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Digital News Consumption Behaviour Among Youngsters in Chennai City

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ABSTRACT

News consumption through digital devices have gained significance among all age groups today. Especially, Generation Z spends most of their time with their digital devices. They prefer digital media news instead of television news because they don't want to spend much of their time while sitting in front of Television. Moreover, there is no cost to access digital news other than Internet fees. This digital news constantly keeps the youngsters updated with the most recent and current topics. So, understanding the shift in their news consumption behaviour is important to engage with the audience. This paper was intended to look at how far Generation Z, those people born after the year 2000 are seeking with reference to digital news. A sample size of 100 was taken. What type of news Generation Z prefers is also analysed through frequency analysis. The relationship between the time spent on watching digital news and the digital news consumption behaviour is identified using the Pearson Correlation. The analysis between the Content accessed and the digital news consumption behaviour is investigated by Linear Regression. It is concluded that Generation Z prefers watching Entertainment & Celebrity news and there was a strong association between the Content accessed and the digital news consumption behaviour.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In order to find news, consumers are turning away from traditional media sources and more towards digital media and messaging services. A major reason for this shift may be the relationship between audience generations and media consumption. Digital media are giving consumers broader access to news and uniting the world, especially young people, on a whole new level. Digital media makes news distribution easier, allowing news outlets to spread their work to a wider audience in seconds.

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A study on the use of digital media for news consumption and the extent to which young people pay attention to news can help us understand the effectiveness of digital media on different platforms for young people. This research primarily focuses on why people watch news via digital media and how it plays a role in their daily news consumption.

1.1 Review of Literature

Tian (2022) conducted study on the effects of social media news overload on news avoidance and news filtering behaviour using the requirement for news and media literacy as a mediating and moderating mechanism. The study found that if people were overloaded with news, they stop looking for that altogether or became engrossed in the tiresome task of weeding out the news that was actually useful.

Levy (2021) conducted a field experiment to study the polarisation and consumption of news on social media. The study discovered that pro-attitudinal news exposure exacerbates affective polarisation. The study demonstrated that social media platforms exposed users to a wider range of viewpoints.

Russmann and Hess (2020) attempted to study young adult's news consumption and trust towards media in Austria. By analysing the effects of news sharing on WhatsApp and other social media, they found that it might help young people become more educated citizens.

Howard *et al.*, (2018) carried out a study on the automation and sourcing of political news and information on social media in the US. They stated that Twitter proved to be a more enlightening information source. The study added that, when properly searched, social media serves as a rich source of knowledge.

Fletcher and Park (2017) observed the effect of news media trust in 11 countries. The study's findings showed that people who had low levels of trust tend to favour alternative news sources. In addition, people seek alternative views owing to their motivation level.

1.2 Research Gap

The existing literature review recognized the effect of trust as well as the type of social media through which people access news media. The present study will focus on the digital news consumption behaviour with regard to factors like trust and the type of content accessed while watching digital news. Further, the study will address the relationship between the time spent on digital news and the digital news consumption behaviour.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

- To know the type of digital news accessed often by respondents.
- To find out the relationship between the time spent on consuming news and digital news consumption behaviour.
- To know the impact of content accessed on digital news consumption behaviour.

2.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Fixation of Sample Size

Sample size (N) – 100

Sampling technique – Convenience sampling

2.2 Study period

The period of study is during October - December 2022.

2.3 Methods of Data Collection

The data was gathered by distributing questionnaires to the target group of college students in Chennai city pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees.

Primary Data	Secondary Data
The questionnaire method	Research Articles and Journals

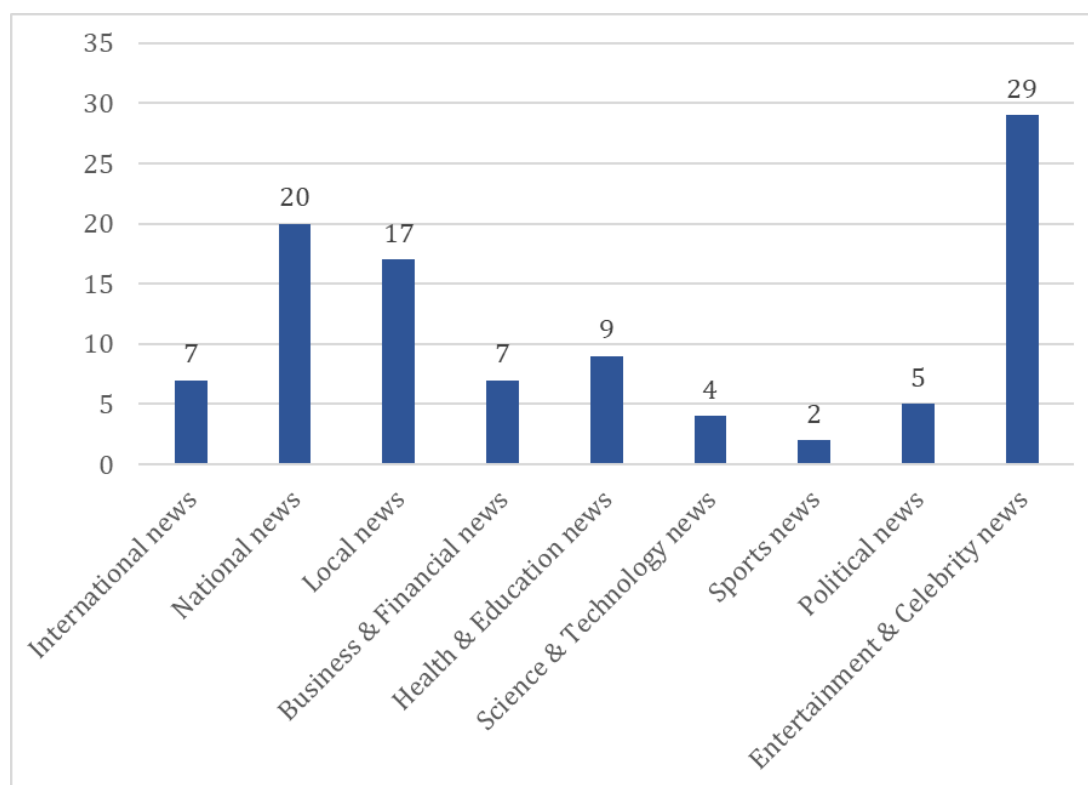
2.4 Hypotheses

- **H₁:** The time of accessing digital media is equally distributed.
- **H₂:** There is no association between the content accessed and digital news consumption behaviour.

3.0 DATA ANALYSIS

Figure 1

Type of Digital News Accessed Often



Source: Primary data

Most of the respondents get their entertainment and celebrity news online. In this study, 20% of respondents preferred to watch national news, followed by local news and Health & education news. Only 2% of the respondents prefer sports news while their favourite team is being featured. Respondents access entertainment and celebrity news in order to stay up to date with their favourite celebrity on a regular basis. (See Figure 1)

Table 1

Chi-square Test for Goodness of Fit of Equality with Respect to Digital Media Accessing Time

Digital Media Accessing Time	Frequency	Percent	Chi-square Value	p-Value
Morning	34	34.0	25.040	<0.001**
Afternoon	4	4.0		
Evening	35	35.0		
Night	27	27.0		
Total	100	100.0		

Source: Primary data

** denotes significant at 1% level

Since P value is less than 0.01, the Null hypothesis is rejected at 1% level of significance. Hence, it is concluded that Digital media accessing time among youngsters are not equally distributed. Based on percentage, most of the youngsters access digital media during Morning and Evening time (See Table 1).

Table 2

Impact of Content Accessed on Digital News Consumption Behaviour

S.No	Hypothesis (H ₂)	Data Analysis Technique	P-value	Result
1	There is no association between the content accessed and digital news consumption behaviour	Linear Regression	*0.000	p = 0.000 < 0.01 (H ₂ is rejected)

Source: Primary data

* denotes significant at 1% level

Table 2 depicts the results of Linear Regression analysis, of the association between the content accessed and digital news consumption behaviour. It can be observed that content accessed had strong association with the digital news consumption behaviour since the P-value is less than 0.01. The Null hypothesis (H₂) is rejected. These values are obtained at a significant level of 1%.

Table 3

Mean and Standard Deviation of Digital News Consumption Behaviour

S.No	Statements	Mean	SD
1	To know about international news	3.79	0.957
2	To know about National news	3.92	0.861
3	To know about Local news	3.95	0.947
4	To get information about daily life (e.g., health, travel)	4.05	0.999
5	To be knowledgeable for my job/work/studies	4.02	0.985
6	To get fun and entertainment	3.67	1.111
7	Out of habit - It's a part of my routine	3.51	1.115
8	To pass the time when I'm travelling/waiting	3.26	1.186

Source: Primary data

From Table 3, it can be inferred that the weighted mean score for statement 4 & 5 is above 4, indicating that the respondents have strongly agreed to the statement that they would watch digital

news to get information about their everyday life and to obtain knowledge for their job/work and studies. Followed by statement 1, 2 & 3, which states that respondents watch international news to get a view of the world (3.79), National news (3.92) and their local news to know what's going on in their immediate area (3.95). For statements 6, 7 & 8, the respondents moderately agreed that they would watch digital news to get fun and entertainment (3.67), to pass their time while they are commuting (3.26) and some watch digital news as it had become their daily routine (3.51).

4.0 FINDINGS

1. Majority of the respondents are under the age group of 17-19 and 13% of the respondents are under the age group of 20-22.
2. Based on the study, 63% of respondents get their news from social media., 20% of them get news through television, 10% of the respondents through online websites, 5% through Search engine (e.g., Google) and only 2% of the respondents receives news through print medium.
3. It was found that 95% of them accessed news through their smartphones, 4% of them through Computers (i.e., Laptops & Desktops) and only 1% through tablet.
4. It was analysed that 49% of the respondents access digital news through Instagram, 34% of them by YouTube, 14% through WhatsApp and 3% of the respondents through Twitter.
5. It was observed that, 35% of the respondents watch digital news during evening time, 34% in morning, 27% during nighttime, and 4% of the respondents watch digital news during afternoon time.

5.0 CONCLUSION

In the digital era, youngsters access news through digital devices and platforms to keep them updated about daily events. Watching news digitally is cost-effective, easy to access at any time and provides instant updates about latest news. The study found that most of the respondents prefer to watch Entertainment & Celebrity news to get some recreation time. Also, the Content accessed factor plays a significant role while people are accessing digital news. There was a negative association with time spent on digital news, the reason being people would like to spend more time whenever the content featured fascinates them. People watch digital news mainly to obtain information and gain knowledge. So, the digital news channels could come up with content which focuses on providing useful information to boost up the accessibility of digital news.

5.1 Limitations of the Study

- A convenience sample of only college students was considered.
- The sample size was limited only to 100 respondents.
- Using the questionnaire method, it was difficult to rule out respondent bias.

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