UNIVERSITY YOUTH'S USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS AS A SOURCE OF NEWS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THEIR LEVEL OF NEWS LITERACY

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ملخص الدراسة

هدفت الدراسة إلى استكشاف العلاقة بين استخدام الشباب الجامعي لشبكات التواصل الاجتماعي كمصدر للأخبار ومستوى التربية الإخبارية لديهم. وقد اعتمدت الدراسة على منهج المسح الإعلامي، وطبّقت على عينة قوامها 643 طالبًا وطالبة من مختلف كليات جامعة المنيا. أظهرت النتائج وجود علاقة ارتباط موجبة ذات دلالة إحصائية بين كثافة استخدام الشبكات الاجتماعية في الحصول على الأخبار ومستوى التربية الإخبارية لدى الشباب الجامعي. كما كشفت عن وجود علاقات ارتباط موجبة ودالة إحصائيًا بين إدراك مصداقية المحتوى الإخباري على تلك الشبكات، ومستوى التفاعل مع الأخبار، وتأثير الشبكات الاجتماعية على عادات استهلاك الأخبار، وبين مستوى التربية الإخبارية، بما يشير إلى أن تزايد استخدام هذه الشبكات يسهم في تعزيز مهارات الشباب في الوصول إلى الأخبار وتحليلها وتقييمها نقديًا.

Abstract

The study explored the relationship between university youth's use of social networks as a news source and their level of news literacy. The study relied on the media survey methodology and was applied to a sample of 643 male and female students from various faculties of Minia University. The results showed a statistically significant positive correlation between the intensity of the use of social networks in obtaining news and the level of news literacy among university youth. It also revealed positive and statistically significant correlations between the perception of the credibility of news content. On these networks, the level of interaction with news, the impact of social networks on news consumption habits, and the level of news literacy indicate that the increasing use of these networks contributes to enhancing the skills of young people in accessing, analyzing, and critically evaluating news.

Introduction

The news function is the basis of media work, as all media outlets have no work except to obtainnews from all sources, which may expose them to some impurities or obstacles, including the lack of credibility and objectivity in the details of the news, and with the speed of circulation of this news and its spread through various media outlets, whether traditional or new media, confusion may occur, which contributes to the dissemination and circulation of rumors and thus affects the different constants and convictions of the public in general Youth in particular. Al-Khazaaleh, 2020)

Also, social networks are the most acquiring as a source of news, because of the speed of these networks in the transfer and dissemination of news and the speed of its dissemination and spread, as well as contribute to increasing interaction with news without investigating its credibility or clarity, so it is considered a double-edged sword, as it contributes to its dissemination without financial compensation and the speed of its transformation from local news to global news, so whoever receives and receives thisnews must have a degree of awareness and analysis And criticism so that he can stand on its details and credibility fully. (Mohammed, Awad, 2020)

There are also many studies and literary research that have confirmed that social networks are the first source of access to information and news, especially in the period of crises of all kinds, and here lies the danger as there is no control by the Ministry of Information as in traditional institutions, so there must be self-censorship, which can be covered by media news literacy, and from here education plays aThe news media has a role in shaping opinions and convictions through this news as it is the basis in shaping the cultural identity towards any of the topics, so social networks play as they are the most used by young people, it is possible to affect the level of media education they have. However, this impact varies in different proportions according to changes and technological, social, and political developments (Eristi, 2017)

Therefore, news media literacy is one of the branches of media literacy. It focuses on accessing, analyzing, and evaluating news, critical thinking skills, and thoughtful consumption of news, enabling individuals to identify news, deconstruct its content, and share it (Al-Seriti, 2025).

Literature Review

1. Social Media for News

The study of Al-Seriti (2025) found the effectiveness of a proposed program based on the "James Potter" model in developing media literacy skills among students of the Faculty of Mass Communication, and the results showed statistically significant differences in favor of the experimental group, which indicates the impact of the program in confronting fake news. In a similar context, Castaño et al. (2025) confirmed that developing critical thinking enhances readiness for collaborative learning. Still, it is insufficient to improve media literacy skills, which calls for more specialized and targeted educational interventions. Geers et al. (2020) also demonstrated that educational programs aimed at less educated youth positively impact their political effectiveness and media knowledge, especially when actively involved in content production. Liu & Zhang (2025) examined the relationship between self-efficacy in English language learning and media literacy, finding a strong relationship between media literacy and self-efficacy, suggesting the importance of integrating media literacy into language education curricula. Orhan (2023) showed that critical thinking contributes significantly to college students' ability to detect fake news on social media, outperforming its impact on new media skills. Together, they explained about 18% of the variation in the Ability to detect fake news.

Ismail's (2024) study showed that artificial intelligence applications such as image editing software and news analysis enhance the ability of educational media students to distinguish fake news, which was confirmed by significant differences between the pre- and post-measurement of the experimental group. Labib's (2024) study also found a correlation between the level of knowledge of academics and professionals about artificial intelligence techniques and their positive attitudes towards using them in detecting fake news, which reflects a growing awareness within the media community of the advantages of artificial intelligence, and this was also supported by Amira Ismail's study (2024), which monitored an increasing confidence of journalists and academics in the ability of artificial intelligence to detect fake news, noting that this confidence is related to their degree of self-efficacy.

 Zhao et al. (2025) also applied an audiovisual media-based intervention to improve students' social media knowledge. The results showed participants' ability to detect fake news better than other groups. In contrast, Tully (2020) showed that disseminating awareness messages in

media literacy on social networks can make a difference in public awareness and awareness of the credibility of information, especially on sensitive issues such as vaccination and genetically modified foods.

Luan et al. (2020) developed a scale measuring media literacy among English language learners in China, which relied on ten indicators, including consumption, evaluation, production, and feedback. The study of Aqila (2022) also aimed to measure the level of news media literacy skills among students of educational media at Minia University, and the results showed that a large percentage of students possess weak skills in this field, which indicates the need for targeted educational interventions.

The study of Kara et al. (2020) revealed the weakness of media literacy among gifted students in Turkey despite their extensive use of social media, which indicates the need to include media literacy concepts in gifted education centers, and Nixon (2021) showed how teaching critical speech as part of video production can enhance media literacy skills among young people, as participants demonstrated an ability to use critical feedback to develop their media work. The study of Xiao et al. (2021) observed disparities in media consumption based on gender, ethnicity, and need for knowledge, highlighting the importance of designing programs that target those most vulnerable to disinformation.

2. News Literacy

News literacy is a branch of media literacy (Ashley, Maksi and Craft 2013 UNESCO, 2013; Rady, 2014), which focuses on the skills of accessing, analyzing and evaluating news, critical thinking skills and thoughtful consumption of news, which enables individuals to recognize, deconstruct, develop, and share news (Vraga and Tully, 2016). Economist), understanding the terminology and constraints that shape news media (Rosenbaum et al., 2020) and focusing on an individual's knowledge of the news industry and its economies, ownership of news organizations and the content and values they provide, and negative and positive news impacts (Rady, 2014)

Rady (2014) and Breslin (2021 define it as the knowledge and motivation needed to learn about and deal with news, and Maksi et al. (2015) argue that news literacy is about answering questions such as: Why do individuals interact with news media? How do they interact? How do they understand what news they consume? And how are they affected by

what (Vraga and Tully, 2019; Mecklin, 2021) they consume? He adds that news literacy aims to teach the individual to think like a journalist, and to use the tools and resources provided by the digital age to be a reliable and influential voice in society, and news literacy deals with news media that have a unique impact on participatory democracy and informed citizenship and focuses primarily on supporting individuals in developing thinking that empowers them. Evaluative skills and critical thinking skills from using information to make positive contributions to society, helping individuals understand and participate in the roles and responsibilities of newsmakers, consumers, news texts, and news organizations in a healthy society (Reznicek, 2021)

News literacy helps individuals develop the critical thinking skills necessary to judge the reliability and credibility of information, whether it is issued by print newspapers, television or the Internet, and this is an important life skill, especially in the digital age where everyone struggles to deal with information overload and the difficulty of determining the validity of reports. (Hornik, 2022)

Four serious challenges underscore the urgent need for news literacy (Aqeela, 2022, p. 655)

- The amount of information we flood daily makes it difficult to sort out what is reliable
- New technologies make it easier to create content that looks reliable, and make it easier to disseminate it widely
- The digital age demands have exacerbated the conflict between speed and accuracy to deliver information as quickly as possible, increasing the likelihood of error.
- The public prefers information that supports their beliefs. The internet and social media make it easier to choose only information that supports our ideas, reinforcing them rather than challenging them.

This reflects the importance of news literacy for both the individual and society, especially media learners who are expected to have a degree of news literacy that qualifies them to play their role towards society, and many of whom work in basic education have a great responsibility towards young people who are exposed to media content and social networking

sites more than the time spent with his family members or in his school and exposed to many misinformation and fake news.

Problem Statement

The problem of the study is evident in the continuous increase in the use of social networks by university youth as the main source of obtaining news, especially in times of crises and public issues, without adequately verifying the credibility of that news or delving into its content, which exposes them to media disinformation and false information. In light of the media's race to dominate the news scene, and sometimes committing professional errors related to sources and credibility, the importance of media news literacy as a tool enables the public to analyze, critique, and verify news Objectivity. Therefore, this study explores the relationship between university students' use of social networks as a news source and their news media literacy level.

Study Significance

- In light of what has been presented from previous studies and in light of the researcher's access to the latest literature, she found a lack of literary studies that dealt with news media education and its relationship to the use of social networks by young people as a source of news
- The importance of the study lies in the fact that it examines a very rapidly growing phenomenon, which is the phenomenon of social networking sites and the increasing demand among young people and their use as a primary source of news.
- News media literacy is a new legislation to regulate the flow of news spread through social networks, and this term is new, important, and worthy of study.

Objectives of the study:

- Identify the relationship between the frequency of university youth's use of social networks as a news source and their level of media news literacy.
- Analyze the relationship between the perception of the credibility of news content provided through social networks and the media literacy level among university youth.
- Reveal the relationship between the interaction of the study sample with the news content provided through social networks and the level of media literacy.

- Study the relationship between the influence of social networks on the habits of consuming news content and the level of news media literacy among university youth.

Study Questions:

The study attempts to answer the following main question:

What is the relationship between university youth and using social networks as a news source to their media literacy level?

Several sub-questions arise from this question:

1. What is the relationship between the frequency of university youth using social networks as a news source and the media literacy level?
2. What is the relationship between the credibility of content provided through social networks and the level of media education news?
3. What is the relationship between the interaction of the study sample with the content provided through social networks and the level of media news literacy?
4. What is the relationship between the consumption habits of content provided through social networks and the level of media news literacy?

Study Hypotheses

H1: There is a statistically significant relationship between the use of social networks by university youth as a source of news and their level of news literacy

H2: There is a statistically significant relationship between university youth's perception of the credibility of news content on social networks and their level of news literacy

H3: There is a statistically significant relationship between the interaction of university youth with news content on social networks and their level of news literacy

H4: There is a statistically significant relationship between the impact of social networks on the habits of consuming news among university youth and their level of news literacy

Methodology

This study belongs to the descriptive analyses, as it depends on the media survey approach through its reliance on the questionnaire newspaper, i.e. the field part, as this approach is commensurate with the nature of the

objectives of the study, and is considered one of the most appropriate approaches to the nature of the study.

Study population and sample:

The study sample consists of a sample of 643 young people from Minia University, distributed among all faculties and disciplines, between males and females

Table No. (1) Description of the study sample

Demographic variables	Category	Freq.	%
Gender	Males	177	27.5%
	Female	466	72.5%
Specialization	Humanities	579	90%
	Engineering Sciences	23	6.3%
	Medical Sciences	41	5.4%
Academic year	First	316	49.1%
	Second	57	8.9%
	Third	183	28.5%
	Fourth	87	13.5%

Study Tools:

The questionnaire measures the level of news literacy and consumption habits of exposure and access to news, the level of university youth's use of social networks as a news source, and their relationship to the level of media literacy.

Limitations of the study:
- **Objective limits:** The current study was limited in its objective limits to studying the use of university youth for social networks as a source of news and its relationship to the level of education of their news media.
- **Spatial boundaries: The** study was limited to students of Minia University in all its faculties and specializations, without addressing other places, due to its proximity and ease of application.
- **Human limits: The** study was limited in its human limits to university youth (Minia University) in all its faculties, without addressing other categories.
- **Time limits:** The current study in the application of its tools was limited to the use of the electronic application in the period starting from 1/1/2025 AD to 1/3/2025 AD

Results

H1 There is a statistically significant relationship between university youth's use of social networks as a news source and their level of news literacy.

Table 2 shows the correlation between university youth's use of social networks as a news source and their news literacy level.

Variables	Level of news literacy		
	R	P-value	Outcomes
Using social networks as a source of news	0.544**	0.000	There is a positive correlation.

The results of the previous table show a statistically significant positive correlation between the use of university youth of social networks in obtaining news and their level of news literacy, where the value of Pearson's correlation coefficient was (0.544) with a probability value less than (0.01), which indicates that the more university youth use social networks to obtain news, the higher the level of news literacy they have, that is, they have better access and news analysis skills.

H2: There is a statistically significant relationship between university youth's perception of the credibility of news content on social networks and their level of news literacy

Table 3 shows the correlation between university youth's perception of the credibility of news content on social networks and their level of news literacy.

Variables	Level of news literacy		
	R	P-value	Outcomes
Credibility of news content on social networks	0.625**	0.000	There is a positive correlation.

The results of the previous table show a statistically significant positive correlation between university youth's perception of the credibility of news content on social networks and their level of news literacy, where the value of Pearson's correlation coefficient was (0.625) with a probability value less than (0.01), which indicates that the more university youth realize the credibility of news content on social networks, the higher their level of news literacy, that is, they have better access and news analysis skills, and this reflects an important dimension of media literacy News,

which is the analysis and criticism of news to verify its credibility. Therefore, the news published through social networks is reliable, but it should be examined, analyzed, and verified first.

H3: There is a statistically significant relationship between the interaction of university youth with news content on social networks and their level of news literacy

Table 4 shows the correlation between the interaction of university youth with news content on social networks and their level of news literacy.

Variables	Level of news literacy		
	R	P-value	Outcomes
Interaction with news content on social networks	0.587**	0.000	There is a positive correlation.

The results of the previous table show a statistically significant positive correlation between the interaction of university youth with news content on social networks and their level of news literacy, where the value of Pearson's correlation coefficient (0.587) with a p-value less than (0.01), which indicates that the more university youth interact with news content on social networks, the higher their level of news literacy, i.e. they have better access and news analysis skills.

H4 There is a statistically significant relationship between the impact of social networks on the habits of consuming news among university youth and their level of news literacy.

Table 5 shows the correlation between the impact of social networks on the habits of consuming news among university youth and their level of news literacy.

Variables	Level of news literacy		
	R	P-value	Outcomes
Influence on news consumption habits	0.681**	0.000	There is a positive correlation.

The results of the previous table show a statistically significant positive correlation between the effect of social networks on the news consumption habits of university youth and their level of news literacy, where the value of Pearson's correlation coefficient (0.681) with a p-value

of less than (0.01), which indicates that the greater the influence of social networks on the news consumption habits of university youth, the higher their level of news literacy, i.e. they have better access and news analysis skills.

Recommendations:

- Holding workshops and training courses for students in different universities to provide them with the skills to analyze and criticize media content and deal with the media.
- Holding a protocol between universities and schools to train students in the pre-university stages on how to use social networks and select content in line with the values and beliefs of society.
- Activating artificial intelligence tools in new media tools to detect and avoid fake news.
- Digital literacy among university youth by training them on using artificial intelligence tools in collecting and editing media content.

Further Research:

- Analyze the impact of the type of content to which young people are exposed on their skills in news analysis.
- Conducting a study on the impact of crises on media literacy.
- The level of university youth's use of artificial intelligence and news literacy applications.

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