Research Article

A Study on Information Consumption Behaviour and Media Bias and Content Prioritization among Millennials and Gen- X

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ABSTRACT

The evolution of communication technology in India has significantly transformed information consumption patterns, particularly among younger generations in the 21st century. With the increasing penetration of the internet, around 840 million Indians were online in 2021, of which 448 million actively engaged with social media. According to the 10th edition of the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism's Digital News Report (2021), 82% of Indians consumed news online. However, traditional media such as radio, newspapers, and television continue to play a vital role in information dissemination. This study investigates media consumption patterns, content satisfaction, and credibility perceptions among Millennials and Generation X. Using a quantitative exploratory approach and non-probability purposive sampling, data were collected from 200 respondents from in Mysore and Mandya districts, Karnataka through a structured questionnaire covering demographics, media exposure, and content preferences.

INTRODUCTION

Institutions and communities play a pivotal role in fostering social change. Development communication has evolved to include the intentional use of communication technologies and processes to achieve socially beneficial goals, with a focus on communication for development. The discourse on development, shaped and interpreted through institutions and social movements, remains vital. Communication about development is essential for driving progress (*Wilkis, K, 2006*). Research shows that Indian newspapers report on development issues more frequently, while Chinese newspapers give these issues more priority than Pakistani and Indian newspapers. The Pakistani press lacks in frequency, prominence, and content regarding development (*Waqal A, Seyal W A, Hassan T U, 2018*). Development journalism has influenced news consumption significantly, but individual-level factors like socioeconomic status and political interest have become key predictors of news use in today's changing media environment. Media environment factors further affect news use and can moderate the influence of individual traits like education and political interest (*Shehata A, Strömbäck J, 2011*).

The media landscape is rapidly evolving, and the importance of individual predictors varies across countries (*Shehata A, Strömbäck J, 2011*). Younger generations like Gen Z and Millennials rely heavily on smartphones. Digital tracking data from the US and UK show that these groups spend much of their time on smartphones for communication, entertainment, and news (*Kalogeropoulos A, Suiter J, Udris L, Eisenegger M, 2019*). While Millennials use digital technology mostly for entertainment, Generation X uses it more for practical purposes and information (*Cristina Calvo-Porral, Rogelio Pesqueira-Sanchez, 2020*). Yet, most research on news consumption focuses on either ordinary or extraordinary trends, often neglecting to study both together (*Mitchelstein E, Boczkowski P J, 2009*).

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Users' interest in news and the accessibility of sources shape consumption habits. Credibility perceptions influence media choices, creating different news repertoires. These repertoires, shaped by media choice, result in varying news agendas (*Yuan E, 2011*). The Uses and Gratifications theory, originally for mass communication media, has been expanded to study motivations for using various technologies. It suggests that individuals' motives determine technology use, gratifications, and outcomes (*Katz et al., 1974; Luo and Remus, 2014).*

In India, mass media has been strategically used for development goals. Greater media engagement supports these goals. Development journalism is not just about technology but also about building skills, awareness, and critical thinking. It promotes planned change, shaping ideas, attitudes, and skills needed for national and human development (*Senghal A, 2016).* Studies indicate that people with low trust prefer non-mainstream news sources such as social media, blogs, and digital-only platforms. This trend is stronger in northern Europe (*Fletcher R, Sora P, 2015*). Fake news, often sensational and emotionally charged, continues to spread widely. Research shows that conservatives, older adults, and the less educated are more prone to believe and share fake news (*Baptista J P, Gradim A, 2019*). The 2016 US election revealed that fake news audiences were small, disloyal, and heavy internet users. Social networks played a major role in this spread, raising concerns about democracy (*Nelson J L, Taneja H, 2018).*

The rise of digital and social media has reshaped news consumption patterns and introduced ideological slants. While exposure to opposing views can reduce partisan hostility, social media algorithms may restrict such exposure and increase polarization (*Levy R, 2021*). US local newspaper readership includes hybrid readers and online-only users, with satisfaction and user type influencing platform preference (*Chyi H I, Yang M J, Lewis S C, Zheng N, 2010*). In India, over 75 percent of people adopted OTT platforms during the COVID-19 lockdown. Gen Z's embrace of OTT during this time shows a need for companies to revise strategies to attract them post-lockdown (*Anand M G, Srinivas N, 2020*). Different generations vary in media use. GenZ depends on social and digital media for news, while Gen X and Baby Boomers still prefer traditional media like television. Smartphones and the internet dominate younger audiences' media habits (*Karim S, 2019*). For Gen Z, improving OTT platforms can reduce cognitive overload and boost user satisfaction (*Patch H, 2018*). Social media also influences the purchase decisions of Millennials and Gen X, especially for food and tourism services.

There remains a gap in comparative studies focusing on what influences news consumption satisfaction among Millennials and Gen X. While it is known that Millennials prefer digital platforms and Gen X favours traditional media, less is known about what shapes their satisfaction. Aspects like content preferences, source credibility, user experience, and the role of social media need further comparative study. Furthermore, the influence of socio-demographic characteristics, such as socioeconomic status, educational background, and political interest, on news consumption satisfaction among these generational cohorts requires deeper investigation. Understanding how these individual-level characteristics intersect with media environment characteristics and generational differences will provide valuable insights into the factors that shape news consumption satisfaction among Millennials and Gen-X in 21st era.

Methodology

For this research application, a pure research approach was used, employing an exploratory research method. The quantitative method, specifically non-probability purposive sampling, was employed to select participants for the study. The primary data collection tool was a closed-ended questionnaire, which was divided into three parts: socio-economic and demographic profiles, media exposure, and media consumption satisfaction.

The study included a sample of 200 respondents from both urban and rural areas of Mysore and Mandya districts. In Mysore district, data was collected from Nanjangud, HD Kote, and Mysore taluks, while in Mandya district, Srirangapatna taluk was selected. The study focused on two generational groups, Millennials and Generation X, who had at least used one form of gadget to read the news. The participants were mostly educated and had a good level of media literacy.

In terms of data collection locations, 100 samples were collected from Mysore Urban, and in Mysore Rural, Kalashwadi (25 samples), Belwadi village (15 samples), and Sidlingpura village (13 samples) were selected. In Heggadadevana Kote taluk, Alanahalli and Bachegowdana Koppalu villages were selected, collecting 15 samples. Nanjangud contributed 14 data points, while Bargoor and Bandavalu villages provided 18 data points. In Srirangapatna's taluk, Dasaragupe village contributed 18 data points. The data collected through the questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS software. Since non-probability sampling was used, nonparametric methods, specifically the Mann Whitney U test, were employed to test the hypothesis and compare the mean values of the two generational groups, Millennials and Gen X.

Objectives

- To examine the patterns of media consumption among Millennials and Generation X.
- To assess the level of satisfaction with various types of media content.
- To evaluate perceptions of media credibility across different media platforms.
- To determine whether generational differences influence media consumption behaviour.

- To analyse satisfaction levels with development-related content and their variation across media types and generational cohorts.

Data Analysis

Above data (Graph 1) reveals that television (81.5%) is the most commonly owned medium, followed by smartphones (72.5%). Newspapers (56.5%) and radio (42.5%) also remain relevant sources. Internet access is available to 34.5% at home and 21.5% at work, while magazines are the least used, with only 19% readership. Overall, traditional media, especially TV, dominate, with growing use of smartphones indicating a shift toward digital access.

The above data (Graph 2) shows that 28% of respondents watch TV news for less than 15 minutes, while 21.5% spend over two hours on social media for news, highlighting its rising influence. Newspapers (20.5%) and radio (23%) also see short news engagement (under 15 minutes). Only 9.5% spend 15–30 minutes across platforms. Overall, traditional media attract brief attention, whereas social media sustains longer news engagement.

The above data (Graph 3: Language) show that the majority of respondents (76.5%) prefer consuming news in their mother tongue, highlighting the importance of local language media. English is used by 15%, indicating engagement with broader national or global news. Hindi is preferred by 6.5%, showing its relevance even outside native-speaking regions. Overall, regional languages dominate, with English and Hindi serving as complementary sources.

The above data (Graph 4: Reliabile) reveal that television (37.5%) is seen as the most reliable news source, followed by newspapers (31.5%), showing strong trust in traditional media. Social media is trusted by 21%, reflecting its rising role but also concerns over misinformation. Overall, traditional platforms remain dominant in perceived credibility.
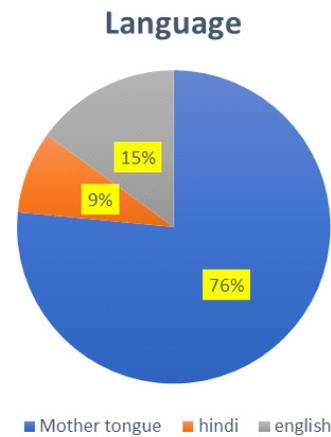
The above data (Graph 5: Media Format) reveals that 44% of respondents prefer audiovisual formats for news, reflecting the rising popularity of television, video clips, and social media reels that offer engaging, easy-to-digest content. In contrast, only 10% prefer text-based formats,
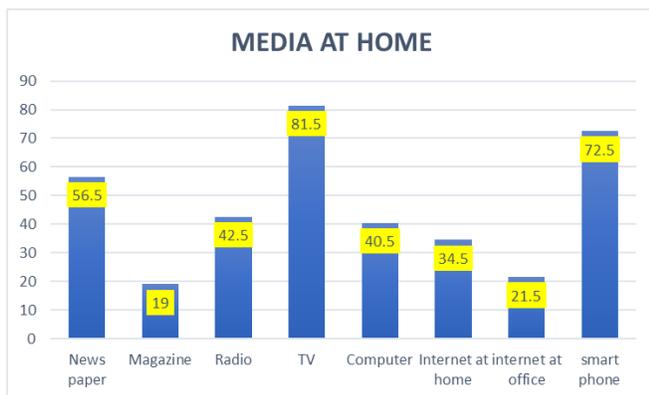
Graph 1: Media at home
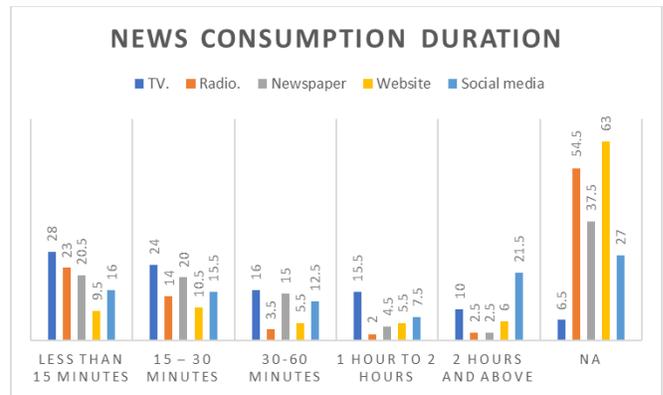
Graph 2: News consumption duration

Graph 3: Language for accessing news
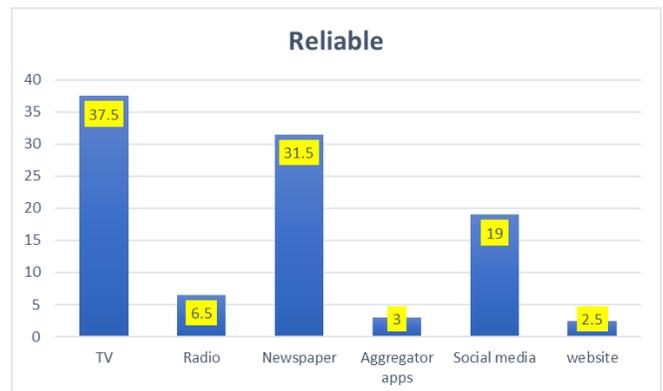
Graph 4: Reliable

showing a smaller audience that values in-depth, reflective reading.

Interestingly, 35% of respondents prefer a combination of formats, highlighting a shift toward multimedia news consumption. A smaller portion prefers images (6.5%) and audio formats (4.5%), indicating niche preferences for visual storytelling and on-the-go listening. Overall, the trend shows a growing demand for flexible, visually rich news experiences shaped by digital media habits.
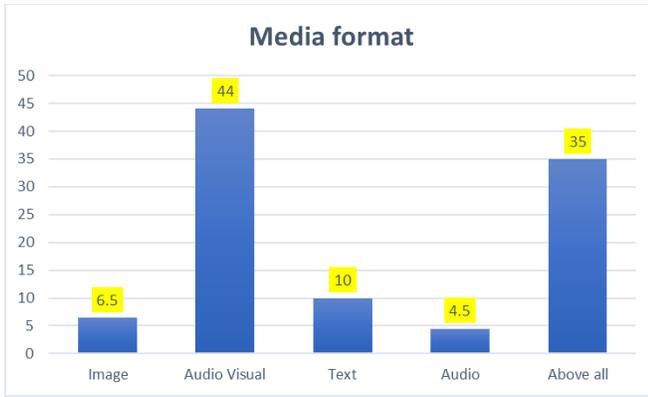
Media format

Graph 5: Media format

The above data (Table 1: Media Priority) reveals that a majority of respondents (67%) believe political news dominates media coverage. This indicates a widespread perception that political events, campaigns, and debates are prioritized due to their on-going relevance and direct impact on public governance. Entertainment news is the second most covered category, with 55% of respondents identifying it as a key media focus—likely driven by audience demand for celebrity culture, cinema, and lifestyle content.

Religion-related news is seen as moderately emphasized, with 21% of respondents noting its visibility in the media. This reflects continued interest in religious events, especially during festivals or socio-political debates involving religious matters. Sports news follows closely at 18%, typically gaining prominence during major national or international tournaments.

Topics like education (14.5%), development (9.5%), and law (9.5%) are perceived to receive significantly less attention. This suggests that despite their societal importance, these areas may be underreported due to their lower sensational value or complexity. Business news ranks lowest, with only 9.5% perceiving it as a priority,

possibly due to limited public engagement with economic content compared to more emotionally or politically charged topics.

The above table (Table 2: Reliable Media) illustrates newspapers are considered the most reliable news source by 40% of respondents, highlighting the enduring trust in traditional print journalism due to its perceived accuracy, depth, and editorial rigor. Television follows closely at 39.5%, indicating that visual media still commands significant credibility, likely due to its real-time coverage and wide accessibility.

In contrast, social media is trusted by 25.5% of respondents, reflecting its growing role in news consumption but also underlying concerns about misinformation. Websites, including online news portals, are trusted by 12.5%, suggesting moderate confidence in digital platforms, though still lower than traditional sources. These insights emphasize the continued relevance of legacy media in the public trust hierarchy.

The above data (Table 3) indicates that 33.5% of respondents view social media as the most misleading news source, reflecting growing concerns over misinformation, fake news, and the lack of content regulation on these platforms. Television follows closely at 30%, suggesting that despite being a trusted source for many, a sizable portion of the audience perceives it as biased or sensationalized.

Aggregator apps (6%) and websites (6%) are also seen as misleading by a small but notable portion, likely due to inconsistent content quality and lack of editorial control. In contrast, newspapers are perceived as the least misleading (5.5%), reinforcing their reputation for reliability and structured fact-checking. These findings underline a general skepticism toward digital media and point to a need for stronger editorial transparency across all platforms.

Hypothesis

H1 Statement: Television gives satisfaction by covering reliable and healthy news.

Table 1: Media Priority

Sl. No	News segment	Mostly prioritized	Prioritized	Neutral	Less prioritized	Not prioritized
1	Political related	67.0	12.0	13.0	6.0	15.5
2	Sports related	21.0	31.5	32.5	9.5	5.5
3	Business related	9.5	18.0	27	29.5	14.5
4	Development related	14.5	22.0	24.5	20.0	19.0
5	Education related	18.0	20.0	23.0	25.0	14.0
6	Job related	11.5	19.0	28.0	22.0	19.5
7	Entertainment	55.0	15.5	15.5	7.0	6.0
8.	Agriculture	19.0	22.5	29.0	17.5	12.0
9	Religion	31.5	21.5	25.5	9.0	12.5
10	Law	14.5	18.0	29.0	20.0	18.5

Table 2: Reliable Media

Sl.No.	Media	Very helpful	Helpful	Neutral	Less Helpful	Not helpful	Not applicable
1	T.V.	39.5	18.0	14.0	7.5	13.5	7.5
2	Radio	15.0	16.0	9.0	2.0	3.5	54.5
3	Newspaper	40.0	16.5	12.0	3.5	0.5	27.5
4	Social media	25.5	13.0	17.5	7.0	15.0	22.0
5	Aggregator apps	5.5	6.5	15.0	5.0	6.0	62.0
6	Website	12.5	12.0	7.5	4.0	4.5	59.5

Table 3: Media Mislead

Sl. No	Media	Very helpful	Helpful	Neutral	Less Helpful	Not helpful	Not applicable
1	T.V.	17	8	13	17.5	30	24.5
2	Radio	14.5	13	14	2.5	1	55.0
3	Newspaper	19.5	16.5	11.0	3.5	5.5	44.0
4	Social media	8.5	11.5	19.5	7.0	33.5	20.0
5	Aggregator apps	4.5	9.0	12.5	7.0	6.0	61.0
6	Website	7.0	11.0	15.5	3.5	4.5	58.5

H_0-There is no significant difference in Mean rating score [from a scale of *highly satisfied* to *highly not satisfied*] between Millennial and Gen-X respondents on the statement '*Television"* gives satisfaction by covering reliable and healthy news" under the sample study.

H_1- There is a significant difference in Mean rating score [from a scale of *highly satisfied* to *highly not satisfied*] between Millennial and Gen-X respondents on the statement '*Television"* gives satisfaction by covering reliable and healthy news" under the sample study.

From the Pairwise comparisons by Mann-Whitney U test results provide an opinion about Television in the study area (Table 4), it is observed that there is no significant difference in mean (* due to sample of Millennial and Gen-X are not equal the Mean value is not similar) scores between millennial and Gen-X respondent on the statement ''*Television* gives satisfaction by covering reliable and healthy news" (p= 0.142, p<0.05) at 5 percent level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis (H0)) is accepted, and the alternative hypothesis is rejected (H1).

The result summarizes that there is no different opinion between Gen-X and Millennial respondents on the statement *Television* gives satisfaction by covering reliable and healthy news*.*

H2 Statement: Radio gives satisfaction by covering reliable and healthy news.

H_0-There is no significant difference in Mean rating score [from a scale of *highly satisfied* to *highly not satisfied*] between Millennial and Gen-X respondents on the statement '*Radio* gives satisfaction by covering reliable and healthy news" under the sample study.

H_1- There is a significant difference in Mean rating score [from a scale of *highly satisfied* to *highly not satisfied*] between Millennial and Gen-X respondents on the statement '*Radio* gives satisfaction by covering reliable and healthy news" under the sample study.

From the Pairwise comparisons by Mann-Whitney U test results provide an opinion about Television in the study area (Table 5), it is observed that there is no significant difference in mean (* due to sampling of Millennial and Gen-X are not equal the Mean value is not similar) scores between millennial and Gen-X respondent on the statement ''*Radio"* gives satisfaction by covering reliable and healthy news' (p= 0.286, p<0.05) at 5 percent level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis (H0)) is accepted, and the alternative hypothesis is rejected (H1). The result summarizes that there is no different opinion between Gen-X and Millennial respondents on

Table 4: Television gives satisfaction by covering reliable and healthy news

Dimension	Age	Number	Mean	P- Value Sig. (2-tailed)
Television gives satisfaction by covering reliable and healthy news.	Millennial	139	103.79	0.142
	Gen-X	60	91.21	

Table 5: *Radio* gives satisfaction by covering reliable and healthy news

Dimension	Age	Number	Mean	P- Value Sig. (2-tailed)
Radio gives satisfaction by covering reliable and healthy news	Millennial	139	97.40	0.286
	Gen-X	60	106.03	

the statement *Radio* gives satisfaction by covering reliable and healthy news.

H3 Statement: Newspaper gives satisfaction by covering reliable and healthy news.

H_0-There is no significant difference in Mean rating score [from a scale of *highly satisfied* to *highly not satisfied*] between Millennial and Gen-X respondents on the statement 'Newspaper 'gives satisfaction by covering reliable and healthy news" under the sample study.

H_1- There is a significant difference in Mean rating score [from a scale of *highly satisfied* to *highly not satisfied*] between Millennial and Gen-X respondents on the statement 'Newspaper' gives satisfaction by covering reliable and healthy news" under the sample study. Table 12: Newspaper

From the Pairwise comparisons by Mann-Whitney U test results provide an opinion about Television in the study area (Table 6), it is observed that there is no significant difference in mean (* due to sample of Millennial and Gen-X are not equal the Mean value is not similar) scores between millennial and Gen-X respondent on the statement ''Newspaper" gives

Satisfaction by covering reliable and healthy news' (p= 0.311, p<0.05) at 5 percent level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis (H0)) is accepted, and the alternative hypothesis is rejected (H1).

The result summarizes that there is no different opinion between Gen-X and Millennial respondents on the statement *newspaper* gives satisfaction by covering reliable and healthy news.

H4 Social Media: Newspaper gives satisfaction by covering reliable and healthy news.

H_0-There is no significant difference in Mean rating score [from a scale of *highly satisfied* to *highly not satisfied*] between Millennial and Gen-X respondents on the

statement 'Social media' gives satisfaction by covering reliable and healthy news" under the sample study.

H_1- There is a significant difference in Mean rating score [from a scale of *highly satisfied* to *highly not satisfied*] between Millennial and Gen-X respondents on the statement 'Social media' gives satisfaction by covering reliable and healthy news" under the sample study.

From the Pairwise comparisons by Mann-Whitney U test results provide an opinion about Television in the study area (Table 7), it is observed that there is no significant difference in mean (* due to the sample size of Millennial and Gen-X are not equal the Mean value is not similar) scores between millennial and Gen-X respondent on the statement ''Social media" gives satisfaction by covering reliable and healthy news' (p= 0.039, p>0.05) at 5 percent level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted (H1).

The result summarizes that there is a different opinion between Gen-X and Millennial respondents on the statement *Social media* gives satisfaction by covering reliable and healthy news.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

This study provides a comprehensive overview of media usage patterns, content satisfaction, news reliability perceptions, and generational attitudes toward media content among respondents. The findings highlight a critical duality in audience behaviour the persistent dominance of traditional media, notably television and newspapers, alongside the growing adoption of digital platforms like smartphones and internet-based services.

Television continues to be the most prevalent medium, with 81.5% ownership and a 55% news usage rate. Television still plays a central role in mass communication in regions with moderate internet penetration, serving as

Table 6: *Newspaper* gives satisfaction by covering reliable and healthy news

Dimension	Age	Number	Mean	P- Value Sig. (2-tailed)
Newspaper gives satisfaction by covering reliable and healthy news	Millennial	136	101.10	0.311
	Gen-X	60	92.60	

Table 7: *Social media* gives satisfaction by covering reliable and healthy news

Dimension	Age	Number	Mean	P- Value Sig. (2-tailed)
Social media gives satisfaction by covering reliable and healthy news	Millennial	139	94.56	0.039
	Gen-X	60	112.60	

a trusted and accessible source of news and information across demographics (*Hongcharu,2024*). However, the rise in smartphone ownership (72.5%) indicates a pronounced shift toward mobile-first consumption, reflecting broader global trends in digital media migration. The ubiquity of mobile devices has redefined access and immediacy, particularly among younger users who often multitask across platforms (*Jordaan and Grove,* 2011).

Despite increasing digital access (home internet: 34.5%, office: 21.5%), aggregator apps remain underutilized, with 67% of respondents reporting non-use. This may stem from limited digital literacy or distrust in algorithm-driven content, users consistently rate legacy news outlets as more credible than digital-born services *(Nelson and Kim, 2021).* Likewise, while 22% use social media for news, only 1.5% rely on it exclusively, indicating enduring scepticism of platform reliability, audiences find television and newspapers inherently more credible than social media platforms (*Choi et al., 2015*).

Content satisfaction findings reveal that entertainment is the most positively received genre, with 34% strong satisfaction. Emotionally engaging and escapist content like entertainment consistently receives higher approval across audience segments (*Cheong & Park, 2015*). Religion-related content also scored high, underscoring its cultural significance and emotional resonance. On the other hand, dissatisfaction with political (19.5% strong dissatisfaction), legal, and job-related content may stem from perceived bias or over-politicization. Political content on digital platforms often lacks perceived objectivity and context (*Russmann & Hess, 2020*).

Regarding reliability perceptions, newspapers (40%) and television (39.5%) were deemed the most trustworthy sources. Traditional media consistently outperform digital channels in trust metrics due to established editorial standards (*Cheng et al., 2024*). Conversely, social media, websites, and aggregator apps received far lower reliability scores, with up to 62% of respondents reporting unfamiliarity with these services. This underlines the on-going challenge digital platforms face in establishing editorial credibility a point elaborated by *Wei et al* (*2020*) in their comparative study of press systems and media trust.

Generational analysis using the Mann-Whitney U test revealed no significant differences in satisfaction levels across Millennials and Gen-X respondents regarding political, religion-related, entertainment, and development content. This finding contrasts with popular narratives suggesting stark digital divides between generations. Generational similarities in content preferences despite platform variation, our results suggest a shared valuation of trustworthy and substantive information (*Andersen et al., 2023*). The media ecosystem reflected in this study is characterized by continuity and transition. While traditional media channels like television and newspapers retain their dominance and trust, digital adoption via smartphones and internet use is clearly rising. This

duality presents both a challenge and an opportunity for media professionals. Retain the credibility of traditional journalism while enhancing the interactivity and personalization of digital platforms (*Elvestad et al., 2018*).

The highest satisfaction with entertainment and religious content, and lowest with political and legal information, reflects broader concerns about media ethics, transparency, and perceived bias. Media organizations must thus prioritize not only content diversity but also the trustworthiness and clarity of their delivery especially in an age where audience scepticism is rising and platform loyalty is fading.

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