

## Exploring Credibility Challenges of Malaysian Online News Portals: A Case Study Among Universiti Malaysia Sabah Students

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Article Info	Abstract
<p><b>Received</b> : 2024-05-19 <b>Accepted</b> : 2024-06-03 <b>Published</b> : 2024-06-31</p> <hr/> <p><b>Key words:</b> news credibility; online news portal; university students; focus group discussions; 3r issues</p>	<p>This study was meant to explore the students' perception of the credibility of Malaysian online news portals using the method of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGD). The results of the study reveal that the proliferation of technologies such as social media and internet accessibility has greatly facilitated university students' access to online news portals. Individuals are seeking up-to-date information more than ever, due to the convenience of technology. Mainstream, alternative, and independent news portals each have distinct impacts on students. Key factors contributing to these credibility issues include information-seeking behaviour, convenience, confirmation bias, and social interaction. Perceptions of credibility vary depending on the type of news portal in the eyes of university students which could be driven by ideology, prejudice, and bias. However, convenience and credibility theme explain why online news portals are often criticized for their lack of credibility in the eyes of university students. Many students perceive clickbait headlines as a major issue with Malaysian online news portals, often finding discrepancies between headlines and the actual content of articles. Incomplete information and journalists' reluctance to address sensitive issues are also significant concerns for students when selecting online news portals. Bias and credibility issues on online news portals often manifest in political and racial controversies. Students also mentioned the 3R issues during the interviews. Despite these concerns, online news portals remain the primary source of information for university students. Overall, the credibility issues have eroded students' confidence in the reliability of online news.</p>

### INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of technology, individuals now turn to news website, news interpretation videos, social media platforms and live streaming directly on their mobile devices to stay updated with the latest information via push feeds (Lee, Eng, Tan, & Liong, 2023). A 2024 survey shows that 42.6% of Malaysians have used social media as a source of news; the leading social platform is facebook, which has become nearly four out of ten Malaysian get their news on social media (Howe, 2024). The gradual shift of news from traditional print media, radio, and television communication channels to the digital domain has contributed significant changes in the traditional news production paradigm. Its effect is becoming more noticeable as it manifests in the unique life situations of each person's unique life scenarios.

Malaysia a basically a nation characterized by its multi-racial population, where trilingual news in Malay, English, and Chinese is prevalent. This diversity further accelerates the evolution of Malaysia's news portal landscape, with platforms like Malaysiakini offering trilingual coverage (Hasan & Dauda, 2020). News portals that were originally offered as 'complimentary copy' to loyal readers of mainstream newspapers today have taken over the role of the main channel. Most mainstream newspapers have stopped distributing their print versions

in most premises. Most Malaysian online news portals are also experimenting with various features on social media platforms, including apps.

The proliferation of social networking sites and the emergence of numerous news portals have not necessarily bolstered credibility ([Mohd Nor, Taufek, & Jaludin, 2024](#)); instead, they have exacerbated existing challenges. Research conducted by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism indicates that 86% of Malaysians now prefer internet and social networking sites for accessing news, eclipsing traditional mainstream media sources (MCMC, 2023). The main reason is the technological development in Malaysia. At the start of 2023, Malaysia had 33.03 million internet users, with an internet penetration rate of 96.8% ([Kemp, 2023](#)). As the digital audience expands, the task of maintaining credibility becomes increasingly daunting.

From time to time, the main problem with the credibility of the online news portals is the growth of misinformation, which creates a negative cycle in our lives. Although the spreading of online news portals is very common in the world, online news portals are now a portal of misinformation (Rampersad et al., 2019). Online news portals, whether mainstream or alternative, have been proven to be an important way of spreading large amounts of content. What made it more complicated was that online news portals are now allowing a clickbait phenomenon and affecting public perceptions of reality (Ireton & Posetti, 2018). Moreover, sharing in today's digital world has become rampant. People can share news with just a flick of their fingers, and information can be shared from users to users. Duffy et al. (2019) explained that online news portals must have validity and present factual news to the public.

The reality of our lives demonstrates the prevalence of disinformation and incomplete news stories. Credibility in online news portals has undoubtedly contributed to the public's loss of faith in Malaysian online news portals. According to surveys, the public has a low level of knowledge of the news ([Machete & Turpin, 2020](#)). This has accelerated the distribution of bogus material. Failure is the result of conveying misleading information through gatekeeping. Thus, online news portals require considerable research from actual life.

As mentioned above, the credibility of Malaysian online news portals has become a pressing concern, plagued by issues such as fake news, misinformation, and ethical dilemmas regarding professionalism in journalism. Despite numerous local studies addressing these challenges, the advent of new media has introduced additional vulnerabilities, including potential manipulation through tactics such as Internet control, blocking, filtering, and content removal.

The uses of the uses and gratifications theory as a guide to explore how university students in Malaysia see the credibility of online news portals brings in depth meaning in their media habits and private motivations. This concept suggests that human beings actively choose and interact with media primarily based on what they need or want, like staying knowledgeable, having fun, connecting socially, or feeling confirmed in their ideals ([Aisah Meri & Lee Kuok Tiung, 2021](#)). Through digging into what drives university students to read online information, we can uncover the reasons behind their selections. We'll also delve into what they get out of it, whether it's staying updated on what is occurring or feeling like they belong to a network. Looking at how students interact with online news, which includes what subjects they may be drawn to and which sources they accept as true with, helps paint an image of their credibility perceptions. And by tracing how their experiences with one source would possibly form their trust in others, we are able to see how credibility plays into their media decisions standard. Through the usage of this concept, we're no longer simply studying students' information habits; we are getting a glimpse into their worldviews, values, and the way they navigate the huge sea of online facts in Malaysia.

Thus, this study aims to explore the students' perception of the credibility of Malaysian online news portals. By examining the perceptions of university students regarding news consumption habits and the credibility of Malaysian online news portals, this research endeavours to shed light on the multifaceted challenges confronting the credibility of contemporary news dissemination platforms.

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## LITERATURE REVIEW

### News Credibility

The credibility of news is linked to its authenticity. News reporting should strive for the greatest levels of credibility a phrase that encompasses concepts of trustworthiness and dependability ([Rosengren, 1977](#)). Objectivity has been claimed to be an important performance requirement elsewhere. Objectivity in news implies that it is free of bias and that it is factual ([Case & Given, 2016](#)). The veracity and relevancy of news constitute its factuality, whereas neutrality and balance in news coverage define its impartiality ([Vežjak, Hladnik, Peri, & Golja](#)). These phrases have been expanded upon, ([McQuail, 1992](#)) listed factualness, accuracy, and completeness as critical distinguishing characteristics of news authenticity. As a result, fact and opinion must be clearly divided. News stories should relate to independently verified interpretations of reality ([Cantor, 1980](#)). Reports should also include enough detail about stories so that readers have a clear picture of what transpired ([Heravi et al, 2018](#)). "Relevance" was another crucial principle, since news can only be valuable to consumers if it touches on or deals with issues that are currently of importance to them.

The level of impartiality noticed in news may be operationally measured at several levels. Bias may occur in the selection of news articles for coverage throughout the first situation. If certain forms of news are favoured over others by news providers may influence impartiality, defined as a lack of balance in the way events and subjects are presented. Then, there may be bias within the stories chosen, with more emphasis placed on some resources or perspectives than others ([Gunter, 1997](#)).

Professional criteria relate to the role that journalists and their editors play in deciding which issues to report. News reporting standards, which are frequently used instinctively, are used to choose stories ([Gans, 1979](#)). However, there is evidence that certain sorts of stories are more likely to be chosen than others for a variety of reasons related to news sources' ideas about what would attract a viewer ([Bogart, 1979](#)). Some critics have suggested that this "news values" attitude has frequently resulted in an overemphasis on unpleasant news ([Haskins & Miller, 1984](#)). The professionalism of online news has been called into doubt, notably in respect to fact checking and the influence of new forms of storytelling on the established norms and integrity of journalism ([Deuze, 2004](#)).

Audience requirements are derived from studies among news consumers. Previous literature has polled the public on the perceived credibility or objectivity of news channels, news distributors or "products" ([Gunter, 2005](#)), and the influence of news presentation and narrative features on audience memory and understanding of news ([Gunter, 2012](#)). Other studies have looked at the effect of how tales are written and how they emphasise certain points of view on audience perceptions of issues ([Entman, 1991](#)).

As a matter of fact, external source criteria are focused only with research for clarity and truthfulness in news reporting by cross-referencing reported information with independent types of evidence. These validation resources may include unbiased professionals ([Berry Jr, 1967](#)) or consider the effects of events that may also be contrasted to their depiction in news broadcasts ([Halloran et al, 1970](#)). Observation can also be done between reports of the same events supplied by different news outlets to see how closely they match or differ ([McQuail, 1977](#)). The confirmation of facts and details in stories is a critical procedure that underpins excellent journalism ([Newhagen & Levy, 1998](#)). There may be pressures or temptations to take shortcuts in the setting of the internet, where large volumes of information are in circulation and a major aspect of the ethos is constant updating. However, within the internet environment, it has been suggested that writers verify one another's facts fast such that inconsistencies are uncovered and not allowed to be lengthy (Allan, 2006).

These credibility judgments have been found to some degree across online news portal news. The credibility of online news is tied to both the individual news provider and its reputation ([Gunter et al, 2009](#)) and a broad impression of the online platform ([Willi, Nguyen, Melewar, & Dennis, 2014](#)). The remainder of this study will concentrate on literature criteria for judging news legitimacy and the relevance of online news portals as legitimate news producers.

Previous studies ([Aitchison & Lewis, 2003](#)) highlight four key aspects of internet communications crucial to news transmission: firstly, the ability to gather an infinite number of diverse information items within a single textual space, emphasizing the preference for bite-sized information in vast quantities; secondly, the utilization of a singular technique to encode text, audio, picture, and video; thirdly, the recognition that each media form carries its own distinct meanings, with "news" encompassing both significant recent developments and the information surrounding such events, often influenced by traditional print and television media; and finally, the observation that the evolving communication landscape fosters novel patterns of interaction among dynamic groups of participants.

### Uses and Gratification Theory

The theory of uses and gratification (U&G) is a common framework in audience media studies, particularly in understanding how new media on news are utilized ([Kaur et al, 2020](#)). This theory posits that audiences play an active role in consuming media and that they turn to various media sources to fulfil diverse needs and gratifications ([Ruggiero, 2000](#)). It has been extensively employed in the examination of online news portals. Previous studies have underscored the underlying needs that drive audience engagement with these portals ([Alexopoulos et al, 2023](#)). Scholars have identified common needs among audiences, such as cognitive, affective, information seeking and social integration needs ([Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973](#)).

Previous research utilizing the U&G perspective has been successful in identifying the credibility and needs of online news portals. For instance, online news portals are frequently used as platforms for finding, discussing, and sharing information ([Antonopoulos et al, 2020](#)). However, when online news portals utilize various media to attract more audiences in Malaysia, there is a significant increase in news viewership, which can elevate the risk of misinformation especially during significant events ([Lee Kuok Tiung et al, 2018](#)). Audiences are primarily engaged in information-seeking behaviours, indicating diverse needs such as cognitive and affective information related to credibility to grasp the reality of various issues ([Soleymani et al, 2023](#)). Additionally, people have found that audiences prioritize convenience when accessing online news portals due to the faster speed of news dissemination ([Wheatley & Ferrer-Conill, 2021](#); [Apuke & Omar, 2021](#)).

### Online News, Online News Portal, and News Credibility

Online news portal as a news dissemination medium is the capacity for users to conduct their own searches and obtain a large amount of information in a short period of time. The website's capabilities enable users to quickly design and reach their own knowledge goals ([Allan, 2006](#)). However, there are several characteristics of the online that connect to credibility and accuracy, including the lack of centralised control and regulation, vulnerability to hacking or other types of communications undermining, and the ease with which content can be uploaded to a new website, as well as the disappearance of conventional media genres ([Metzger, Flanagin, & Zwarun, 2003](#)). In comparison to the amount of information accessible on the internet, a website does not have an effective centralised filter of information ([Flanagin & Metzger, 2000](#)).

While evaluating the credibility of Malaysian online portals, it's important to do not forget numerous factors, including editorial integrity, accuracy, transparency, and independence. Among the online news portals in Malaysia, Malaysiakini stands proud for its impartial reporting and important journalism, frequently covering a huge spectrum of political and social problems ([Steele, J., 2023](#)). One of the famous portals is The Star online, certainly one of Malaysia's oldest and most broadly circulated English-language newspapers, known for retaining high journalistic requirements despite occasional criticism ([Govindaraju et al, 2019](#)). The Malaysian Insight, established in 2017, focuses on in-depth evaluation and investigative reporting on Malaysian politics, economics, and social matters ([Omar, et al, 2018](#)). While Free Malaysia Today (FMT) gives balanced reporting and diverse viewpoints on Malaysian politics, business, and contemporary affairs ([Ahmad, N., 2022](#)). New Straits Times (NST), with its lengthy-standing recognition, presents credible mainstream news insurance (Alkaff, S., & McLellan, J., 2017). Moreover, Bernama, Malaysia's country wide information enterprise, is

respected for its complete insurance of each government and preferred news ([Said, N. E. M., 1991](#)). For Chinese language-language news, Sin Chew daily is a platform that grants credible information and evaluation to the Malaysian Chinese language-speaking target audience, ensuring a diverse variety of views ([Luan, N.M. and Beng, L.Y., 2018](#)).

Although there are online news portals that support established media such as RTM, Media Prima and Astro which have official gate keepers in screening, there are many Malaysian online news portals that do not. The issue is that there is no editorial assessment of online news, resulting in less societal pressure and professionalism to ensure the veracity of information on the internet ([Claussen et al, 2019](#)). Those who have used internet media before tending to believe the stuff presented there ([Bruce, 1999](#)). There are various reasons why certain internet news, or online news portals, were false. Studies have looked at how internet news portals affect people or how students think about their news intake. However, these studies lack qualitative research and a university students' viewpoint, notably from Malaysia. Furthermore, no study has examined students' perspectives on the reliability of online news sites. To overcome these gaps, the current study intends to answer the following research questions:

1. What are university students' views on the credibility of online news portals?
2. What do university students believe motivates the consumption of online news portals?
3. What are university students' perceptions of the impact of online news portals?
4. What solutions do university students suggest that online news portals can increase their credibility?

## METHOD

This study was conducted using two qualitative methods, namely Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and in-depth interviews. The selection of these two methods is based on the intention of exploring the perception of university students towards the credibility of online news portals.

In-depth interviews involving 10 individual students and two FGDs were conducted. The main sampling criterion is that the informant must have read the news online. All informants volunteered to help participate in this research by sharing their experiences and views. Only informants 1 and 2 are international students who have lived in Malaysia for more than 3 years and regularly use Malaysian news while the rest are all Malaysian citizens. Ethnic backgrounds, majors, and genders for both FGDs are mixed representing the reality of Malaysia's plural society.

Table 1: Demographic of interviewees

<b>Interview</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Race/Nationality</b>	<b>Courses</b>
Student 1	Male	Egypt	Psychology
Student 2	Female	China	Education
Student 3	Male	Malay	Psychology
Student 4	Male	Chinese	Creative art
Student 5	Female	India	Psychology
Student 6	Female	Malay	DPLI
Student 7	Male	India	Data sciences
Student 8	Female	Chinese	Financial economics
Student 9	Male	Chinese	Food service
Student 10	Female	Malay	Social work
Focus group discussion	2 male , 1 Female	Malay	DPLI
Focus group discussion	2 male, 1 Female	Dusun and Chinese	Malay, Communication

Research findings were obtained through the following semi-structured questions:

1. How do you rate the credibility of Malaysian online news portals compared to traditional media sources such as newspapers and television?
2. What factors do you consider when determining the credibility of news from Malaysian online news portals?
3. Have you come across misinformation or fake news on Malaysian online news portals? If so, how does that affect your perception of their credibility?
4. Do you believe Malaysian online news portals prioritize accuracy and objectivity in their reporting? Why or why not?
5. How does the presence of advertisements or sponsored content on Malaysian online news portals affect your perception of their credibility?
6. Is there a particular Malaysian online news portal that you trust more than others? If so, what factors contribute to your trust in this portal?

After gathering all the data, we used thematic analysis as our analytical framework as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis was selected for its flexibility and reflexivity, which allowed us to maintain the depth and complexity inherent within the qualitative statistics. Overall, the theme had been supplied in a cohesive finding that was very well investigated by the interviewee. However, this study preserved the richness and depth of the contributors' critiques by using uses and gratification theory.

## FINDINGS

After analysing the data, this study decided to present our findings under four main themes which are needs for information-seeking and credibility, social interaction and credibility, gratification of bias and credibility challenges, convenience, and credibility trade-offs.

### Theme 1 Information seeking needs and news credibility

Most students accept as true that online information portals are significant among universities, especially things regarding their courses. but they're navigating the news hyperlink of online information portals through social media of the news portals. They tended to choose online news portals that had been visible as legitimate and sincere providers of records. Some students identified websites or applications recognised for multiple resources strategies or those related with set up news organizations as their favoured assets. However, during information seeking, the body of the news are their concern.

"I found one news, it's about the girlfriend murdering the boyfriend due to suspicion, I find the news portals report it was very sensation topic, but I felt like that wasn't much information given about the details like why did it happen or how did it caught in something like that, so like the news story was abandoned over there on most of the online news portal" (Student 5, India).

"Information in Malaysian online News always lack more view from different perspectives, for example like regarding a health issue, maybe in the same article, reporter should interview like dr number 1, dr number 2, dr number 3, number 4, because they only put opinion from like a certain source from one doctor, it's like very bias" (Students 6, India).

"Online News in Malaysia are without proper reporting, some of the news are too short until information is not presented well, some of them without author and some of them without any sources and photo, Mainstream online news portals also have such issues" (Students 1, Egypt).

"I am using Malaysian online news portals for information, but different news portals that write in different facts make me can't identify which sources are real." (Student 2, China).

"News now are created for marketing, whether in video, text or image, Online news portals often take the part who may attract public interest without letting public know the full stories of the news, for example, news on tiktok, some of them will cut the full news video into different parts" (Focus Group 1).

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For most of the respondents, when obtaining information from online news portals, it is interesting to note that the first step they consider is often not what the information represents, but rather its credibility and relevance to their needs. They possess research skills that enable them to delve deeper into a news item or topic, pondering questions such as: 'Is it based on personal experience?' 'Is it logically plausible?' and 'How can we ascertain its validity?'

“As a research student, I often saw that Malaysian online news portals are not presenting the fact, all the news from online news portals is far different from the fact, they are trying to manipulate the fact.” (Students 2, China).

“Title is the most terrible issue on online news portals Malaysia, they often write the title with words that are attractive, but the body of the news somewhat didn't connect well with the title.” (Students 8, Chinese).

“Title of news make me confused when I come to online news portals, make me can't understand what the main purpose of the news is, it looks like too fancy (Student 3, Malay).

“We found that some of the data come from the online news portal such as according on what percentage of users but without citation and sources, because we all cognize based on individuals, what is said above means that we will never be able to avoid being manipulated by people. (Focus group 2).

## **Theme 2 Social Interaction and credibility**

A few students indicated that they used news as a method of social interplay and engagement with their friends. They have been selective about sharing information articles from resources they deemed credible, as they have been conscious of their recognition and the ability to share misinformation. This indicates that credibility issues play a vast role within the social dynamics of news sharing among university students.

“I often referred to the mainstream online news portals and facebook pages like Sin Chew and China Press due to the history and credibility of the online news portals, they start from newspaper, they have ethical journalist and enough reputation to make me have enough confidence to share ” (Students 4, Chinese).

“The most crucial part of the credibility of the online news portals is the social people comment below the news, this often manipulates or changing the meaning of the reporting by that online news portals hence increase fake news.” (Students 4, Chinese).

“Most of the alternatives or independent news portals such as M star, keep reporting nonsense such as celebrity pregnant, celebrity break up, etc that didn't provide positive news value to the society although people keep discussing about this” (Students 10, Malay).

“I'm extra careful of spreading news to my friends on internet news portals because I don't want to hurt people, whether alternative or independent, popping up everywhere and it appears that everyone is using one.” (Students 9, Chinese).

“As a user who loves using online news portals for Malaysian gossip, I like to select an entertainment online news portal since entertainment is like gossip about celebrities, foolishness, or people doing weird things, but I noticed that all Malaysian online news portals cover the same entertainment theme such as the Adeline issues recently.” (Students 2, China).

“We only choose traditional news sources that transform into online news portals because they start from tv, must be high in credibility. We usually watch it from childhood like Astro Awani, RTM. Recently, they had different social media on tiktok. We enjoy sharing it with friends.” ( Focus group 1).

## **Theme 3 Gratification of confirmation bias and credibility challenges**

A subset of individuals stated that they sought out online news sources that aligned with their pre-existing beliefs and views. Even as they derived gratification from having their perspectives affirmed, they also mentioned the capability pitfalls of echo chambers and affirmation bias. Interestingly, some individuals expressed closer to mainstream information portals, perceiving them as biased or influenced by means of political agendas, and as a substitute turned to

alternative information sources, raising questions about the evolving nature of credibility within the virtual age.

“The mainstream online news portal sometimes afraid to report something, but independent online news portals will try to speak out this, so that i prefer multiple sources of information.” (Students 7, India).

“In Malaysia, we have much more freedom compared to most of the country, but they usually teach people on how to obey, but nobody teaches them to how to disobey, whether mainstream or independent such as Bernama, The Star or Free Malaysia today, rarely have people come to criticize them for their reporting that resulting in bias” (Students 1, Egypt).

“We want news, regarding which portals, and it is very important, but when news comes together with races, politics, or language opinion, you know. So yes, we want to have the credibility news , but we must think about audience, that will make audience think that online news or online news portal in Malaysia will make them feel Malaysian news portal are good and should give responsible news portals a reward, reward them for being responsible on the internet, on the social media. They should provide news based on quality not quantity.” (Focus group 1).

“It is interesting to add, we as media studies students, when we mentioned that certain online news portals belong to some political party from the lecturer, we realised that they have bias in their reporting when it comes to 3R issues and political news. They are trying to use some racial, religion perspectives to gain votes. Sometimes, certain news, look like someone pay for the news, as if this news is helping them to make more profit“ (Focus group 2).

#### **Theme 4 Convenience and credibility trade-offs**

Numerous students highlighted the convenience and accessibility of online news portals as key factors influencing their media consumption conduct. However, they admitted that they sacrificed credibility for convenience, choosing resources that provided quick and without difficulty digestible information updates over people who prioritized in-depth reporting and fact-checking. This suggests an anxiety among the choice for convenience and the significance of credibility in students' news consumption picks.

“Compared to traditional media, News now is super convenient, that we have AI to make news highlight, we have application and social media to read about the news, but it is not the reason of consume news with lack of credibility, especially when a news portal presents inaccurate news, we call it as fake news.” (Students 7, India).

“I am understanding that advertisement can help online news portals profit because technology is emerging to help them better reach people, However, online news portals should use technology to check the facts before the news published, when they provide fact- check, they will produce better news (Students 3, Malay).

“For us, we still believe in traditional sources news such as TV or newspaper, although We have a different type of news through video which is very convenience , but online news portals news now is editing a video into different small parts instead of giving the whole stories, we can't understand the real facts of the whole stories ( Focus group 1).

“Social media and comments are too convenient under online news portals. It is very good that we can discuss some news below some news, but i think online news portals should filter the comments instead of letting misinformation or disinformation spread around the social media. (Students 4, Chinese).

“Quality of news is something that must be controlled; consumers now acknowledge watching a lot of news at once and being updated on the news, but online news portals now appear to be rushing to publish the article” (Focus Group 2).

#### **DISCUSSION**

This study mainly approaches the credibility and people choice on Malaysian online news portals that are based on uses and gratification theory from a university students' perspective.

In this information overloaded era, we mentioned that throughout the interview process, this study came out that the online news portals in Malaysia lack credibility whether in foreign



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students and Malaysian students' perception. First and foremost, the first theme shows that across various cultural backgrounds, students exhibited information-seeking needs and gratification closer to online news platforms diagnosed for their legitimacy and honesty in turning in facts (Case & Given, 2016). Challenges emerged regarding sensationalism in news, coming out with the questions about the balance between engaging content material and major reporting. Moreover, students talk about bias and the shortage of information in articles, highlighting the importance of sources. Problems pertaining to reporting requirements, along with inadequate statistics, absence of authorship, and absence of proper citations, had been additionally diagnosed, underscoring the necessity for transparency and duty in news dissemination. The prevalence of misleading or clickbait headlines in addition affects this situation, fuelling confusion and frustration among students.

The second theme highlights the elaborate uses of Malaysian online news portals in the social integration of university students, especially in terms of information sharing and social-connection needs and gratification (Heravi, Mubarak, & Choo, 2018). One factor is the conscious selection of news articles for sharing primarily based on perceived credibility. Students factor out the impact of consumer comments on online news portals, suggesting that social interactions within these structures can distort or control the means of information reviews, potentially contributing to the spread of faux information. The findings highlight the enduring influence of conventional information assets, together with newspapers and television channels, which have transitioned into online structures. Students specific a sense of nostalgia and familiarity with those assets, indicating an endured affinity for installed manufacturers inside the virtual age.

The theme three discusses gratification and bias. a few individuals admitted to seeking out online news portals that verify their preconceived notions, locating validation and satisfaction in having their perspectives affirmed (An & Kern Pitak, 2023). Interestingly, a few members expressed bias in the direction of mainstream online news portals, perceiving them as biased or prompted by political agendas. Consequently, they turned to alternative resources for information, highlighting a shift in credibility perceptions within the virtual age. This increases questions about the evolving nature of trust and credibility in online news intake, as individuals navigate a landscape marked via a proliferation of records assets with varying degrees of reliability. Moreover, contributors stated the importance of freedom of expression in information reporting, mainly in contexts in which mainstream may be hesitant to cowl certain topics. The discussion additionally touches upon the role of obligation in news dissemination, with individuals emphasizing the need for excellent over quantity in on-line news reporting.

The last theme on convenience and credibility trade-offs in credibility of Malaysian online news portals among students highlights a gratification among accessibility and reliability (Apuke & Omar, 2021). Many students renowned the undeniable convenience and accessibility offered by way of online information portals, with generation improvements presenting instant updates and diverse systems for intake. However, this convenience often comes at the cost of credibility, as students opt for short and without difficulty digestible facts over sources that prioritize in-depth reporting and reality-checking. They advise for the combination of technology that makes sure accuracy and reliability, emphasizing the significance of first-rate over quantity in news dissemination. This displays the students of the significance of credible resources in shaping their understanding of modern-day events and problems. Lastly, the trend of online news portals editing video into shorter segments, probably compromising the integrity and accuracy of the storytelling.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to compare the news utilised by Malaysians and to analyse the obstacles to the credibility of contemporary Malaysian online news portals. Based on the findings, it is possible to infer that news from online news portals is dependent on Malaysian online news portals. The findings show that the legitimacy of online news portals is under greater scrutiny than ever before, as consumers increasingly rely on them to acquire their news.

However, some of the internet news portal news is inaccurate, and our community is unprepared for the twenty-first century since individuals are not taught media literacy. Media literacy is the capacity to recognise various sorts of media and comprehend media material such as online news. This research suggests that media literacy should be taught beginning in primary school. We can transform how people see news in the future by adopting a new method of teaching and learning. They can be astute when it comes to navigating the news.

The following are some recommendations for journalists, news editors and the government by respondents. For the government, the Malaysian news laws must be more specific, avoid making an act quickly and without thinking about the whole situation of Malaysia. Otherwise, people will think that the act is being used to protect the government. The guiding ideology of law formulation refers to the type of leading ideology that a country's lawmakers follow in the process of producing laws, revising, supplementing, improving, and even repealing laws. A country's guiding ideology is always consistent with the country's political development goals, economic and social development goals, and so on.

Be professional and avoid prejudice in our news reporting as journalists. The news must be accurate and objective. Journalists must be faithful, impartial, and courageous in acquiring and disseminating information, but they must also examine the authenticity of material from all sources to avoid inadvertent mistakes. Journalists often try to track down the subjects of the story and provide them an opportunity to reply to the alleged misbehaviour. Journalists should identify information sources wherever feasible. To judge the reliability of sources, the public should have access to as much information as possible. Finally, do not plagiarise other people's news.

For the news editor, News editors are responsible not only for organising and reporting news facts, but also for being the major body of social responsibility, "re-understanding" and "recreating" news materials, and expressing their opinion on news facts. The speeches of the editorial section are mostly oblique. through re-selection and combination of news items, selection of news dissemination content and focus, selection of reporting words and titles, selection of abstract expression and style, processing technique in audio and visual recording and editing, programme duration and broadcast The timing of the release, its placement in the programme schedule, and the inclusion of additional news, directly or indirectly reveal their biased ideas and positions, influencing the audience's comprehension and evaluation of news facts.

Finally, Malaysians are highly tolerant of news. Online news portals are making information exchange even more interactive and widespread. Online news portals may be useful when utilised appropriately, but they can also be harmful when used incorrectly. As the percentage of visitors has increased dramatically over the years, there is some controversy about whether internet news portals assist individuals, but this study believes that internet news portals may help society by assisting each other in living a meaningful, passionate, and prosperous existence. Our journalists, news editor, and government are currently setting up a perfect online news environment.

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