

Exploring the Determinants of News Consumption Preferences: A Comparative Analysis of Factors Influencing Choice between Print and Digital Formats

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ABSTRACT

"The media serves as both a window through which we shape societal choices and a mirror reflecting them."-Arun Shourie

In today's fast-paced and interconnected world, the media landscape is constantly evolving, presenting both challenges and opportunities for media organizations and researchers alike. As digital platforms continue to reshape the way news is disseminated and consumed, it is imperative to delve deeper into the factors influencing individuals' preferences between traditional print media and emerging online sources. Drawing inspiration from the quote above, this research embarks on a journey to unravel the intricate dynamics of news consumption preferences in the rapidly evolving media landscape of India. The rises of digital platforms has revolutionized the way people access and interact with news content, posing profound implications for traditional print media and necessitating a reevaluation of conventional wisdom regarding news sources and consumer behavior.

Through a comprehensive mixed-methods approach, incorporating qualitative and quantitative analyses, this study seeks to illuminate the multifaceted nature of news consumption preferences. By conducting in-depth interviews, engaging in focus group discussions, administering surveys, and employing statistical analysis techniques, the research endeavors to uncover nuanced insights into the drivers behind individuals' choices in news consumption. This research delves into a wide array of variables influencing news consumption behavior, ranging from technological advancements and demographic characteristics to content credibility and emotional factors. By examining these factors holistically, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the evolving news consumption patterns in India. The findings of this research carry significant implications for media practitioners, informing strategic decisions and media engagement strategies to adapt to the changing media landscape. As digital platforms continue to redefine the media ecosystem, understanding the factors shaping news consumption preferences becomes imperative for sustaining relevance and efficacy in the dissemination of information and how digitization is affecting print media.

Keywords: Print Media, Preferences, Digital Media, Content Credibility, Emotional Factors, Demographic characteristics, Technological advancements.

INTRODUCTION

The era of print media stands as a historic witness to the strength of written communication in the records of media history. In addition to being informational tools, newspapers and magazines also acted as social glue, influencing beliefs, sparking social movements, and building a sense of community among their readers.

The emergence of the digital age, marked by the widespread use of internet technology and the growth of digital platforms, has brought about a significant change in the preferences for news consumption trends.

Digital media is appealing because it is instantaneous, accessible, and has the capacity to transcend time and geographic boundaries. Digital platforms, which are no longer constrained by the restrictions of physical distribution, provide an abundance of interactive features, personalized experiences, and multimedia content catered to the needs and



imagination of contemporary audiences. Digital media has revolutionized news consumption by introducing immersive storytelling forms and breaking news alerts, ushering in an era of unmatched customization and choice.

By challenging long-standing norms and changing the dynamic between media producers and consumers, the transition from print to digital media has completely changed how audiences interact with news information. Digital platforms enable dynamic, multidirectional communication, in contrast to print media's linear, one-to-many paradigm. This allows consumers to interact with news information in real-time, express their opinions, and engage online communities.

Adults, representing a broad spectrum of individuals, exhibit varied news consumption behaviors shaped by their professional and personal contexts. Factors such as time constraints, information needs, and technological proficiency influence how adults access and engage with news media.

With the rise of the internet, traditional newspapers have faced tough competition from their online counterparts. But why do some of us still prefer the feel of a newspaper in our hands while others opt for the convenience of digital news? It's not just about what's easier; it's about a whole bunch of factors that influence our decision-making process.

Newspapers are the most widely used news medium to this day. However, throughout time, other media have emerged, like Internet.

These days, websites and mobile apps also adjust to the rapidly shifting tastes of users and readers. The emergence of internet has given individuals access to a greater range of information, as they can now obtain real-time updates from anywhere in the world with just a single tap.

People now have access to immediate updates from all over the world within seconds because of the growth of the nternet. This covers all fields, from science and technology to geopolitics. Sifting through news app feeds on the way to work has mostly replaced the morning read with tea. News dissemination has also greatly increased. There has been a shift in how various generations engage with news as a result of all these rapidly evolving phenomena. People from different generations also have diverse preferences when it comes to news.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Yadav, A. K. (2020). Swiping The Pages: Comparative Study Analysing The Shift From Printed Newspaper To Online Newspaper In India (11th Ed.)

"The majority of people are inclined towards online news sources for daily information, regardless of their profession." This research delves into the shifting landscape of news consumption preferences, particularly focusing on the transition from printed newspapers to online platforms, with a special emphasis on the Indian context. Through a comprehensive analysis, the paper examines the factors influencing this shift, including technological advancements, changing reader habits, and the accessibility of digital media. It investigates the impact of these changes on the newspaper industry, highlighting the challenges and opportunities presented by the digitalization era. Additionally, the study explores the preferences of different demographic groups, such as millennial, in their consumption of news content. By surveying various sectors of society, the research provides valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of news consumption behavior and the implications for both traditional print media and emerging digital platforms.

Dhiman, B. (2022). A Comparatively study of content in Print and Online Newspaper in India

The research paper authored by Bharat Dhiman explores the dynamics between print and online versions of newspapers, focusing on Dainik Jagran and Times of India, two prominent Indian publications. Through content analysis, the study delves into the similarities and disparities in the content presented across both mediums. Over a span of 7 days, a sample of 100 stories from the front pages of the newspapers was examined, revealing that nearly 80% of the stories appeared in both print and online formats, with consistent content. The study highlights the evolving nature of journalism in the digital era, emphasizing the role of online newspapers in providing a more interactive and multimedia-rich experience for readers. Despite the proliferation of digital content, traditional print newspapers continue to hold relevance, particularly among older demographics. The research underscores the need for further exploration into the impact of online journalism on traditional print media.

Waal, E. D., Schönbach, K., & Lauf, E. Online newspapers: An addition to or a replacement for print media and other sources of information?

The study delves into the intricate relationship between online newspapers and their traditional print counterparts, shedding light on how their usage patterns intersect with other media channels. It reveals a demographic profile of online newspaper readers, indicating that they are predominantly younger, educated individuals, with a notable male skew, and a diverse array of interests spanning politics, finance, and culture. Moreover, the research uncovers that online newspaper reader's exhibit higher engagement with other online news sources, such as news websites and teletext, as well as traditional media like radio. Interestingly, this heightened engagement with diverse media platforms is particularly pronounced among younger age groups. Despite these trends, the study suggests that online newspapers



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serve as complementary rather than outright substitutes for print newspapers, with minimal impact on the overall time spent on traditional print media. However, it raises concerns regarding the potential long-term implications of online newspapers on the decline of print newspaper readership, especially among younger demographics. The findings underscore the evolving landscape of media consumption and the need for continued vigilance in understanding its implications for traditional print media.

As per the research study titled A Comparative Study of News Channel Coverage in Traditional and Digital Media, 6. Gupta, A., Kumar, A. S., Hari Krishna, S., Patel, S., & Maguluri, L. P. (2022) is a comprehensive examination of the comparative dynamics between traditional media and digital media news channel coverage. It specifically scrutinizes the credibility of news disseminated through various mediums such as social media, television, and newspapers. Utilizing a combination of focus group discussions and surveys, the research endeavors to uncover the underlying factors influencing individuals' perceptions of news credibility. It provides insight into the complex interactions among educational attainment, internet proficiency, and news consumption patterns. It turns out that people who are more educated and have more experience using the internet behave well when it comes to choosing and trusting news sources. The study also reveals a tendency where people frequently cross-check news articles from several media outlets to ensure the veracity and authenticity of the content.

There is an agreement that mainstream media is more credible when compared to digital media platforms. Examples of these traditional media outlets include television and newspapers. This preference can be attributed to the participation of seasoned journalists and well-established editorial procedures that give precedence to impartiality and accuracy. On the other hand, there are many difficulties in the online world, such as the spread of false information and biased reporting. It emphasizes how critical reporting and disinformation, especially in the political sphere, have a significant influence on public opinion and social norms. It explains how content people come see online can shape their political opinions and associations, deepening ideological rifts in society. In addition, how quickly misleading information spreads via social media, frequently overshadowing true news reports and spreading false information.

Hassan, I., Abubakar, U. I., Nasidi, Q. Y., Azmi, M. N. L., & Shehu, A. (2021 Newspapers in the Digital Communication Age: Opportunities and Challenges. International Journal of Business and Social Science Academic Research, 11(6)

"New media technology affects nearly every aspect of traditional media in the era of digital communication, including readership, circulation, advertising revenue, and subscriptions. The ability to obtain information and get real-time updates through the internet has put traditional newspapers in threat."

The great expense of manufacturing and distribution is one of the main issues facing print newspapers. Expenses for print publications are high and account for a large percentage of their total operating expenditures. Furthermore, traditional newspapers face significant challenges in meeting the need for real-time updates because they are frequently unable to match the frequency and immediacy of online news sources. Furthermore, reading culture has generally declined worldwide, which presents a serious obstacle to print newspapers' circulation. Additionally, the absence of key capabilities found in online publications—like audio, video, hyperlinks, and interactivity—makes traditional newspapers less appealing to readers who are familiar with technology. Online platforms are preferred over print newspapers by readers who demand freely available and engaging news material. The difficulties experienced by print newspapers are further compounded by their reliance on advertising revenue, since declining readership has an impact on both sales and ad revenue. Print newspapers still have a lot of chances to prosper in the digital era, despite these obstacles. In a world where false information and fake news are rampant, newspapers can differentiate themselves as trustworthy sources of news by adopting digital technology. Newspapers may attract a wider audience by providing print and online versions, meeting the varying preferences of their readers, and fully utilizing innovation.

Furthermore, those who would like handle print media in a tactile way or do not have access to the internet can still read traditional newspapers. This group comprises senior citizens who might not be as adept at using modern technology. Furthermore, advertisers are still drawn to print newspapers, particularly those that are national in scope, which generates a substantial amount of advertising money.

To sum up, print newspapers have significant obstacles to overcome in the digital era, but they also have special advantages that can be capitalized on by implementing digital technologies. In a media world that is always changing, print newspapers can stay resilient and relevant by embracing innovation and utilizing their inherent advantages.

In an article by IvyPanda. (2024, January 5). Newspaper Readership Decline Factors.

This article investigates the variables affecting the drop in newspaper readership, paying special attention to age, gender, and educational attainment. The development of internet technology has drastically changed the way that information is disseminated, even if traditional media have historically benefited from strong support and expansion. Readership of print newspapers in particular has declined worldwide, with differences noted between nations and communities. Age, gender, and educational attainment are a few examples of the factors that greatly influence



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newspaper readership trends. Research by Chan and Goldthorpe (2007), Elvestad and Blekesaune (2008), and Coelho (2008) demonstrate how these characteristics affect readers' behaviour. In an effort to shed light on tactics for reviving newspaper circulation, the study uses data from the General Social Survey (GSS) to investigate these variables. The factors influencing Newspaper Readership:

Gender: Being one factor that affects newspaper readership; research shows that men read newspapers more frequently than women do. There may be a need for focused tactics to draw in female readers given the gender gap in reading habits.

Education Level: Newspaper readers are more likely to be well-read individuals with higher educational backgrounds. Increased need for knowledge and improved information processing ability are two effects of education that affect reader behaviour.

Age: Although some studies claim that readers of newspapers are influenced by their age, the GSS data analysis's results show that there is no meaningful correlation between readership frequency and reader age. The association between readership and age, however, can be mediated by other variables including wealth.

The media sector faces a major issue as a result of the loss in newspaper readership, which makes a greater understanding of the causes influencing this trend necessary. The study reveals that readership behaviour is significantly predicted by gender and educational attainment. This implies that specific interventions are necessary to improve readership among women and persons with lower educational achievement. To guarantee the correctness of the results, the study also emphasizes how critical it is to raise response rates and data reliability. All things considered, taking care of these issues can assist media systems in creating plans to combat the fall in newspaper readership and stay relevant in a changing media environment.

Veluchamy, D. R., Gawande, R., & Keshwani, S. (2021). Factors Determining Choice Of Newspapers A Reader Buy. 44.

The study explores the changing patterns of newspaper consumption in India and clarifies the complex interactions between print newspapers in print and digital newspapers. It emphasizes how readers' choices and reading habits have been profoundly impacted by technology improvements, especially with the introduction of e-newspapers. Even while online newspapers are incredibly convenient and provide real-time news, print newspapers are still quite popular, especially with older audiences who appreciate the tactile, reliable nature of print newspapers. A wide range of characteristics, including readability and cultural relevance, as well as qualitative elements like age, education, and income, are identified by the study as impacting newspaper choice.

It emphasizes how language and geographical preferences influence how people consume newspapers. It observes that although regional language newspapers continue to serve a sizable readership, particularly in non-urban areas, English newspapers continue to enjoy broad impact, especially among educated metropolitan people. This highlights the necessity for newspapers to serve a varied range of language and cultural consumers as well as the significance of linguistic diversity and cultural context in understanding readers' preferences.

The impact of socio-economic factors on newspaper choice, revealing correlations between income levels, educational attainment, and media preferences. It suggests that individuals with higher levels of education and income tend to gravitate towards reputable publishers and value the reliability of information, while those with lower educational attainment may prefer television or online sources for news consumption.

The study makes suggestions for news organizations to modify their tactics in light of these findings in order to satisfy readers' changing requirements and preferences. This entails using social media channels to boost viewer interaction and changing up the material to appeal to various demographic groups. In an increasingly digital media landscape, it also highlights how crucial it is to uphold high standards of journalism and reliability in order to keep readers' trust. It highlights how important print media is still in India's media environment, despite the growth of digital platforms. It implies that news organizations must have a sophisticated grasp of reader behaviour that takes into account socioeconomic, cultural, and demographic variables in order to successfully negotiate this unstable environment and maintain their influence and relevance in the rapidly changing media landscape.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employs a mixed-method approach to investigate the determinants of news consumption preferences between print and digital formats. The mixed-method approach allows for the integration of both qualitative and quantitative data, providing a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. This research methodology aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of news consumption habits among the participants.



Research Objective

- 1. To identify the key factors influencing individuals' preferences for news consumption between print and digital formats.
- 2. Discover the news consumption determinants/factors that influence the preference.
- 3. To understand the evolving trends and patterns in news consumption preferences over time, particularly in the context of changing media landscapes and technological advancements.

Data Collection

By exploring news consumption preferences, this study hopes to get insightful information from people of all ages and backgrounds. The research aims to provide a complete picture of modern reading habits with an emphasis on comprehending the elements influencing the decision between traditional print newspapers and their online counterparts.

1. Selection of participants

- **College students:** Participants are selected from colleges and universities, targeting students pursuing undergraduate and postgraduate degrees across various disciplines. The aim is to gather insights from young adults regarding their news consumption habits and preferences.
- Adults: In the adult spectrum, there are two major groups: working professionals and homemakers. These groups have different perspectives on how people consume news and what is their preference. Corporate workers, business owners, stay-at-home parents, carers, and those responsible for household tasks. It will ensure a nuanced understanding of how individuals in the adult demographic navigate news consumption amidst their professional responsibilities and domestic duties.

2. Methods used:

- **Surveys-** A structured questionnaire is designed to collect quantitative data on participants' news consumption habits, preferences, and attitudes. The survey includes questions about preferred news sources, frequency of consumption, preferred formats (e.g., print and online), and factors influencing their news choices.
- **Review of Previous Research Papers:** Existing research papers on news consumption habits and preferences is reviewed to gather relevant data and insights. This secondary data analysis supplements the primary data collected through surveys.

3. Ethical Considerations

Prior to the interview, each participant was given comprehensive information about the research objectives, procedures also ensuring confidentiality and anonymity offered if needed.

FINDINGS

The Effect of Emotions

In analyzing the data collected from the survey of respondents, it was clear that that people's choices for consuming news, both in print and digital formats are greatly influenced by their emotions. Emotional reactions were found to be key variables influencing news preferences and participation across various age groups and demographic subgroups. It was discovered that emotions were important factors in the content selection of young individuals (18–35 years old), who mostly prefer online news sources like Instagram, e-newspaper websites, and news aggregator apps like Inshorts. This group was more likely to be interested in and pay attention to news articles that provoked strong emotional reactions, such as enthusiasm, outrage, or empathy. Young readers of news were more engaged and likely to share items that struck an emotional chord because of the digital platforms' immediacy and involvement. Interestingly, though, there was an identifiable pattern suggesting that young adults are becoming more and more inclined to acquire knowledge from reading newspapers. Although this demographic still mostly gets their news from digital media, there is a growing trend towards reading print publications, partly due to the need for an in-depth knowledge of complex topics and a greater understanding of current affairs. This change implies that young adults are appreciating the value of traditional print newspapers as providers of in-depth analysis and trustworthy information in addition to looking for emotional connection in their news reading.

On the other hand, older generations showed a stronger inclination towards traditional print newspapers, while there was a clear emotional impact on their news preferences. Even though older readers find print media more recognizable and credible, emotional appeal was still a major factor in determining how they consumed news. The elderly showed a



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preference for human interest stories, opinion articles, and editorial content that inspired feelings like nostalgia, concern, or satisfaction. This suggests that emotions are still relevant when it comes to print media engagement.

All things considered, these results highlight the fundamental relationship between feelings and news preferences in a variety of age groups and media types. Attention, interest, and trust in news media are all fueled by emotionally charged material, which also acts as a catalyst for audience involvement.

Novelty of the News Items

People's habits of consuming news are largely influenced by novelty since they are naturally drawn to odd or noteworthy content that sparks their interest. This desire for novelty affects not just the availability of many media outlets but also how news information is covered. Novelty affects the coverage of news material as well as the existence of various media outlets. Within the electronic media space, breaking news pieces utilize the element of novelty to draw in viewers by providing up-to-date information on events as they happen. Similar to this, social media sites highlight popular subjects and sensational tales, using novelty to draw users in and increase traffic. Banner headlines and eye-catching images are used by even traditional print media to draw attention to the newest and most innovative news. The continuous need for novelty highlights the changing nature of news consumption habits, encouraging people to search for novel and captivating material through many media platforms.

Secondary Data Results

In The primary finding of the paper by Liew, C.K.,. Print Newspaper versus Online News Media: A Quantitative Study on Young Generation Preference revolves around the shifting landscape of news consumption preferences, with a notable inclination towards online news platforms over traditional print newspapers, particularly among younger demographics. Despite the enduring appeal of print newspapers' main sections, which remain the most frequented sections among respondents, the prevalence of online news consumption underscores a broader trend towards digital media adoption.

The data shows a complex pattern of news consuming behaviours, with consumers of print newspapers most frequently viewing the cover page or major section. This preference can be explained by the main section's fundamental attentiongrabbing quality, which acts as readers' first point of contact and provides an overview of the most important subjects of the day. Its popularity is also influenced by the attraction of the entertainment news in this part, which speaks to younger people's tendency to follow trends. In contrast, the business section of print newspapers is the one that is least read, which makes sense given that the majority of respondents are students and so have a lower interest in news about businesses. Online news consumption habits, on the other hand, show that people don't have any particular preferences for areas of the news; instead, they frequently come upon news issues by accident while doing other online activities. The immediacy and accessibility of online news platforms fuel their popularity despite the lack of segment-specific preferences, as reader's value being able to stay up to date on current events at any time and from any location. The importance of the main section in online news is similar to that of print news, with respondents favoring sites that provide in-depth reporting on current events.

Although while print newspapers are still an essential source for news updates and are a part of many respondents' daily routines, their function as a tool for socializing seems to be declining in the digital age. This trend may be attributed to the availability of out-of-date news stories and the accessibility of real-time updates through online platforms, with online news consumption being preferred due to its timeliness and content breadth.

The results highlight a strong preference for consuming news online, especially for younger populations, due to reasons like accessibility, immediacy, and the wide variety of content that is readily available. This move to digital media emphasizes how news distribution in the digital era is changing and is a reflection of larger developments in media consumer patterns.

Swiping the Pages: Comparative Study Analyzing the Shift From Printed Newspaper to Online Newspaper in India, study determined that the majority of daily readers lean towards online news sources based on data from the Chi-Square test regarding participant reading patterns.

The consumption rate of an individual, whether it is weekly, monthly, or infrequently, affects this outcome. It also covered things like their preference for skimming the headlines to gain a general overview of what's going on in the globe versus reading an extensive piece. Homemakers, business people, employees, and students made up our sample. The responses obtained indicate that there is no discernible pattern or relationship between the readers' preferences and their occupation.

The primary focus is on how much information or news content is retained by individuals and whether there is a correlation between news source and retention capacity. As a result, Table No. 1 shows that most of the people in our sample felt that reading the news online allowed them to remember more information than reading it offline, in printed newspapers.

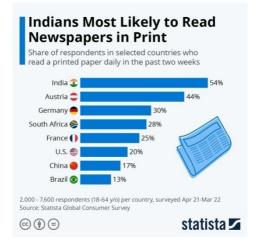


Table 1 People's Opinion to different questions		Count
7. I prefer to access news online rather than offline?	Strongly Disagree	6
	Disagree	24
	Neutral	21
	Agree	99
	Strongly agree	48
8. "I am interested in knowing the headlines and summary rather than going into full details."? Supporting this statement, I prefer online news applications.	Strongly Disagree	6
	Disagree	18
	Neutral	33
	Agree	114
	Strongly agree	27
 Revisiting to a particular piece of information is comparatively easy on online platforms rather than offline platforms. 	Strongly disagree	6
	Disagree	27
	Neutral	33
	Agree	93
	strongly agree	39
I am satisfied with the online newspaper.	Strongly disagree	0
	Disagree	3
	Neutral	15
	Agree	135
	Strongly Agree	45

The study's primary goal was to determine whether online newspapers, or e-papers, are taking the place of printed newspapers. Even while there is a shift from printed to electronic newspapers, the printed edition is still not greatly affected. The availability of information and communication technology (ICT) devices and the internet are just two of the many obstacles that come with access to e-paper. Therefore, in order to further improve the validity and reliability of such studies, future research must make use of a broader sample group from other media organisations.

The country will witness a significant shift from printed newspapers to electronic newspapers if its ICT infrastructure and penetration improve over the next several years. This would lead to a sharp decline in hard copy sales as e-Paper subscriptions get to a critical mass.

In the **Statista Global Consumer Survey** (2022), 54% of urban Indians reported reading print newspapers on a daily basis. Out of the more than 50 countries included in the poll, this astounding figure is the highest, demonstrating the distinct pace India is establishing in the print publication industry. Austria had the greatest percentage of any European nation at 44%, which was another impressive accomplishment. Newspaper readership in Germany, a neighbour, was only about thirty percent, about the same as in South Africa.



The printed press is in greater decline in other countries. Just 25% of French people and 20% of Americans claimed to read print media on a daily basis, at least in the two weeks prior to the study. The people in China and Brazil were even less interested in printed literature.



CONCLUSION

This study provides a thorough investigation of news consumption choices within the framework of India's changing media environment. Through the utilisation of a mixed-method approach and the application of pre-existing literature, the research investigated the various aspects that impact people's decisions when choosing between digital platforms and traditional print media.

A noteworthy observation is the significant impact of emotions on news selections in different age groups. Older readers favour the familiarity and authority associated with traditional print newspapers, while younger readers are drawn to online platforms that offer immersive storytelling and interactive elements that evoke strong emotional reactions. This emphasises how crucial it is to comprehend audience demographics and modify content tactics to accommodate the wide range of wants and tastes of your target audience.

Furthermore, the study emphasises how crucially technology developments influence how people consume news. Online news consumption is on the rise due to the unmatched accessibility, real-time updates, and personalised experiences provided by digital platforms. But worries about the accuracy of content and the spread of false information highlight how important it is for media outlets to maintain journalistic standards and build audience trust.

The report also clarifies the potential and problems that traditional print media face in the digital era. Even if internet platforms are more convenient and instantaneous, print newspapers are still relevant, especially for some demographic groups. The study shows that there are still a significant number of newspaper readers despite the rising popularity of digital news consumption, highlighting the durability of print media in the rapidly evolving digital world of today.

Learning Outcomes

- 1. Understanding audience preferences: This study offers insightful information about the various aspects that influence people's decisions between print media and digital platforms, allowing media professionals to efficiently customise content strategies to cater to audience preferences.
- 2. Leveraging technology: The study emphasises the significance of adopting digital platforms and utilising cutting-edge technologies to improve audience engagement and reach by demonstrating the influence of technological improvements on news consuming behaviours.
- **3.** Maintaining journalistic standards: The results highlight the critical role that content credibility plays in building audience trust, highlighting the significance of maintaining journalistic standards and battling disinformation in the digital era.
- 4. Navigating the evolving media landscape: This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between media, society, and technology, offering valuable insights for media practitioners, researchers, and policymakers navigating the rapidly evolving media landscape in India and beyond.

As digital news consumption continues to rise and print newspapers remain relevant, it emphasises the need for a balanced strategy that incorporates both digital and traditional media to satisfy the varied demands of consumers in the fast-paced media landscape of today.

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