ 9 (9)
 - ☐ 10 (Always) (10)
-

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

Q18 I know the features of this medium well.

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

Q23 The medium presents news in an objective manner.

[illegible]

Q24 The medium is transparent about its sources of information.

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

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I can critically
analyze news
content to
identify
potential
biases or
misinformation
(5)



[illegible]

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The news I
come
across
through
social
media and
friends is
sufficient
for me to
stay
updated (5)



[illegible]

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The news in general provides information that is relevant and useful to my daily life. (9)

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

The news in general presents information clearly and is easy to understand. (10)

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Q32 How interested, if at all, would you say you are in news?

- ☐ 1 (Not at all) (1)
- ☐ 2 (2)
- ☐ 3 (3)
- ☐ 4 (4)
- ☐ 5 (5)
- ☐ 6 (6)
- ☐ 7 (7)
- ☐ 8 (8)
- ☐ 9 (9)
- ☐ 10 (Absolutely) (10)
-

[illegible][illegible]

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Q35 Which of the following best describes your political ideology? (1= Extremely conservative, 7 = Extremely liberal)

- ☐ Extremely conservative (1)
 - ☐ Conservative (2)
 - ☐ Somewhat Conservative (3)
 - ☐ Moderate (4)
 - ☐ Somewhat Liberal (5)
 - ☐ Liberal (6)
 - ☐ Extremely liberal (7)
-

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Q36 How much do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
I am interested in local politics (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am interested in federal politics (2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I follow the news about government and politics (3)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I often discuss political issues with others (4)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q37 What is the minimum age requirement to run for US President?

- ☐ 25 years old (1)
- ☐ 45 years old (2)
- ☐ 35 years old (5)
- ☐ 30 years old (6)
-

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Q38 Who is the vice president of the United States?

- ☐ Mike Pence (1)
 - ☐ Ron DeSantis (5)
 - ☐ Nikki Haley (6)
 - ☐ JD Vance (7)
-

Q39 Which political party currently holds the majority in the US Senate?

- ☐ Green Party (1)
 - ☐ Republican Party (5)
 - ☐ Libertarian Party (6)
 - ☐ Democratic Party (7)
-

Q40 Who is the current Speaker of the House of Representatives?

- ☐ Mitch McConnell (1)
 - ☐ Mike Johnson (5)
 - ☐ Nancy Pelosi (6)
 - ☐ Chuck Schumer (7)
-

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Q41 How many justices serve on the US Supreme Court?

- ☐ Five (1)
 - ☐ Seven (5)
 - ☐ Nine (6)
 - ☐ Ten (7)
-

Q42 What is the name of the current Secretary of State?

- ☐ Mike Pompeo (1)
 - ☐ Antony Blinken (2)
 - ☐ Rex Tillerson (3)
 - ☐ Marco Rubio (4)
-

[illegible]

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Q44 Please indicate the strength of your affiliation with a political party on a 6-point scale, ranging from weak (1) to strong (6).

- ☐ 1 (Weak) (1)
 - ☐ 2 (2)
 - ☐ 3 (3)
 - ☐ 4 (4)
 - ☐ 5 (5)
 - ☐ 6 (Strong) (6)
-

Q45 During the past one week, how frequently did you talk about current issues or politics with coworkers?

- ☐ 1 (Never) (1)
 - ☐ 2 (2)
 - ☐ 3 (3)
 - ☐ 4 (4)
 - ☐ 5 (5)
 - ☐ 6 (6)
 - ☐ 7 (7)
 - ☐ 8 (8)
 - ☐ 9 (9)
 - ☐ 10 (Very frequently) (10)
-

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Q46 During the past one week, how frequently did you talk about current issues or politics with acquaintances?

- ☐ 1 (Never) (1)
 - ☐ 2 (2)
 - ☐ 3 (3)
 - ☐ 4 (4)
 - ☐ 5 (5)
 - ☐ 6 (6)
 - ☐ 7 (7)
 - ☐ 8 (8)
 - ☐ 9 (9)
 - ☐ 10 (Very frequently) (10)
-

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Q47 During the past one week, how frequently did you talk about current issues or politics with family members?

- ☐ 1 (Never) (1)
 - ☐ 2 (2)
 - ☐ 3 (3)
 - ☐ 4 (4)
 - ☐ 5 (5)
 - ☐ 6 (6)
 - ☐ 7 (7)
 - ☐ 8 (8)
 - ☐ 9 (9)
 - ☐ 10 (Very frequently) (10)
-

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Q48 During the past one week, how frequently did you talk about current issues or politics with friends?

- ☐ 1 (Never) (1)
- ☐ 2 (2)
- ☐ 3 (3)
- ☐ 4 (4)
- ☐ 5 (5)
- ☐ 6 (6)
- ☐ 7 (7)
- ☐ 8 (8)
- ☐ 9 (9)
- ☐ 10 (Very frequently) (10)
-

Q49 How many times did you engage in working or volunteering for nonpolitical groups in the past 12 months?

- ☐ Click to write (5) _____
-

Q50 How many times did you engage in raising money for charity or participate in a charity event in the past 12 months?

- ☐ Click to write (1) _____
-

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Q51 How many times did you attend a meeting to discuss neighborhood problems in the past 12 months?

☐ Click to write (1) _____

Q52 How many times in the past 12 months did you buy a certain product or service because you may have liked the social values of the company?

☐ Click to write (1) _____

Q53 How many times in the past 12 months did you ban a certain product or service because you many have disagreed with the social values of the company?

☐ Click to write (1) _____

[illegible]

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Q55 How much do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Broadcast viewers/listeners find and watch broadcast channels and programs that fit their political inclinations (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Newspaper readers search for and read news articles that fit their political inclinations (2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Online news readers search for and read news articles that fit their political inclinations (3)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Social media users search for and read news articles that fit their political inclinations (4)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

End of Block: Default Question Block