

Exploring College Students' Perspectives towards the Use of Social Media and Mass Media in Information Dissemination

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Abstract

This study aims to find out the differences between social media and mass media as the platforms of information dissemination. In this study, a survey was conducted by distributing questionnaires to participants. A total of 25 English Education students taking Academic Writing class took part in this survey. This study revealed that there are 7 differences between social media and mass media as the source of information based on the form, promptness, credibility, influence, authority, audience, and direction. One of the core values of journalism is accountability. Accountability depends on credibility. Results suggest that the credibility of social media is low as compared to that of mass media. Nevertheless, social media has a greater influence on students' perception towards the news and information circulating around them. These findings indicate that technology plays an essential role in journalism.

Key words: Information Dissemination, Social Media, Mass Media.

INTRODUCTION

Lies travel faster than the truth, so does fake news that spreads faster than true stories (Pinem, 2018),(Endang Woro Kasih, 2018),(Mata, 2022). One of media that can be used to share any information the public seek is social media (Heaverly & EWK, 2020),(Isnain et al., 2021),(V. A. Safitri et al., 2019). With its rapid pervasiveness, social media is an 'ideal' platform to share anything, including fake news or we used to say as 'hoax (Supriadi & Oswari, 2020),(Putri et al., 2021),(Rossi et al., 2021). The more people spend their time using social media, the more they are possibly exposed to hoax or false information filled with prejudice and hatred (Amin, 2020),(SETIYANTO, 2016),(Marlyna, 2017). However, many people, especially teenagers, easily believe what they see on social media without verifying the truth (Susanto et al., 2021),(Pramita et al., n.d.). Teenagers easily believe in hoaxes because they tend to be emotional (BRONDONG, n.d.),(NASIONAL, n.d.). Any incoming information, especially sensational ones, will be immediately disseminated (CS, 2019),(Aditomo Mahardika Putra, 2021),(Savestra et al., 2021). In addition, many teenagers are lazy to read, proven with Indonesian reading interest rank which places 60 out of 61 countries (Celarier, n.d.),(Cindiyasari, 2017).

In January 2020, there were approximately 160 million social media users in Indonesia, quoted from We Are Social (Bertarina & Arianto, 2021),(Agustina & Bertarina, 2022),(Sanjaya et al., 2014). That means that 59% of Indonesian people are vulnerable to hoaxes on social media (Songati, 2018),(Hasan, 2018). About 126,000 rumors were spread by approximately 3 million people from 2006 to 2017 on Twitter, with the top 1% of false news spreads to between 1000 and 100,000 people, while the truth rarely spreads to more than 1000 people (Kustinah & Indriawati, 2017),(Sukawirasa et al., 2008),(Hafidz, 2021). These study indicate that people are easily influenced by the news spread on social media (an Environmenta, n.d.),(Yuninda, 2020). The target audience of social media is also in abundance and it can be an advantage for people to disseminate news and information so that it can reach maximum audience (Budiman & Sidiq, n.d.),(PUSPITASARI, n.d.),(PRASETYAWAN, n.d.).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Thus, many people including journalists utilized social media as their platform to share news and information (Kurniawan, 2020),(Mathar et al., 2021),(Damayanti et al., 2021),. Recent study found that every daily newspaper with more than 100,000 readers in United States used social media to disseminate their content online (AS & Baihaqi, 2020) (Akbar, 2019),(Bonar Siregar, 2021). In addition, more than 95% of news sites allow social media users to like, share, as well as recommend the content to other users (Hendrastuty, 2021),(Styawati et al., 2021),(Dharma et al., 2020),. Digital media have not only changed how news is consumed but also how it is created, as digital platforms have increasingly become the primary working tools for journalists and media professionals (V. A. D. Safitri & Anggara, 2019),(V. A. Safitri et al., 2020). Thus, this paper tried to see the differences between social media and mass media as public's source of information (An'ars, 2022),(Anars et al., 2018).

METHOD

This research adopted qualitative approach as it explores participants' perspectives towards the use of social media and mass media in information dissemination. The research was conducted in December 2020 involving 25 participants. The participants were selected from English Education students who take Academic Writing class. Questionnaire was used to collect the data. The questionnaire was used to see students' perspectives toward social media and mass media as their source of information as well as the media they used to gain new information (Saputra, 2020),(Suwarni et al., 2022),(Handayani et al., 2022). The questionnaire was distributed online through chatting application.

The questionnaire distributed to the participants consists of 10 questions. The questionnaire was developed and divided into two main sections. The first section consists of 5 questions and compares social media and mass media. This section uses 3 points Likert Scale ranging from 'agree', 'neutral', to 'disagree' which requires the respondents to indicate a degree of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements related to the stimulus. The second section consists of 5 questions and collects how frequent participants use both social media and mass media as their source of information. This section uses 'yes' and 'no' options as the parameter of the answers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to see participants' perspectives toward social media and mass media as their source of information, the participants are asked these 5 questions. The result is shown on the table below.

Table 3.1
COLLEGE STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES TOWARDS SOCIAL MEDIA AND MASS MEDIA AS THE SOURCE OF INFORMATION

No.	Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1.	I usually hear/read the latest news from social media first before hearing/reading it from mass media.	96%	0%	4%
2.	The news presented on mass media is	72%	28%	0%

	more credible than the one presented on social media.			
3.	I am more easily influenced by news that is spread on social media than mass media.	64%	12%	24%
4.	The news presented on social media is usually more subjective than the one presented on mass media because anyone can write and comment anything	56%	36%	8%
5.	Social media is a better platform than mass media to gain information or news.	52%	32%	16%

Based on the data above, it can be seen that almost every participant claims that they know the news on social media first before knowing it from mass media. It can be concluded that the news presented on social media is spreading more rapidly than the news presented on mass media. It is because anyone can write any news or information happening around them posthaste on their social media. Even journalists use social media to gain information which are verified later, processed, and broadcasted or published by news organizations through a scheduled broadcast or newspaper.

People on social media write what they want to write, what they believe is the case, without verifying the credibility in advance [24]. They express their opinions and point of view honestly, without editorial considerations, which can affect people's opinions and perceptions. Thus, the news presented on social media is usually more subjective than the one presented on mass media. On the other hand, mass media aim to share objective information which is in conformity to the main value of journalism.

Even though most of the participants agree that the news presented on mass media is more credible than the one presented on social media, more than half of the participants are easily influenced by news that is spread on social media. This indicates that social media have a great influence towards people's opinions and perceptions.

As in the following table 3.2, the frequency of college students using social media and mass media as the source of information is compared.

Table 3.2
THE FREQUENCY OF COLLEGE STUDENTS USING SOCIAL MEDIA AND MASS MEDIA AS THE SOURCE OF INFORMATION

No.	Statement	Yes	No
1.	Do you actively use social media?	96%	4%
2.	Do you actively comment/like/share posts especially news on social media?	84%	16%
3.	Do you frequently watch television?	44%	56%
4.	Do you frequently listen to radio?	12%	88%

5.	Do you frequently read newspaper/magazine?	36%	64%
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The data above shows that 24 out of 25 participants are active social media users, indicating social media has a great number of audience. Among the 24 social media active users, 21 participants are also actively liking, giving comment, or sharing the news on their social media. This signifies that the users of social media are given a lot of freedom to do anything and are playing an important role in information sharing. Anyone can write any news as well as give any comments on the news written by other people on social media.

While social media is able to reach such a large scope of audience, mass media is started to be forgotten. More than half of the participants do not frequently watch television and read newspaper or magazine. Only 3 participants listen to radio. These result denote that the target audience of mass media is lesser than that of social media, since not all public use and/or watch television, read newspaper/magazine, and listen to radio. Only people who watch the news segment at scheduled time on television, or listen to the news segment on radio receive the information. Only people who subscribe to a newspaper receive the information. However, people using social media can access the news anytime, anywhere, and from anyone.

Thus, table 3.3 below is summarizing the difference between social media and mass media as the source of information based on participants' perspectives.

Table 3.3
COMPARISON OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND MASS MEDIA AS THE SOURCE OF INFORMATION

	Social Media	Mass Media
Form	A digital platforms that enables public to create and share information, ideas, news, and content.	A form of contemporary media that focuses on delivering news to general public.
Promptness	The news presented on social media is immediately delivered to public	The news presented on mass media can be delayed due to production times
Credibility	The data presented are often unreliable and inaccurate	The data presented are more reliable and accurate
Influence	Has a greater impact on public's perceptions and opinion	Has a lesser impact on public's perceptions and opinion
Authority	Gives public a lot of freedom over creation of information and in information sharing	Only the authority decides what to publish or broadcast, while public always receives the information
Audience	Reaches a maximum	The audience is

	audience	generally more targeted
Direction	A two-way conversation	One way conversation

CONCLUSION

Social media has been a great platform that facilitates its users with its sophisticated technology, in which people can communicate and interact virtually. Nowadays, people use social media not only for social purposes, but also for gaining information and news to keep them up-to-date. Almost all participants in this study agree that they receive most of the news and information through social media because the news spread faster on social media than mass media. This makes mass media such as television, radio, newspaper, and magazine are started to be abandoned. However, the news presented on social media is mostly raw and subjective, which makes people sometimes doubt its credibility and reliability. Despite that shortcomings, many people are still influenced more by the news spreading on social media. Moreover, social media is able to reach a greater audience than mass media can, since the number of social media users is more than television audiences, radio listeners, as well as newspaper and magazine readers.

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