



## 21st Century Watchdogs: The Credibility of News Media Outlets in the Philippines

Alecshane Mae M. Pablo\*, Julla Lee G. Corpuz, Princess C. Deypalan, Homaisa Z. Musa, Vivialyn C. Asoy

Sultan Kudarat State University, the Philippines  
Correspondence: E-mail: [alecshanepablo@sksu.edu.ph](mailto:alecshanepablo@sksu.edu.ph)

### ABSTRACTS

This study explained the relationship between the credibility of different news media outlets and the trust of Sultan Kudarat State University senior high school students when they are a group as a whole. This study used a quantitative research design, particularly the correlational research method. This research study uses various types of statistical methods, which are frequency, percentage, mean, and Pearson correlation to accumulate the result needed. Based on the findings, the level of frequency on how often the senior high school students read or watch the news is determined by the verbal description of always. The level of agreement to what extent and credibility of news media outlets show that the students strongly agree with news media outlets' credibility. Lastly, the result of the study reveals that there is a relationship between the two identified variables: the trust of senior high school students and the credibility of news media outlets. The level to which two variables are connected, that is, the degree to which changes in one variable correspond with changes in the other.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Mass media exists in the same manner as it does in every state throughout the world. Its definition, which refers to its term as a type of innovative technology that delivers news to a large audience, is widely accepted on a universal basis. Every time people try to make themselves informed, television is always the first thing to approach in search of not just relevant and timely but also credible data (Mehrabian et al., 2019).

Newscasters are the face of every network and oftentimes, viewers perceive them as the network itself (D'Alessio & Allen, 2000). Hence, the network's quality of being reliable is attached to them as a part of their profession (Quinn, 2017).

In comparison to former eras when journalism was at the vanguard of democratic resurgences across Africa, the loss of journalistic resources, along with an onslaught of misinformation poisoning the information ecosystem has eroded trust in the media. The worrying increase in the number of these incidents calls into question the newscasting networks and media's legitimacy.

Exposure to newscasters, visual credibility, political variables, and the strength of para-social relationships were all deemed significant aspects that ensure the public's belief in trustworthy reporting (Marko, 2011). Nowadays, the media is the most important source of information (Faber & O'Guinn, 1984). However, as time passes, much of the information provided by those news media sites becomes boring rather than believable.

People's trust is eroding, and many residents distrust the news media. Thus, this study explained the trust of senior high school students of Sultan Kudarat State University - Laboratory High School in the level of credibility of various media outlets in the Philippines as credible sources of information.

This study discussed the impact of the credibility of news media outlets in the Philippines and the trust of senior high school students of Sultan Kudarat State University - Laboratory High School enrolled during the Academic Year 2021-2022. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

- (i) What news media outlets do the senior high school students of Sultan Kudarat State University - Laboratory High School trust the most?
- (ii) What frequency do the senior high school students of Sultan Kudarat State University - Laboratory High School spend on reading or watching the news?
- (iii) To what extent do the senior high school students of Sultan Kudarat State University - Laboratory High School trust the news media outlets?
- (iv) What is the level of credibility of the news mass media outlet in terms of a reliable source of information and credibility source of information?
- (v) Is there a significant relationship between the trust of senior high school students of Sultan Kudarat State University - Laboratory High School and the credibility of news media outlets?

## 2. METHODS

This study used a quantitative research design, specifically, the descriptive correlation was used in this study because the primary focus is to determine to what extent the senior high school students trust the news media outlets. Furthermore, the study was conducted at Sultan Kudarat State University Laboratory High School with 122 respondents.

### 2.1. Respondents of The Study

The respondents of this study were senior high school students of Sultan Kudarat State University-Laboratory High School. Specifically, the respondents must meet the following

criteria: senior high school student of Sultan Kudarat State University - Laboratory High School enrolled in the school year 2021-2022.

## 2.2. Data Gathering Instrument

We used a survey questionnaire as an instrument for the data gathering procedure. Each respondent is given a survey questionnaire via an online platform. The survey questionnaire is simple, allowing the respondents to understand it easily.

We also used the Likert scale to analyze and measure the level of the frequency the senior high school students spend on reading or watching the news, the level of agreement to what extent they trust the news media outlets, and the level of agreement in terms of news media outlets' reliable source of information and credibility of information. The Likert scale works well in terms of understanding the response of the selected respondents.

## 2.3. Data Gathering Procedure

The primary stage was to first send the "letters to conduct" to the Adviser and the High School Chairperson. We then asked for approval from the respondents. If it is confirmed, we compiled the list of all participants and identified them to conduct the survey. After the study was completed, the survey questionnaire was prepared for validation.

Following receiving requests for the study's initial phase, the survey questionnaire was delivered via online social media platforms. Any personal information acquired was kept private at all times. The responses that were collected from the respondents differed depending on their perceptions about the credibility of the media. After receiving the data, we began to evaluate it and concluded the study.

## 2.4. Statistical Treatment

We used various statistical treatments to determine the statement of the problems. For the first statement of the problem, the frequency and percentage are used to determine the percentage of news media outlets. We also asked the senior high school students to trust the most. Next, we employed mean and standard deviation as the statistical method for the statement of problem numbers two, three, and four. For the last statement of the problem, the Pearson correlation is used to determine the relationship between the two identified variables.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the findings from the e-questionnaires were completed by the senior high school students of Sultan Kudarat State University – Science Laboratory High School for the school year 2020-2021. The data were presented in separate tables, analyzed, and interpreted to strengthen the respondents' responses. The presentations are arranged based on the statement of the problem.

**Table 1** shows the highest frequencies and the top ten (10) rankings of news media outlets which senior high school of Sultan Kudarat State University - Laboratory High School trust the most. ABS CBN (Online) ranked first with 80 responses that comprised a total of 65.6% of the total population. The second news media outlet that has a total of 57.4% and a total response of 70 is CNN Philippines. Next, is the GMA7 which garnered 65 responses and a percentage of 53.3 is listed as the third one.

It is followed by the Philippine Star, Rappler, Manila Bulletin, TV5 / Interaksyon, SMNI, Manila Standard, and Sunstar Philippines, with a total response rate of 35, 28, 27, 23, 21, and 17 and a percentage of 28.7, 23, 22.1, 18.9, 17.2, and 13.9 respectively. People choose

media outlets whether they obtain their news online or through the printed page of a newspaper that keeps them connected with the world around them.

However, the type of journalism that the media outlet people follow will determine which media outlet people believe. This is because the media is a strong institution that can govern and mold public opinion, whether for the better or the worse (Zhou & Moy, 2007). It is a given that audiences may choose their preferred media outlet based on subjective assumptions, depending on the individual's perspective of the world (Golbeck & Hansen, 2014).

**Table 1.** Top 10 news media outlets.

News Media Outlets	Frequency	%	Rank
ABS CBN (Online)	80	65.6	1
CNN Philippines	70	57.4	2
GMA7	65	53.3	3
Philippine Star	35	28.7	4
Rappler	35	28.7	4
Manila Bulletin	28	23	5
TV5 / Interaksyon	27	22.1	6
SMNI	23	18.9	7
Manila Standard	21	17.2	8
Sunstar Philippines	17	13.9	9

**Table 2** shows the level of frequency on how often a senior high student of Sultan Kudarat State University - Laboratory High School spends reading or watching the news. Based on the result, all the statements have almost the same mean ranging from 4.35 - 4.48 with a standard deviation of 0.70 - 0.78 respectively, which describes as always and with a qualitative interpretation that the respondents always spend time reading or watching the news.

Meanwhile, the calculated grand mean and standard deviation are 4.43 and 0.75, respectively, which indicates that the respondents always spend time reading or viewing the news. If you routinely read or watch the news, it will be much easier for you to make associations and draw analogies while engaging in conversations with other people about current events and politics. If you do this, the conversation will go much more smoothly.

**Table 2.** Level of Frequency on how often a student spends reading or watching the news.

Parameters	Mean	SD	Verbal description
I read or watch the news so that i can keep up with current events and be a witness to them as they happen.	4.46	0.78	Always
I read or watch the news to keep up with current events and formulate my opinions on them.	4.35	0.70	Always
I read or watch the news so that i can keep up with the most recent developments that are taking place in our society.	4.46	0.73	Always
I read or watch the news to improve my ability to differentiate between truth and lies.	4.42	0.78	Always
I read or watch the news to gain information and general knowledge, such as the economic state of the country, sports, games, entertainment, and trade and business.	4.48	0.74	Always
<b>Grand mean</b>	<b>4.43</b>	<b>0.75</b>	<b>Always</b>

The biggest advantage of either reading or watching the news is that it enhances a person's personality and adds value to who they are as an individual (Sindermann *et al.*, 2020). This is true regardless of whether one reads or watches the news.

**Table 3** shows the level of agreement to what extent the senior high school students of Sultan Kudarat State University - Laboratory High School trust the news media outlets. Based on the data gathered, statement 3 and statement 5 obtained the highest range of mean with 4.5 and 4.47 and standard deviation of 0.63 and 0.67, respectively.

It is shown that the students strongly agree with news media outlets. On the other hand, statements 1 and 4 obtained the result with a mean of 4.43 and a standard deviation of 0.73 and 0.69 respectively, and indicates that the students strongly agree with the media outlets.

Meanwhile, the computed grand mean and standard deviation are 4.43 and 0.70 respectively, meaning that the students strongly agree with news media outlets. According to Fan (2021), people's trust in the news is an essential component in maintaining social cohesiveness, which has emerged as a primary problem in the modern era of mass communication because the media is the primary source of day-to-day public knowledge (Matema & Kariuki, 2022).

Cannibalizing a significant portion of the market share held by traditional media, the explosive development of new media in recent years has brought about a monumental shift in the manner in which information is transmitted. Because of this, there has been a resurgence in focus on the legitimacy of the media.

**Table 3.** Level of the agreement to what extent do the student trust the newsmedia outlets.

Parameters	Mean	SD	Verbal description
I trust news media outlets since they are the primary source of public knowledge daily.	4.43	0.73	Strongly Agree
I trust news media outlets that explicitly label opinion sections as such identify conflicts of interest.	4.32	0.78	Strongly Agree
I trust news media outlets that specify material on how it was verified, and provide links to sources.	4.50	0.63	Strongly Agree
I trust news media outlets because they give a level playing field for all viewpoints, effectively convey information, and provide valuable information.	4.43	0.69	Strongly Agree
I trust news media outlets because it is more accessible and balanced in scholarly communication with trustworthy facts.	4.47	0.67	Strongly Agree
<b>Grand mean</b>	<b>4.43</b>	<b>0.70</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

**Table 4** shows the table summary of the level of agreement of reliable sources of information and credibility of information. Based on the result, the students strongly agree that news media outlets are credible in terms of a reliable source of information and credibility of information. Information that may be trusted must originate from reliable sources.

The relevance of utilizing reliable sources is, in all honesty, reducible to the value of efficient communication. If the information on which your knowledge is based is unreliable,

then you cannot be relied upon as a trustworthy asset. As a result, the reliability and trustworthiness of news media outlets will improve if they obtain their material from reputable sources.

**Table 4.** Summary of the level of agreement of respondents on news media outlet's credibility.

Parameter	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
A reliable source of information	4.38	0.76	Strongly Agree
Credibility source of information	4.45	0.70	Strongly Agree
<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>4.41</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

According to [Karlsen & Aalberg \(2021\)](#), the general public must view news reports about politics and other current events as credible and trustworthy. When it comes to alerting citizens about the pertinent information they need to make decisions on politics, a news source's credibility is directly correlated to how effective it is at doing so. Confidence in the news, often known as the credibility of the news, refers to many different aspects, including trust or credibility in various sources, journalists, news outlets, and news organizations.

**Table 5** shows the Relationship Between the trust of students and the credibility of news media outlets. The table justifies that there is a high correlation or relationship between the trust of senior high school students of Sultan Kudarat State University - Laboratory High School and the credibility of news media outlets as entailed by the P-value at 5.895E-26.

It indicates a high correlation or relationship with a Pearson correlation of 0.78. This means that there is a relationship between the two identified variables: the trust of senior high school students of Sultan Kudarat State University - Laboratory High School and the credibility of news media outlets.

The level to which two variables are connected, that is, the degree to which changes in one variable correspond with changes in the other. Pearson's correlation coefficient is a test statistic that determines the statistical link, or association, between two continuous variables. Therefore, there is enough evidence to support the claim that there is a significant relationship between the trust of senior high school students of Sultan Kudarat State University - Laboratory High School and the credibility of news media outlets.

**Table 5.** Relationship between the trust of students and the credibility of news media outlets using Pearson correlation.

Source of Relationship	N	df	Computed r	P-value	Decision on Ho @ 0.05 alpha	Interpretation
Trust Credibility	122	120	0.7780	5.895E-26	Reject null	High correlation

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers have reached the following conclusions: The top 5 news media outlets that the SHS students trust the most are (1) ABS CBN (Online), (2) CNN Philippines, (3) GMA 7, (4) Philippine Star, and (5) Rappler. The level of frequency on how often a senior high school student spends time reading or watching has a mean of 4.43

and a standard deviation of 0.75 which indicates always and with a qualitative interpretation that the respondents always spend time reading or watching the news.

Next, the level of agreement of to what extent the senior high school students trust the news media shows a grand mean of 4.43 and a standard deviation of 0.70, interpreted as the students strongly agreeing with news media outlets. For the level of agreement of reliable source of information and credibility of information have the mean of 4.38 and 4.43 and a standard deviation of 0.76 and 0.70 respectively.

Based on the result, the students strongly agree that news media outlets are credible in terms of a reliable source of information and credible information. Lastly, there is a significant relationship between the trust of senior high school students of Sultan Kudarat State University - Laboratory High School and the credibility of news media outlets.

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## 6. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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