

Social Media Activity And Trust In Digital Vs. Traditional News: A Quantitative Analysis

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the relationship between social media activity and the level of trust in digital news, both disseminated through social media and traditional media. With a quantitative approach and explanatory design, data were collected through a survey of 300 social media active respondents in Indonesia and analyzed using the Pearson correlation test and simple linear regression. Results showed a positive and significant relationship between social media activity and trust in news on social media ($r = 0.478$; $\beta = 0.472$; $R^2 = 0.229$), but there was no significant association with trust in news in traditional media ($r = -0.108$; $\beta = -0.094$; $R^2 = 0.011$). These findings suggest that nearly a quarter of the variation in trust in digital news can be explained by the intensity of users' social activity in digital media, with trust mechanisms driven more by algorithmic exposure, social validation, and echo chamber effects than institutional credibility. This study confirms and contextualizes the media trust model and agenda-setting theory in Indonesia's digital environment, especially considering that 91% of respondents stated that they first encountered news through social media. This study recommends strengthening digital literacy based on social interaction and developing news distribution strategies adaptive to people's digital trust patterns.

Keywords: Social media, Trust, Online news, Traditional media, Digital.

Introduction

In today's digital era, social media has become one of the main sources of information for the public. Platforms such as Instagram, Twitter (X), Facebook, and TikTok are not only used for social interaction but also as the main channels for the dissemination of news and information. According to the We Are Social and Hootsuite (2024) report, more than 170 million Indonesians have actively used social media, with an average usage time of 3 hours and 18 minutes per day. The high intensity of this activity makes social media a very influential source of information in shaping public opinion, including in terms of trust in the news. However, as social media activity increases, the challenges to the quality and accuracy of information circulating are also becoming more complex. Fake news, hoaxes, and misleading information are widely found on digital platforms, which can affect people's perception and trust in news, both on social media and traditional media (newspapers, television, and radio). A study from Newman et al. (2023) in the Reuters Institute Digital News Report shows that the level of trust of the Indonesian public in news decreased from 61% (2021) to 56% (2023), with most respondents expressing confusion in distinguishing between true and untrue news.

On the other hand, traditional media is still considered to have higher credibility than social media. The Edelman Trust Barometer survey (2023) shows that the level of public trust in traditional media is at 59%, higher than social media, which is only 41%. However, the reach of traditional media is increasingly limited, especially among the younger generation who prefer to access news through digital platforms and social media (Newman et al., 2023). This phenomenon raises an important question: does a person's high activity on social media affect their trust in online news, both those disseminated through social media itself and those that come from traditional media that are digitally repackaged? With the increasing consumption of news through digital channels, it is important to understand how the behavior of social media users can affect the orientation of their trust towards information. This is in line with the findings of Tandoc et al. (2017), who stated that continuous exposure to information on social media can shape perceptions and preferences for news sources, including the level of credibility associated with certain platforms. Therefore, this research is expected to contribute to understanding the dynamics of information consumption in the digital era,

as well as provide recommendations for media managers and policymakers in improving media literacy and public trust in information.

This problem indicates a gap in the previous research literature. Most studies have focused on beliefs in one type of media, or on the effects of fake news alone (Tandoc et al., 2017; Nielsen & Graves, 2017), without simultaneously measuring how social media activity relates to trust in two news channels with different characteristics. In addition, there are still a few studies that integrate a theoretical framework comprehensively in measuring the relationship between social media user activity and the dynamics of trust in cross-platform news. So, this research is here to answer this gap.

Social media is defined as a digital platform that allows its users to share, create, and distribute information interactively and in real-time (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Social media user activity includes various forms of engagement, from passive consumption (viewing and reading) to active participation (sharing, commenting, and creating content). According to Valkenburg & Peter (2011) and Diego Garusi, Clara Juarez Miro, Folker Hanusch (2025), social media activities can be classified into three categories, namely Browsing (viewing content), Social interaction (commenting, messaging, liking), and Self-presentation (creating or sharing one's own content). The level of social media activity is often measured based on the frequency, duration, and intensity of user engagement with the platform.

The difference between social media and traditional media is very basic. Traditional media such as television, radio, and newspapers perform the function of professional journalism with a rigorous editorial process. Meanwhile, social media is open and participatory, allowing anyone to disseminate information without journalistic filters. According to McQuail (2010), traditional media tend to be seen as more credible due to information verification procedures, while social media is more susceptible to bias, misinformation, and manipulation. This creates a difference in the perception of public trust in news coming from the two channels.

Trust in news is an important dimension in the study of mass communication and media literacy. According to Kohring & Matthes (2007), trust in news involves the audience's perception of the accuracy, balance, independence, and credibility of the information source. In the digital age, trust in news is increasingly complex due to the large number

of unverified sources. Newman et al. (2023) noted that people tend to have lower trust in news on social media than in news in traditional media. This is influenced by a lack of editorial control on social media, as well as algorithms that drive virality, not accuracy.

Various previous studies have examined the relationship between social media use and perception of information. Tandoc et al. (2017) show that the use of social media as the primary source of news increases the likelihood of individuals believing fake news due to confirmation bias and echo chambers. Nielsen & Graves (2017) found that people trust news from professional news organizations more, even though they access it through social media. Sari and Nugroho (2021) examined the fact that the digital literacy factor has a great influence on trust in information, especially on social media. However, there have not been many studies that have specifically measured the relationship between social media activity and trust in two different news channels simultaneously.

This study uses several theories to analyze the relationship between social media activity and trust in news, namely the theory of usefulness and gratifications (Uses and Gratifications theory). This theory explains that individuals actively choose media to meet specific needs (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974). In this context, social media is used to meet the needs of information, entertainment, personal identity, and social interaction. The higher a person's activity in using social media for information needs, the greater their exposure to various types of news, both accurate and unreliable. This can affect their level of trust in certain news sources.

This research also uses the theory of agenda setting, according to McCombs and Shaw (1972), whereby the media have the power to determine which issues are considered important by the public. In the digital age, agenda setting also occurs on social media, with algorithms and the virality of content shaping people's perceptions of what matters. However, this algorithmically formed agenda is not always based on facts or journalistic truth, thus causing confusion and doubt about the news consumed, especially when compared to news from traditional media. The model used in the study is the Media Trust Model. The model from Kohring and Matthes (2007) explains that trust in the media is formed through several dimensions, namely the accuracy of information, the objectivity of the news, the independence of the source, and the credibility of media institutions. In the context of social media, these dimensions are

often not met because news can come from anonymous accounts or have no affiliation with official media institutions.

Previous literature shows that there are differences of views. Tandoc et al. (2017) mentioned that social media increases the likelihood of audiences believing fake news due to *the confirmation bias* and *echo chamber* effects. However, Nielsen & Graves (2017) show that users still put their trust in news from professional organizations even though it is accessed through social media. On the other hand, Park et al. (2020) found that the perception of media credibility actually depends on the extent to which the media meets user expectations, not the type of media. This contradiction shows the need for a new study that not only measures trust in one media channel but also compares perceptions of both in the context of intense social media use.

This study aims to measure the relationship between the level of social media activity and the level of trust in online news, as well as to identify how much influence social media activity has on trust in news on two different channels: social media and traditional media. The study was conducted on 300 respondents with a quantitative approach. To answer this goal, this study used the Pearson Correlation Test to test the relationship between social media activity level and trust in online news. In addition, the Linear Regression Test is also used to analyze how much an independent variable (level of social media activity) influences a dependent variable (trust in news on social media and traditional media).

This study is important because it seeks to measure the relationship between social media activity and trust in online news from two different sources: social media and traditional media. This study fills the literature gap by developing a quantitative approach that not only uses the Pearson Correlation Test to see the relationship between variables, but also the Linear Regression Test to determine the magnitude of the influence of social media activity on the level of news trust in the two channels. With this approach, the research is expected to make a theoretical and practical contribution in developing an understanding of information behavior in the digital era, as well as provide implications for policymakers and media industry players to increase information literacy and public trust in the news consumed.

Thus, the thesis statement of this study is that the level of social media activity of individuals has a significant relationship with their trust in online news, both sourced from social media and traditional media, with

influences mediated by usage motives, agenda exposure, and perception of the credibility of information sources.

Research Method

This study uses a quantitative approach with the type of explanatory research, which aims to explain the causal relationship between two main variables, namely the level of social media activity (independent variable) and the level of trust in online news (dependent variable), both from social media and traditional media. The quantitative approach was chosen because it allows for the collection of numerical data and objective hypothesis testing through statistical analysis, making it suitable for identifying relationships that can be empirically tested (Neuman, 2014; Sugiyono, 2021; Arikunto, 2019).

This research was carried out from January to March 2024, with locations in urban and semi-urban areas of Indonesia selected purposively. The target of the study was the population of active social media users aged 17–45 years who consume news through social media and/or traditional media. The research sample amounted to 300 respondents, who were selected using a non-probability sampling technique with a purposive approach. Inclusion criteria include: (1) age 17–45 years, (2) active social media use for at least two hours per day, and (3) having accessed news from social media and/or traditional media in the last 30 days. Although quantitative approaches are often associated with probabilistic sampling techniques, purposive sampling can be legitimately used in quantitative research if the selection criteria are explicitly described and relevant to the study's inferential objectives. Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim (2016) emphasized that this technique allows the selection of participants who are believed to be most capable of providing the required information, while Arikunto (2019) states that in studies with limited time, cost, or specific subject characteristics, non-random sample selection can still be used as long as it is done rationally and consistent with the research objectives.

The sample size of 300 respondents was considered sufficient based on two bases: first, a power analysis that showed that the number was sufficient to detect a moderate relationship in a simple correlation and regression analysis, with a statistical strength of at least 0.80 and a significance level of 0.05 (Hair et al., 2014); second, conformity with common practice in similar studies examining the influence of social

media on public perceptions or attitudes in digital communication studies (e.g., Tandoc et al., 2018; Bode & Vraga, 2018).

The data was collected through an online questionnaire (Google Form), consisting of three main sections. First, the demographic characteristics of the respondents, including age, gender, education, and duration of social media use. Second, the scale of social media activity (independent variables), measured through indicators: frequency of use (number of times a day), duration of use (how many hours per day), and intensity of engagement (frequency of interactions such as liking, commenting, sharing, and creating content). Third, the scale of trust in online news (dependent variable), measured on a Likert scale of 1–5 based on three main indicators according to Kohring & Matthes (2007): source validity (credibility of the origin of the news), objectivity (impartiality of the content), and content consistency (suitability between news sections).

Before the main data collection, a try-out was carried out on 30 respondents to test the validity of the construct and the reliability of the instrument. Reliability is declared good if Cronbach's Alpha value > 0.70 (Sugiyono, 2022). The collected data was analyzed using SPSS version 27 through four stages. First, validity and reliability tests are used to ensure that the instrument measures precise and consistent constructs. Second, the Pearson correlation test was used to find out the linear relationship between social media activity and trust in online news. Third, the linear regression test is simple: to determine the influence of the independent variable (X) on two aspects of the dependent variable, namely Y_1 (trust in news on social media) and Y_2 (trust in news in traditional media). Fourth, the classical assumption test includes normality, multicollinearity, linearity, and homoskedasticity. Normality is checked with the Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk tests, and if the data is abnormal, then data transformation (log or square root) or non-parametric approaches are carried out as alternatives. Multicollinearity is examined through the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance values. A VIF value of < 10 and a Tolerance > 0.1 indicate that there is no multicollinearity; if a violation is found, then the item that contributes the most to redundancy is excluded from the model. Linearity and Homoscedasticity are tested through residual scatterplots to ensure an even linear relationship and distribution of residual variance.

The validity of the instrument's content is guaranteed through the preparation of indicators that refer to relevant theories and expert

judgment testing. All measurements and analyses were carried out to support the objectivity and accuracy of the interpretation of the results in explaining social phenomena related to media trust in the digital era.



Figure 1. Research Design Diagram

Results and Discussion

This study aims to determine the relationship and influence between the level of social media activity and trust in online news, both from social media and traditional media. Data processing was carried out using the SPSS program version 27 and presented in descriptive and inferential forms. Statistically, out of 300 respondents, the average duration of social media use was 3.4 hours per day, the most frequently used platform was Instagram (85%), followed by TikTok (72%), and YouTube (68%). As many as 91% of respondents admitted to getting news for the first time from social media. The level of trust in news on social media is at an average score of 3.02 (moderate category). The level of trust in news in traditional media has an average score of 3.74 (a fairly high category).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variabel	N	Mean	Hours of deviation	Category
Social Media Usage Duration (hours/day)	300	3,40	1,12	Moderate
Trust in News on Social Media	300	3,02	0,84	Moderate

Variabel	N	Mean	Hours of deviation	Category
Trust in News in Traditional Media	300	3,74	0,71	Fairly High

Source: Data processed (2025)

The duration of social media use shows that the average respondent uses social media for 3.40 hours per day. A standard deviation of 1.12 indicates a moderate diversity in the intensity of use, but it is generally in the moderate category. The level of trust in news on social media has an average score of 3.02 on a Likert scale of 1–5, which is also categorized as moderate. This indicates that respondents' trust in the information they obtain on social media is still cautious, although it is quite stable given the high frequency of exposure. Trust in news in traditional media shows a mean of 3.74, which is quite high. This indicates that despite high digital activity, most respondents still consider traditional media to be relatively more credible, even if it does not correlate significantly with their social media activity. In general, the descriptive data in Table 1 illustrate that respondents are active on social media, show moderate trust in information from social media, and have relatively higher trust in news from traditional media. This becomes an important basis for understanding the differences in the direction of relationships and influences that are further tested in correlation and regression analysis.

Table 2. Correlation between Social Media Activity and Trust in News

Variabel	1	2
1. Duration of Social Media Use	1	
2. Trust in News on Social Media	.478*	1

* $r = 0.478$, $p < 0.05$

Source: Data processed (2025)

The value of the Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.478$ in Table 2 shows that there is a fairly strong positive relationship between the duration of social media use and the level of trust in news on social media. A positive sign (+) indicates that the longer or more often a person uses social media, the more likely they are to trust news obtained through the platform. The significance level ($p < 0.05$) indicates that this relationship is statistically significant, so this finding did not occur by chance in the

sample studied. These results support the hypothesis that the intensity of engagement in social media is positively correlated with trust in the information contained in it. It also reinforces previous findings in the literature that repeated exposure to digital content, especially that coming from personal social networks, tends to increase the perception of credibility of such information, even without a rigorous verification process. Thus, Table 2 provides a solid basis for further regression analysis, which tests how much social media activity affects users' trust in news on the platform.

Table 3. Simple Linear Regression Results: The Influence of Social Media Activity Trust In News on Social Media

Model	R	R Square	F	Sig.	B (Unstandardized)	Beta	t	Sig.
1	0.215	0.046	14.23	0.000	0.185	0.215	3.77	0.000

Source: Data processed (2025)

$R = 0.215$ shows a correlation between predictors (social media activity) and outcomes (trust in news on social media) in the regression model. $R^2 = 0.046$ means that the 4.6% variation in trust in news on social media can be explained by the social media activity variable in this model. This value is smaller than the final R^2 (0.229) in Table 7, as Table 3 is the initial output of the first test or possibly part of a phased testing process. $F = 14.23$ and $\text{Sig. (p)} = 0.000$ indicates that the regression model as a whole is statistically significant, meaning that the model has the ability to explain the relationships between variables. The non-standard regression coefficient (B) = 0.185 means that every single unit of social media activity score increases trust in news on social media by 0.185 units (on the Likert scale). The standardized beta coefficient = 0.215 indicates the relative magnitude of the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable. $t = 3.77$; $p = 0.000$ indicates that the regression coefficient is significant. Although the R^2 value in this table still shows a relatively small influence (4.6%), this finding is important because it statistically means that social media activity makes a real contribution to the formation of user trust in the news they encounter on social media. This confirms that user behavior patterns — how often and intensely they

use social media — can affect how they perceive the credibility of news on those platforms. These findings also support the hypothesis in the theory of Uses and Gratifications that media is actively selected and used to meet information needs, and in the process, repeated exposure shapes preferences and beliefs towards certain types of information.

Table 4. Results of the Validity Test of Questionnaire Items

Scale	Number of Items	Item-Total Correlation	Information
Social Media Activity	5	> 0,300	Valid
Trust in Online News	6	> 0,300	Valid

Source: Data processed (2025)

All items on each scale show an item-total correlation value greater than 0.300, which means it is valid.

The validity of the construct is assessed based on the correlation between each item's score and its total variable scale score. An item is declared valid if its item-total correlation value > 0.300 (Hair et al., 2014; Scott, 2022). In Table 4, all items on both scales show item-total correlation values that exceed the 0.300 threshold, meaning that each item has logical and theoretical consistency with the construct being measured. For the scale of social media activity, all five items are valid; This means that behavioral indicators such as duration, frequency of interactions (likes, comments, shares, posts), and engagement are considered conceptually relevant to those variables. For the scale of trust in online news, six items were also declared valid, including indicators such as perception of accuracy, objectivity, and source of information, according to the dimensions of the Media Trust Model (Kohring & Matthes, 2007). This validity test showed that the instrument used in the questionnaire had sufficient construct strength to be used in further analysis. High validity reinforces the reliability of the research findings because the variables measured actually reflect the intended theoretical concept. Thus, Table 4 becomes an important methodological foundation to guarantee the quality of the data and supports the internal validity of all subsequent statistical analyses, such as correlation and regression.

Table 5. Reliability Test Results (Cronbach's Alpha)

Scale		Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Information
Social Activity	Media	5	0,812	Reliable (Very good)
Trust in News	Online	6	0,857	Reliable (Very good)

Source: Data processed (2025)

In Table 5, Cronbach's Alpha is used to measure internal reliability, i.e., consistency between items on a scale. The alpha value ranges from 0 to 1; The closer it is to 1, the higher the reliability. In social and psychological research, the general interpretation of alpha values is as follows (George & Mallery, 2003): ≥ 0.90 = Excellent; $0.80-0.89$ = Very good; $0.70-0.79$ = Acceptable; $0.60-0.69$ = Questionable; < 0.60 = Poor. Based on the standard, the social media activity scale obtained a value of $\alpha = 0.812$, which falls into the "excellent" category, meaning that all items in this scale are consistent in measuring aspects of user activity on social media. The trust scale for online news is even higher, at $\alpha = 0.857$, which indicates a very strong internal consistency and is suitable for use in sensitive measurements of perception and attitude. These values pass the threshold of at least 0.70 for acceptable reliability in social research (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994) and show that the instruments used are consistent in measuring constructs. These reliability values indicate that the quantitative instrument used has been proven to be statistically reliable and trustworthy in representing the construct being studied. This ensures technical validity for all subsequent analyses, including correlation and regression, as it reduces the risk of measurement errors. In other words, the results from Table 5 reinforce the conclusion that the scale used in this study works consistently in Indonesia's digital social context.

Table 6. Pearson's Correlation between Social Media Activity and Trust in News

Variable X	Variable Y	r (Pearson)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Information
Social Media Activity	Trust in News on Social Media	0,478	0,000	Significant, positive relationships

Variable X	Variable Y	r (Pearson)	Sig. tailed)	(2- Information
Social Media Activity	Trust in News in Traditional Media	-0,108	0,054	Insignificant

Source: Data processed (2025)

In the relationship between social media activity and trust in news on social media, the value of $r = 0.478$ indicates a fairly strong positive relationship between social media activity and the level of trust in news on social media. The significance value ($p = 0.000$) showed that this relationship was statistically significant at a 95% confidence level ($p < 0.05$). This means that the higher the level of user activity on social media (e.g., the frequency with which they use, interact, and share content), the greater their tendency to trust the news circulating on the platform. In the relationship between social media activity and trust in news in traditional media, the value of $r = -0.108$ indicates a weak negative relationship between social media activity and trust in news in traditional media. However, the significance value $p = 0.054$, slightly above the threshold of $p < 0.05$, is therefore not statistically significant.

That is, although the correlation direction is negative (the more active on social media tends to be the more distrustful of traditional media), this relationship is not strong enough to be considered a real influence in the study population. Table 6 makes it clear that social media activity plays an important role in shaping trust in news on social media, but it does not significantly affect trust in news in traditional media. This illustrates the asymmetry of the influence of cross-platform trust: respondents build trust in a digital information ecosystem that is separate from their perception of conventional media. The findings also corroborate theories such as Uses and Gratifications, which state that active social media users choose news sources that suit their needs and tend to trust the content they choose themselves. Reinforcing the theory of confirmation bias and echo chambers, bringing trust to an environment that reinforces the views that users already have, especially through digital social interactions.

Table 7. Linear Regression Test Results: Social Media Activity, Trust in News on Social Media

Type	Coefficients of Regression (β)	R^2	Sig.	Interpretasi
Social Media Activity → Trust in News on Social Media	0,472	0,229	0,000	Significant, Positive Influence

Source: Data processed (2025)

The coefficient of $\beta = 0.472$ shows that social media activities have a positive and strong effect on trust in news on social media. This means that the higher the level of activity a person has on social media (frequency, duration, intensity of interaction), the higher their tendency to trust the news presented on the platform. $R^2 = 0.229$ means that 22.9% of the variation in trust in news on social media can be explained by social media activity. This is of significant value in the context of social research, as trust in information is usually influenced by many factors, and one variable can explain almost a quarter. Sig. = 0.000 ($p < 0.01$) indicates that this regression model is statistically significant, so it can be concluded that the effect is real, not coincidental, in the sample. Table 7 confirms that social media activity is not only passive behavior, but has a predictive power towards the formation of trust in the digital information ecosystem.

These findings are particularly relevant in the theory of uses and gratifications, as active users consciously choose, consume, and validate content as needed. And it is also relevant to the phenomenon of confirmation bias and exposure effect, where repeated exposure to information strengthens the perception that the information is valid. These findings also reflect the mechanisms of digital social trust; users are more likely to trust news because it is associated with social networks and interactions, rather than solely because of its institutional sources. This means that Table 7 describes how social media activity significantly affects trust in news on social media. These findings suggest that social media platforms have formed their own trust ecosystem, with a different logic than conventional media. These results highlight the importance of digital literacy, which focuses not only on content but also on behavioral patterns and trust dynamics in online social spaces. From a theoretical point of

view, these findings are consistent with the Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz et al., 1974), which states that individuals actively choose media to meet specific needs. High activity indicates the use of social media as the main source of information, which ultimately creates the perception that the information that is often consumed is the correct information. In other words, the frequency of engagement creates a sense of credibility, although it is not necessarily based on the validity of the source.

Table 8. Linear Regression Test Results: Social Media Activity, Trust in News
In Traditional Media

Type	Coefficients of Regression (β)	R ²	Sig.	Interpretasi
Social Media Activity → Trust in News in Traditional Media	-0,094	0,011	0,054	Insignificant

Source: Data processed (2025)

The coefficient of $\beta = -0.094$ indicates that there is a negative influence, meaning that the higher a person's activity on social media, the lower their trust in news from traditional media. However, the R^2 value = 0.011 means that only 1.1% of the variation in belief in news in traditional media can be explained by social media activity. This is a very small and insignificant influence. A Sig. value = 0.054 (greater than 0.05) indicates that this relationship is not statistically significant at a 95% confidence level. Although statistically insignificant, the direction of this negative relationship is worth observing.

These findings indicate that active users of social media may experience a "trust shift" from conventional to digital media. Individuals who are increasingly involved in social media activities may be more exposed to narratives or discourses that cast doubt on the credibility of traditional media, whether in the form of criticism of the mainstream media, accusations of political partisanship, or content that asserts that social media is more "free", "direct", and "as it is". There is exposure to the mainstream anti-media narrative, namely, social media users are more exposed to content that conveys criticism of traditional media institutions, for example, related to political bias, inaction of coverage, or lack of public

participation. In the wake of the echo chamber and filter bubble effect, social media algorithms tend to present content that aligns with users' views, reinforcing existing biases and reducing trust in information from outside their digital community, where users are only exposed to information that reinforces their views.

There has also been a decline in the relevance of traditional media for the digital-native generation, namely, young age groups who are active in social media tend to feel that traditional media does not represent their speed, communication style, and interests. However, because these effects are not statistically significant, researchers cannot conclude that there is a real effect in the population. This suggests that trust in news in traditional media may be influenced by other factors, such as education, old habits, or political affiliations, rather than just by social media activity. Table 8 supports the finding that trust in media in the digital age is platform-specific and does not automatically reinforce each other. This is an important note for traditional media and policymakers: it is not enough to rely on institutional credibility if it is not followed by a cross-platform engagement strategy that actively targets digital audiences.

In this context, trust in traditional media can be eroded, not because of declining journalistic quality, but because of public perceptions that are increasingly shaped by personal and social experiences in the digital space. These findings can also be linked to the results of a study by Newman et al. (2023), which shows that the higher the dependence on social media as the main source of information, the lower the trust in conventional media. In this case, active users of social media may perceive traditional media as slow, controlled, or not representative of the interests of their social group. Thus, although the negative influence is not statistically significant, the direction of this relationship can form the basis of a hypothesis for further research, for example by exploring the role of media skepticism, exposure to disinformation about mainstream media, or the influence of antimedia narratives in online communities on the level of trust in traditional media.

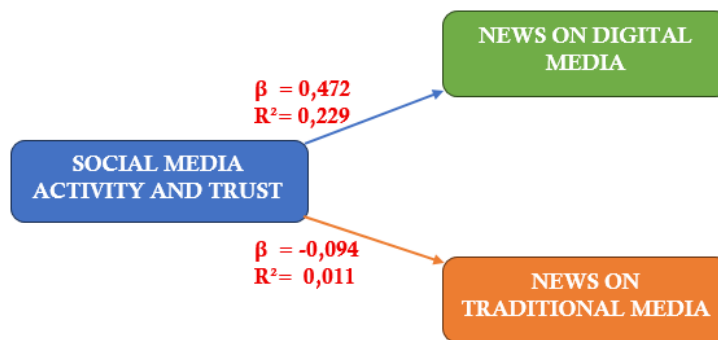


Figure 2. Visualization of Research Results

Picture 2 presents a regression relationship between social media activity and two types of news beliefs. The positive arrow leads to news trust on social media with $\beta = 0.472$, while the negative arrow is insignificant towards traditional media news trust with $\beta = -0.094$. This visualization underscores the asymmetry of influence across information platforms (Picture 3).

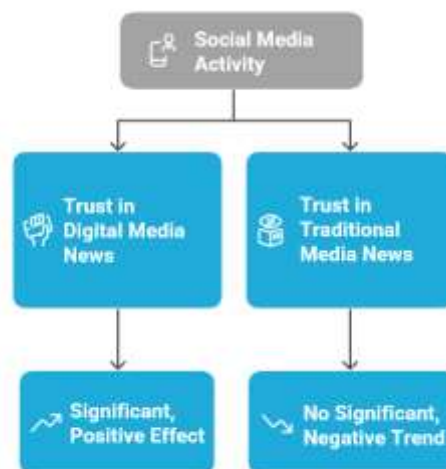


Figure 3. Research Findings Diagram

The practical impact of these findings is particularly relevant in the context of the rapid and inaccurate dissemination of digital information. Users who are more active on social media tend to be more exposed to the type of content that matches their values or beliefs, reinforcing the effect

of confirmation bias, which is the tendency to trust information that affirms personal opinions. These findings support the exposure effect theory, which states that the more often a person is exposed to a stimulus, the more likely he or she is to believe or approve of it (Zajonc, 1968). In addition, these results are in line with the study of Tandoc, Lim, & Ling (2017) and the Reuters Institute Digital News Report report by Newman et al. (2023), which found that trust in social media content often does not come from the news source itself, but from who shares it, be it friends, influencers, or celebrities. This indicates the existence of a social dimension in the formation of trust in news, which reinforces the importance of educational and regulatory approaches in responding to the dynamics of news consumption in the digital era. In contrast, correlation tests showed that there was no significant relationship between the level of social media activity and trust in news in traditional media ($r = -0.108$; $p > 0.05$). This suggests that even if a person is active on social media, it does not automatically affect their perception of the news delivered by the conventional media. This can be explained by the difference in the nature of the two information channels. Traditional media, such as television and newspapers, tend to be considered more official sources of news, but highly active social media users often perceive traditional media as slow, less interactive, or even biased towards certain institutions. This is consistent with previous findings from Hermida et al. (2012), which showed that active users of social media often show a preference for "speed" and "community", rather than just "formal credibility".

These findings reinforce the basic assumption that trust in news is strongly influenced by social context and media consumption patterns. In the context of social media, trust is not only formed by the content of the news, but also by the social context in which the news is received and shared. This is called the "social trust mechanism", where information authority moves from formal institutions to personal social networks. In addition, these findings suggest that active users of social media are more affected by the dynamics of the "echo chamber" and "filter bubble", which causes them to trust the information circulating in their social circles more than to verify the truth of information through traditional media.

These findings are consistent with the theory of Uses and Gratifications (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974), which states that individuals actively choose media to meet specific needs, such as information, entertainment, personal identity, and social interaction.

Active social media users tend to seek out and receive information from such platforms according to their preferences and needs. This explains why the level of social media activity is positively correlated with trust in the news, because users themselves choose content and sources of information that match their values and perceptions, thus reinforcing trust.

This study is consistent with previous studies, namely Tandoc et al. (2017) mentioned that intensive engagement in social media can increase the perception of trust, even towards news that is not necessarily true, and Shin & Thorson (2017) also found that individuals who passively consume news on social media have a higher level of trust in news shared by social connections compared to news from official media. However, unlike several other studies that found a positive correlation between the intensity of internet use and a decrease in trust in traditional media (Park et al., 2018), this study showed that social media activity did not have a significant impact on trust in traditional media, which could mean that trust in conventional media was more influenced by other variables, such as age, education, or media experience. However, the finding that social media activity has no significant effect on trust in traditional media news can be interpreted as an indication that audiences are separating between news sources and the beliefs attached to them. This can be seen as a challenge for traditional media to remain relevant in the information agenda system that is now dominated by digital platforms.

The results of this study are in line with previous findings that intense exposure to social media can increase media trust in digital content, especially news, due to peer endorsement and customized algorithmic exposure. A study by Tandoc et al. (2017) also shows that social media users often trust the news they encounter for the first time on the platform because it is confirmed by peers or influencers. Meanwhile, another study (Newman et al., 2022) confirms that trust in traditional media tends to decline, especially among the younger generation who no longer consume it directly. From the perspective of Agenda Setting (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), social media has become a major source of shaping public perception of important issues. The finding that 91% of respondents first get news from social media shows that social media has taken a significant role in setting the agenda of public issues. Although traditional media is still considered more credible in terms of average trust scores, the influence of social media in shaping the attention and focus of public issues cannot be ignored.

The media trust model from Kohring and Matthes (2007) proposes that trust in the media is influenced by four main dimensions: selectivity, accuracy, transparency, and objectivity. In the context of this study, active social media users may not have enough tools to assess the objectivity or transparency of the information circulating, but still consider content on social media to be credible due to the frequency of exposure and confirmation from their social networks (e.g., through likes, shares, or comments from people they trust). In contrast, traditional media may be judged to be more objective, but do not experience a significant increase in trust due to a decrease in the intensity of consumption and public interaction with it.

These findings have important implications in the context of media literacy and responsible information dissemination in the digital age. Governments, media institutions, and educational institutions need to strengthen digital literacy programs, focusing on improving the public's ability to verify news sources and understand information biases circulating on social media. For future research directions, it is recommended to combine quantitative and qualitative approaches to delve deeper into the motives and subjective experiences of social media users in assessing news trust. Examine the role of intermediate variables such as age, education level, and digital literacy as mediators or moderators in the relationship between social media activity and trust in news. Develop predictive models involving platform algorithm variables and the effect of news visualization on the perception of trust. Media literacy needs to be improved, especially related to the ability of users to verify and evaluate information on social media. This research also underscores the importance of strengthening digital-based journalism to remain accountable and trustworthy to the public. For future research, it is recommended to develop a model of the influence of interpersonal trust on media trust, examine differences in trust perceptions by platform (e.g., TikTok vs. YouTube vs. Instagram), and analyze the role of algorithms and echo chambers in shaping perceptions of news credibility. Overall, the results of this study successfully answer the research questions and expand our understanding of how social media activity shapes trust in information. The Uses and Gratifications Theory, Agenda Setting, and Media Trust Model provide a strong conceptual framework to explain the phenomenon. These findings also confirm the need for a critical approach

to consuming digital news as well as more adaptive media strategies to reach modern audiences.

Conclusion

This study shows that the level of social media activity has a significant effect on trust in news on social media, but not on trust in news in traditional media. These findings reinforce the understanding that in the digital context, a person's level of engagement with social media in terms of frequency, duration, and interaction contributes to the perception of the credibility of news circulating on the platform. Meanwhile, trust in traditional media appears to be shaped by other factors, such as institutional authority, long-standing consumption habits, and personal experiences that are not related to the intensity of digital media use. Another important finding is that the regression model shows that social media activity variables only explain about 22.9% of the variance in trust in news on social media, which indicates that there are many other factors that influence that belief. The theoretical implication of this is the need to broaden the perspective on trust in digital information by including psychosocial dimensions, such as ideological affiliation, information literacy level, and affective predisposition to content. This research has several methodological limitations. The use of a cross-sectional design does not allow the definitive drawing of causal conclusions. In addition, sample selection through non-probability purposive sampling techniques can cause selection bias, so that the findings cannot be generalized widely to the entire population of social media users in Indonesia.

Follow-up recommendations and related policies on digital media literacy programs need to be strengthened, not only in the form of formal education in educational institutions, but also through public campaigns based on digital platforms. The main focus is on improving users' critical abilities in recognizing hoaxes, understanding content algorithms, and distinguishing credible information from manipulative information. The government, through the Ministry of Communication and Information, should develop data-based policy interventions, such as encouraging transparency of content distribution algorithms and supporting fact-checking services that are integrated directly into social media platforms. Traditional media are advised to develop an interactive news distribution format, as well as build two-way engagement with social media users, in order to bridge the trust gap between the digital-native generation and

conventional news sources. Higher education institutions and civil society organizations need to be actively involved in creating contextual digital literacy curricula, based on local data and viral cases that reflect socio-political dynamics in Indonesia.

Future research is suggested to explore moderation variables, such as education level or the type of media most commonly used, in the relationship between social media activity and trust in traditional media. In addition, it is recommended that the mediating effects of digital literacy or perception on media bias be tested in order to understand the more complex mechanisms of trust formation. The research methodology can also be improved by using a longitudinal approach to track changes in beliefs towards news over time, as well as an experimental approach to test how exposure to certain content (e.g., fake news or content from influencers) affects user perception. Research can also deepen affective aspects by measuring the role of emotions, such as anger or empathy, on the tendency to believe or spread news on social media.

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