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Credibility perceptions of television and online news

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Credibility Perceptions of Television and Online News

by

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to God Almighty who amazingly provided finances, strength, time, and people that helped in accomplishing this research work. It is likewise dedicated to the people in the media industry.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Credibility Perceptions of Television and Online News

Charmy G. Sabigan

ABSTRACT

Three major factors influence audience's credibility perception of mediated news on television and on the internet. This study found that reporters' credibility, media credibility, and news credibility had direct influence to the credibility of news presented on both media. Reporters' credibility on both media could be measured by their expertise, intelligence, education, trustworthiness, and authoritativeness. Television and the internet were evaluated differently. Television was measured by its comprehensiveness, concern for the interest of the public, and fairness. The internet was assessed on its trustworthiness, consideration of public interest, and objectivity. News credibility for both media, however, could be evaluated using the same measures such as news trustworthiness and objectivity.

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

Mass media are ubiquitous these days. Almost everywhere that people go, such as malls, airports, restaurants, hotels, and other public places, television sets are on even though people do not seek or ask for them. Radios likewise are heard in elevators and public transportations. It also cannot be denied that computers and internet cafés are mushrooming. Due to cheap and easy access to these media, more people are using these platforms to communicate and also to get information than ever before.

The media are also used extensively to communicate on behalf of other entities. For example, business corporations tap mass media entities to broadcast or print them. This happens despite the controversies and questions of credibility media are facing these days. Bramson (2007) wrote,

"[W]hen something is written or widely viewed, it demonstrates your expertise, your willingness to take the time to educate the public, and your ability to organize and articulate your thoughts. Media exposure shows that you are a professional. And it lends credibility with writers and editors who are more likely to quote you in an article to be read by prospects and clients." (p. 14).

Government and politicians use the media for their programs and propaganda. Interest groups, advocacy groups, non-profit groups and other sectors of the society also strive for news coverage to further their interests (Bardes & Oldendick, 2003). In the

same way ordinary citizens air their grievances against government or public officials through the mass media.

Likewise, due to advanced technology, mass media have penetrated almost every corner of the world. Homes are getting more and more equipped with different media appliances (Van Rompaey & Roe, 2004). Despite media's accessibility and utilization as sources of information, people do not scrupulously trust and believe everything they get from the mass media. Pew Research Center for the People and the Press (2004) reported that since the mid-1980s Americans have become increasingly skeptical of the information they get from mass media. This affects all major media news outlets. Credibility ratings for both network and cable television have fallen in recent years due to increased cynicism toward the media.

Amidst negative charges against mass media like media bias, sensationalism of news and issues, wrong prioritization, and other criticisms, credibility has emerged as the major issue that ought to be addressed in news operations (Bucy, 2003).

The *Washington Times* (2006) reported the Project for Excellence in Journalism revealed that only 19 percent of the people who participated in a survey believed "all or most" of the information they read in daily newspapers. Forty percent believed only "a good deal" of what they read. The paper also cited some of the probable causes of loss of public trust such as journalists caught making up stories, reporting unverified data, plagiarizing, juicing stories, and accepting payola from the government.

Other polls also rate the press at low in public respect. Broadcasters are treated as celebrities yet they are strongly criticized (Klein, 2007). Klein believes the major reason for the public's criticism of the media is how reporters ask questions. Reporters often

insert their opinion in their questions. This style of asking questions creates and stirs different opinions and scenarios in the minds of the audiences.

Despite the innuendo-loaded questions of American media personalities, one writer in New York quoted Gerard Baker, The Times' U.S. editor in Washington, who said American reporters are still considered "incredibly soft" and "patsy-like" when compared to their British counterparts. British reporters are said to be known for their tough way of interviewing through sharp and probing questions (Hansen, 2007, para. 18).

United States' journalists, however, appear to be more neutral and balanced than Britain's. British journalists have established a tradition of openly floating their partisanships. While this is not an ideal practice of journalists it was said that this has a liberating effect and makes the papers more interesting to read. Partisanship is not totally absent in the U. S. media either. Nonetheless, British newspapers' websites are increasingly getting more and more Americans accessing them. U.S. readers flocked BBC's Web sites for a fresh, "non-U.S.-centric take on world events" (Hansen, 2007, para. 13).

The above scenarios stress the importance of credibility research in mass communication. There should be a continuous search to determine the perceived reliability and credibility of media as sources of news and information. While a number of studies had already been done, there are still questions left unanswered that demand further research (Pornpitakpan, 2004)

Scientific research on media credibility was advanced sixty years ago and initial studies were tied with persuasion research (Self, 1996). In the 1930s mass communication started measuring credibility for the purpose of knowing which medium

was most trustworthy: newspaper, television or radio. The studies were primarily done to attract advertisers to invest their dollars to the perceived most trusted news source.

Research at that time was based on the hypodermic-needle model of communications where mass media were perceived to be highly credible and whatever they said were most likely accepted by the audiences. Initial studies showed that newspapers were the most trusted medium. Later, radio was tagged as the most credible, but in the 1950's, television assumed the position as the most trusted medium (Pornpitakpan, 2004; Self, 1996).

Some recent studies on news report credibility and media credibility produced conflicting results. These conflicting findings were attributed to institutional interests, political and social agendas, and researchers' use of an array of theoretical orientations (Pornpitakpan, 2004; Self, 1996).

Academic researchers claimed that interpretations of data and methods employed in past research were questionable. For instance, the interpretation of the data published in the journal of the Newspaper Association of America could have been interpreted as signifying high levels of credibility of news media, contrary to the analysis presented. The scaling techniques used in the ASNE study were likewise challenged. It was proven that using the same scales but altering the positive/negative structure produced different dimensions of credibility (Self, 1996).

Past research studies were also limited. They either focused on the credibility of source, medium, or message. Source credibility research focused more on persuasion communication, while research on medium credibility focused on the different channels. Researchers criticized Jacobson's (1969) study on medium credibility as one-

dimensional. They believed that credibility is a multidimensional concept (McCorskey & Jenson, 1975; Self, 1996).

McCorskey and Jenson's (1975) research on persuasion revealed that source image is multidimensional. The researchers criticized the scales used in past studies of source credibility including that of Berlo, Lemert, and Mertz (1969-1970) arguing that most of the scales used by past researchers adopted scales used for platform speakers or politicians and were not appropriate for media practitioners. They hypothesized that the scales effective in measuring politicians' credibility and other types of sources may not be valid to measure credibility of mass media practitioners. Thus, new scales were tested to measure mass mediated source credibility. Their findings, however, showed that there was no big difference in the criteria considered in the perception of credibility of mass media personalities from other types of sources. The researchers, nonetheless, were confident in concluding that their dimensionality is the "best representative of the combined results from previous research" (p.178). The study found five factors to measure mass media news source image credibility: competence, extroversion, composure, character, and sociability.

The seminal work of Hovland and colleagues (as cited in McCorskey & Jenson, 1975) on source credibility was likewise criticized as not being based on a strong theoretical framework. Hovland and colleagues argued that the dimensions of source credibility were expertise and trustworthiness.

Other studies that focused on mass communication constructs showed conflicting findings. For instance, Berlo, Lemert, and Mertz (1969) reported competence, trustworthiness, and dynamism as the dimensions of source credibility. Aside from these

5

three factors Whitehead (1968) identified objectivity as a dimension while McCorskey (1966) reported only two factors, namely, authoritativeness and character (McCorskey & Jenson, 1975; Pornpitakpan, 2004; Self, 1996).

This research was not only limited to persuasive communication and medium credibility but integrated other communication constructs in mass media like message characteristics. Past studies either particularly focused on what characteristics of sources made them credible, what medium were credible, or what made messages credible. This study explored the relations and interrelations of source, media and news characteristics. Past research studied these concepts separately, this study grouped them together. This research hypothesized that source, medium and news characteristics are attributes of the credibility of mediated news report in general. Therefore, this research explored the extent these constructs boost or take away credibility of mass media news.

Chapter Two

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Mass media are the primary provider of information that reaches wide audiences. News and information from mass media are considered stimuli that solicit responses from the public. Publics and individuals may respond differently to the same stimulus depending on their personal presuppositions and perceptions.

Cognitive dissonance theory holds that if a message received is dissonant or contrary to the existing belief of the recipient of the message, cognitive and psychological processes take place (Cotton, 1985; Festinger, 1957; Hyman & Sheatsley, 1947; Klapper, 1960; Lazerfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1948; McQuail, 1987; Severin, & Tankard, 1998; Stone, Singletary, & Richmond, 1999). Information contrary to the existing beliefs of an individual causes dissonance. Dissonance is a psychological discomfort felt when there is discrepancy between an existing knowledge and belief and new information or an interpretation. This occurs when there is a need to accommodate new ideas (Festinger, 1957; Hyman & Sheatsley, 1947; Klapper, 1960; Lazerfeld et. al, 1948; Severin & Tankard, 1988). To eliminate the discomfort or anxiety, the recipients of the message tend to reconcile their thoughts until they establish a state of equilibrium.

Cognitive response theory on one hand deals with the processing of information and emphasizes the importance of initial opinion. Message recipients who have a negative attitude to the new information may retrieve strong opinions stored in long-term

memory to make counterarguments. Nonetheless, if the source of information is highly credible, the retrieval of counterarguments is hindered. If the source is less credible, the retrieval of supporting arguments takes place among those of with a favorable original attitude towards the message. This theory, nonetheless, does not explain the origin of initial opinions (Sternthal et al., 1978).

Cognitive response theory holds that when weighing information or making decisions, high credibility sources are more convincing if thoughts are negative while lower credibility sources are more effective if thoughts are positive (Bock & Saine, 1975; Harmon & Coney, 1982). It claims that people who initially have a negative opinion or are against an issue are more likely to change their beliefs or attitudes if the source is highly credible. High credibility sources may change negative perceptions. On the other hand, if the information presented is congruent or in consonance with the belief of the receiver of information, a low credibility source is more effective.

Selective exposure theory on the other hand suggests that people choose what information they want to hear, read, or view. Individuals have the tendency to avoid information contrary to their own beliefs (Severin & Tankard, 1988). Social scientists believe that this is a basic fact about communication effects. Political advertisements, for instance merely reinforce preexisting beliefs or preferences. They do not necessarily change voters' choice. If a voter likes a candidate, the political advertisement only reinforces the positive attitude toward the candidate. Advertisements do not change the voters' attitude toward a disliked candidate (Lazarsfeld et. al, 1968).

Selective theory also suggests that people are less receptive to counter-propaganda because of selective exposure. The principle of selective exposure is also

8

explained in cognitive dissonance theory wherein selective exposure is primarily used to reduce dissonance.

Sears and Freedman (1967), however, claimed that literature on selective exposure is unsatisfying. In their study, they concluded that there seem to be a "de facto" selectivity, but not as overtly as claimed. In some instances, individuals seem to prefer information supportive of their views, but likewise seek information contrary to their views. What is most interesting in the Sears and Freedman study is their assumption that resistance or acceptance of information may be "accomplished most often and most successfully at the level of information evaluation, rather than at the level of selective seeking or avoiding information" (p. 213).

Alternatively, source credibility theory suggests that people are more likely to believe if the source is presented or presents itself as credible (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953). It seems that this theory is self-evident, but some studies show that source credibility had no direct effect when the identification of the source was deferred until after the message (McGinnes & Ward, 1974; Pornpitakpan, 2004; Self, 1996). On the other hand, source of moderate credibility stimulates greater positive response and attitude when identified prior to the presentation of the information. It is presumed that this is due to message recipients' need to bolster existing beliefs or positions if the communicator is of questionable reputation (Sternthal, Dholakia, & Leavitt, 1978). Another reason why source credibility may not result in attitude change is the recipient's involvement in the message as the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) of communication explains.

Petty and Cacioppo (as cited in Severin & Tankard, 1988), creators of the ELM model, proposed that message is transmitted and received through one of two routes of persuasion: the central route and the peripheral route. If a person is able to elaborate on the message, central route is used. The recipient of the message is then motivated to think and evaluate the message. If he/she finds the message is strong, persuasion takes place.

The peripheral route is used if a person could not elaborate on a message extensively. The recipient may still be persuaded by factors like familiarity with the message or positive attitudes, albeit weakly and temporarily (Severin & Tankard, 1988).

On the other hand, if Sears and Freedman (1967) claim that resistance or acceptance of information may be accomplished mostly during the evaluation of the information, this research hypothesized that the acceptance or rejection of news or information from mass media is a product of cognitive and psychological processes primarily attributable to the receiver's evaluation of the information based on various variables as such the credibility of the source, the medium used in transmitting the message, and the news itself.

Literature of each of the aforementioned variables of the credibility of mediated news is discussed comprehensively in the succeeding section.

Chapter Three

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Past credibility studies dealt particularly and separately with the credibility of source, medium, and message. The results of these studies are presented here one after the other.

Credibility

The concept of credibility in the context of mass media has various definitions based on different presuppositions. It has been defined as "believability, trust, perceived reliability," and scores and combinations of other concepts (Self, 1996, p. 421). It has been defined based on the characteristics of the raconteur or presenter, the group presenting, the channel, and the message presented. Credibility has also been defined from the point of view of the recipient of communication and the situation within which the communication took place.

Studies on credibility were primarily focused on the believability of the source, the medium, or the message itself. Source credibility studies examined how characteristics of the communicator "influence the processing of the message" (Kiousis, 2001, p. 382). Under this stream of research, the attributes of a source were examined in terms of its impact on the message or content. The message may be processed based on reliability and expertise of the sender/source (Hovland et al., 1953; Pornpitakpan, 2004).

Medium credibility studies, on the other hand, focused more on the channel used to deliver the information rather than on the individual or group sending the message.

Source Credibility

Past studies tested combinations of source qualities that would stimulate attitude change. Source expertise and trustworthiness were seen as the primary considerations in source credibility. Expertise plus trustworthiness equals credibility (Hovland et al., 1953). Expertise refers to the capability and proficiency of the speaker to make correct statements about his/her subject (Sternthal et al., 1978). Expertise is attributable to age, leadership, and social background. Older people were believed to be more experienced. Leaders were assumed to have the ability to predict. Those who talk about what they do are considered expert in their particular field (Hovland et al., 1953; Levine, 1978).

A business tycoon, for instance, who discusses the strategies of effective business management, is likely to be believable. A high credible source is perceived to provide a "more accurate perception of reality" (Gotlieb & Sarel, 1991, p. 40). On the other hand, trustworthiness is basically based on the honesty and integrity of the communicator (McGinnies & Ward, 1980). If an audience believes the averments of the speaker were based on his/her disinterested beliefs the speaker will be perceived as trustworthy (Sternthal et al., 1978). Experiments showed that if audience perceived a speaker or source to have something to gain by persuading them, the speaker becomes less trustworthy (Hovland et al., 1953; McGinnies & Ward, 1980). Moreover, McGinnies and Ward found that a trustworthy source is more persuasive whether expert or not than an expert that is less trustworthy.

Likewise, a communicator could hold the attention of the audience and change attitude if he/she has a striking personality, is attractive, or has an admirable appearance, and belongs to an influential group. Studies showed that the acceptance and believability of communication depend on the sender (Hovland et al., 1953; Sternthal et al., 1978). A communicator with prestige was believed to be more effective and credible. Highly respected individuals or organizations were expected to have better impact than unfamiliar sources. This was the result of an experiment given to two groups of subjects whose initial attitudes were unfavorable toward Henry Ford. The two groups were provided the same communication. In the first group, the propagandist from the very start and during his presentation, made it explicit that his intention was to make the subjects feel more favorable to Ford. In the second group, the same presenter told the subjects that his purpose was to make the group feel less favorable to Ford. The result showed that there was greater change produced in the first where the intent of the presenter was congruent to the group's initial bias.

In most cases, high credibility sources were perceived to be more effective than medium or low credibility sources. However, low credibility sources tended to be more effective if thoughts of the recipient of the message were positive. If thoughts were negative, the high credibility source tended to be more effective in influencing attitude and behavior change (Harmon & Coney, 1982; Pornpitakpan, 2004; Self, 1996). Nonetheless, Sternthal et al. (1978) said there is a dearth of studies on the joint effects of source credibility and other variables that affect the processing of communication.

The other factors affecting the acceptance of a message may be attributed to receivers' idiosyncrasies. Experimental research indicated contextual factors had

significant effect on the impact of source credibility (Sternthal et al., 1978). Emotions like affection, admiration, awe, and fear of the receivers also attribute to the acceptance or rejection of the message (Hovland et al., 1953; Self, 1996). Culture may also have influence on source credibility. Nevertheless, it was believed that "the communicator's power, and his credibility, are probably important in all societies" (Hovland et al., 1953, p. 21).

How differences in personalities of sources influenced attitudes of audiences toward certain issues was the subject of research of Hovland and Weiss (1951). They studied source credibility by using identical information presented by two sources: one trustworthy and the other untrustworthy. Their experiments showed that message acquirement and retention had nothing to do with the trustworthiness of the source. Trustworthiness of the source, however, had a significant effect on the change of opinion of the receivers of the message. If the source was perceived as trustworthy, the change in opinion was greater than when the source was perceived untrustworthy.

Subsequent research supported Hovland and Weiss's conclusions. Source credibility affects the acceptability of the message presented (Lee, 1978). Lee's findings also supported Andersen and Clevenger's (1963) claim that "the ethos of the source is related in some way to the impact of the message" (p. 77).

It was also believed that cognitive aspects of information processing should be considered in the study of message reception because individual "psychological noise" may prevent the receiver from accepting an unbiased message (Jacobson, 1969, p. 22).

On the other hand, source credibility and message have direct association. Studies confirmed that there is considerable connection of credibility with message acceptance

14

(Chebat, Filiatrault, & Perrien, 2001; Pornpitakpan, 2004). The more involved a person is with the message the more likely it is this person would actively process the message and may not scrutinize the credibility of the source. The involvement with the message could outweigh the credibility of the source. However, if involvement is low source credibility is more likely to be considered (Chebat et al., 2001; Pornpitakpan, 2004; Self, 1996). High involvement with the message may encourage central processing, and ignore peripheral cues like the message source.

Nonetheless, source is not the only factor to be considered in assessing credibility (Hovland et al., 1953). The impact of a message may depend on the credibility of the medium transmitting the information. For example, an advertisement may be given more credence if it appeared in a reputable magazine than in a tabloid.

Medium Credibility

Media credibility is the news medium's trustworthiness (Bucy, 2003). It is distinct from source credibility, which focuses on the individual or group as communicator or to the message itself (Bucy, 2003; Kiousis, 2001). Media credibility does not focus on the characteristics of the senders of the message like speakers or news presenters. It does not look into the individual's expertise or trustworthiness. Media credibility, if measured as one conceptual dimension, is "most consistently operationalized as believability" (Bucy, 2003, p. 249).

Jacobson (1969) studied the believability and credibility of mass media as news sources. He particularly focused on the credibility of the medium used in communicating. The study revealed that television was the most believable, followed by newspaper, and finally radio. The data analyzed was from the survey of the Wisconsin

Survey Research Laboratory. The responses of those surveyed showed that believability of the media does not depend on their perceived objectivity. Newspapers, for instance, were rated as the second most credible and radio was third. Respondents, however, said that radio was considered to be more objective than newspapers. It was believed that this was so because newspapers had traditionally taken editorial positions that were not necessarily in consonance with the readers' beliefs or positions. It also revealed that respondents would rate a source to be more believable if its stand on a particular issue coincided with the beliefs of the reader or audience. The problem with this study was that it was not certain whether the audiences and readers understood the difference between newspapers' opinion function and news function.

In a study on the interactive effects of the medium used, message sender, and message articulacy Worchel, Andreoli and Eason (1975) investigated the effects of the interaction of type of medium, presenter, and the persuasiveness of the communication. Communications were presented in different platforms such as television, radio or print. The communication presented positions with which the participants in the study either agreed or strongly disagreed. The source of the communication was either a newscaster or a candidate for political position. The results showed that the newscaster was perceived to be more trustworthy than the candidate. They then suggested that the type of media used had no main effect on believability or persuasiveness. Nevertheless, media had interactive effects with other variables when audience disagreed with the message. At that point, television was the most effective medium. Media type had no effect if the message was acceptable to the audience.

Since television was the most persuasive medium, it was assumed that television was the most effective in causing attitude change among audiences. It was also considered to be a more involving medium. It was said that the more "live" the presentation, the more the audiences were involved (Andreoli & Worchel, 1978).

It was also believed that television made the characteristics of the communicator more prominent, noticeable and observable. The positive characteristics of a trustworthy source would become more obvious making him/her more persuasive. Likewise, the negative characteristics of an untrustworthy communicator would also be more emphasized in television, which would decrease his/her persuasiveness. Nonetheless, in the same research it was found that the medium had no effect if the audiences were least involved (Andreoli & Worchel, 1978; Pornpitakpan, 2004).

Gaziano & McGrath (1986) explored the credibility of individual media and news media in general. People's perception of the credibility of television and newspaper were almost the same but if they were forced to choose between the two, they were more likely to choose the former. Likewise, if people received conflicting versions of the same issue, they were more likely to believe the television version. Moreover, if they were left with only one source of news and information they would rather go for the television. It is noteworthy that the study also showed people considered newspapers more reliable when it came to complex and controversial issues.

In September 2004 a Gallup poll found that news media credibility had reached its lowest rating in 30 years (Geary, 2005). In June 2005, less than a year later, the same organization reported that newspapers' and television news' credibility turned out to be very low. Despite the fact that the data revealed the mistrust of the people to the media,

17

only 28 percent of journalists believed that the media had lost their credibility. Similarly, public relations practitioners still believed they should not abandon the media but instead continue to build relationship with them. A considerable large audience still believed the news media. Moreover, not all media had low credibility.

All these inconsistencies of perception of whether mass media are still credible or not, and whether the perceived credibility of news reports is a function of credibility of mass media in general, are addressed in the next section.

Message/Information Credibility

Not only the communicator or the medium should be evaluated but also the message, information, or news itself. Markham (1968) conducted research on the credibility of television newscasts based on three major factors: the reliable-logical factor, showmanship, and trustworthiness.

Five hundred ninety six students were asked to judge three newscasts from three local television channels not accessible to them. As a result the students were not familiar with the newscasters. The students viewed and evaluated the taped newscasts. Three major dimensions were used. The first major factor, the reliable-logical factor suggested that the subjects focused on the message delivered by the newscasters. The subjects evaluated if the news could be logically or credibly correct. They also questioned the face validity of the news (Markham, 1968).

Showmanship was the second factor. Showmanship is the equivalent of the dynamism factor used by Anderson in studying platform speakers' credibility. Under showmanship, the "value judgment of goodness and badness" was considered (Markham, 1968, p. 62). This related more to the newscasters' way of presentation. The third major

18

factor, trustworthiness, dealt more with the projected personality of the newscasters, namely, whether they seemed friendly or not. Markham concluded that these major factors, not to mention the sub-factors used, encompassed past research in "source credibility across a variety of sources and communication contents" (p.62).

Markham's conclusion and factors used to measure news credibility seemed to be questionable and problematic. The first factor, the reliable-logical factor, was the only appropriate factor used to measure the news' credibility. The other factors, showmanship and trustworthiness, evaluated the newscasters and not the news. Considering further the fact that the students did not know who the newscasters were, they could not have judged them on their trustworthiness. Likewise, showmanship was rather a characteristic of the newscaster than the news. Therefore, Markham failed to establish the factors to be used to measure news credibility.

Chapter Four

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF VARIABLES AND TERMS

The above studies lead to the development of the following operational

definitions and terms that were applied in this research project.

Independent Variables

News anchors/reporters credibility

The survey consisted of semantic differential scales testing source credibility,

namely, expertise, intelligence, trustworthiness, authoritativeness, and education.

Media credibility

Media credibility was operationalized by a 15- item scale designed to gauge the

audience's confidence in a mass medium. This research partially adopted the questions

used in past studies like Jacobson's (1969) study on media believability, which he

likewise adopted from the Wisconsin Survey Research Laboratory. Respondents in

Jacobson's (1969) study evaluated the television and internet through a multidimensional

measure of mass media images using adjectival opposites used in past studies with slight

modifications.

In this research, the bipolar adjectives used in evaluating the two media were a

combination of measures used by past research like that of Kiousis (2001) in evaluating

media credibility and Gaziano and McGrath's (1986) news credibility scale as cited in

Rubin (1994). It was assumed that some of the measures Gaziano and McGrath (1986)

used in measuring news credibility were more appropriate in testing media credibility rather than the news itself. Hence, some of these measures were used in this study to measure medium credibility.

News credibility

News credibility was operationalized by a 10-item semantic differential scale based on the scale used by Gaziano and McGrath (1986). Gaziano and McGrath used a 12-item scale but in this study two of the scales were dropped and the tenth scale was modified. Two of their scales such as "concern about the community's well being" and "does not watch after the readers/viewers' interest" were dropped with the belief that these were more appropriate in measuring a medium rather than the news itself.

Moreover, the last item in the semantic differential scale, which called for the evaluation of the reporters, was revised. The evaluation of the perceived competence of the reporter did not fall in this scale but rather under the source credibility scale. So instead of asking if the reporters were well trained or poorly trained, this study asked if the news was well or poorly presented. Likewise, the instruction Gaziano and McGrath used was slightly amended to suit the purpose of this research. The respondents were asked to focus particularly on the news they viewed from a television, and read or viewed online. (See appendix A for the survey instrument.)

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable in this study is the credibility of mediated news. This was operationalized in a semantic differential scale measuring believability, education, and intelligence. In the instrument the phrase "mediated news" was not used to adapt to the level of comprehension of the respondents. It was then termed as "news presented on the

different media." Mediated news, however, is used in the reporting and discussion of results. Moreover, internet and online media, though technically different from each other, were used interchangeably in this paper as a news medium or online news.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question 1: What factors determine the perceived credibility of news from television and the internet?

Hypothesis 1: A news presenter's credibility has direct effect on the perceived credibility of the mediated news.

Research Question 2: Which variables have the strongest effect on the ultimate credibility/believability of the mediated news in general?

Hypothesis 2: A medium's credibility influences the perceived credibility of the mediated news.

Research question 3: To what extent do news characteristics affect the credibility of the mediated news report in general?

Hypothesis 3: News characteristics have a significant effect on the perceived credibility of mediated news.

Research question 4: To what extent do news presenters, medium, and news credibility affect the credibility of mediated news in general?

Hypothesis 4: The news presenter, medium and news characteristics have a direct effect on the overall credibility of news as presented in news media.

The figure on the next page presents the hypotheses of this research.

Figure 1. Multidimensional model influencing mediated news credibility.
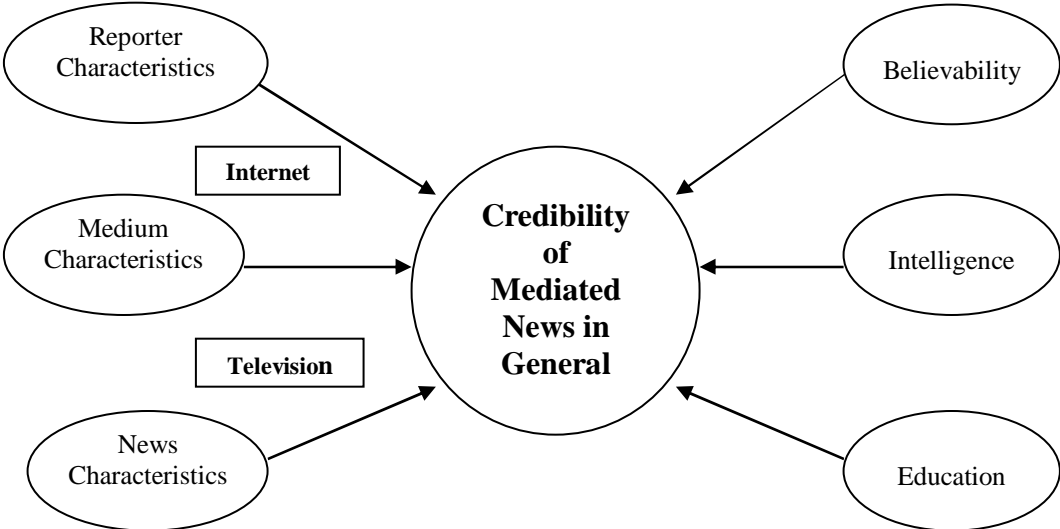
The following chapter will review the methodology of this study.

Chapter Five

METHODOLOGY

Instrument

Bipolar adjectives in a semantic scale of 1 to 7 were used to examine the degree of student audience's perception of the credibility of television and online reporters, television and the internet as media, and the news as presented in these media. Semantic scale is an effective technique in measuring attitudes or perceptions using contrasting adjectives. Bipolar adjective scales are adaptive to different respondents (Heise, 1970). Hence, these were used to measure students' perceptions on the aforementioned stimuli.

The instrument also inquired what medium do these students consider as most reliable when they get conflicting versions of one news story. The instrument likewise asked students the news sites they are most likely to visit to get their online news.

A pretest was conducted among 34 mass communication students to validate if students could easily understand the questionnaire and that it was of reasonable length. Those who took the pretest were requested to give their candid comments. There were suggestions that some of the terms should be simplified. These comments were properly addressed. One very helpful comment was the ambiguity of the phrase "mediated news." This was then paraphrased as "news as presented on the different media." The term *mediated news*, however, will be occasionally used in this paper. In general, the students did not encounter much difficulty in answering the survey.

24

As mentioned in the previous sections of this paper, the instrument was an amendment of different measurements used in various studies. Hence, the measurements could be considered a new creation. The variables measured three constructs: reporters/news presenters' credibility, medium credibility, and news credibility.

Cronbach reliability analysis was conducted to determine the reliability and internal consistency of the different constructs. The acceptable level for reliability was set at .70 and above.

Participants and Data Collection

A convenience sample of 538 students participated in paper and online survey. Students roaming around the university campus and students from different classes answered the paper survey. The same questionnaire was posted online and the URL of the survey site was sent to students. Student presidents of student organizations through blackboard and electronic mail were requested to share the URL of the survey site with their members. Those who happen to have answered the paper survey were requested not to answer the online survey. Four hundred forty two students answered the paper survey and 96 answered the online version. There were 22 students who participated in the paper survey that expressed inability to answer questions pertaining to online news because they do not surf the internet for news.

Though convenience sampling was used the turnout could be considered as a reasonable representation of the student population considering the fact that all the colleges on campus were represented. Both graduate and undergraduate students had the chance to participate. Likewise, the distribution based on age, race, and political stances show a typical college or university population. It could then be argued that their

25

perceptions on the credibility of news as presented in media could in a way a representative of the general perceptions of all students.

Data Analysis

All data collected were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 15.0). Different statistical procedures such as correlations, factor analysis, multiple linear regression, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were performed to analyze the data collected.

Prior to the conduct of these analyses, the data from each variable were screened to meet model assumptions. Thus, the data were checked for normal distribution of scores, presence of outliers, randomness of scores, and independence of scores, among others. All the model assumptions were satisfied and it appeared appropriate to proceed with the various statistical procedures. All hypotheses were tested at an alpha level of .05.

Chapter Six

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics

As reported, 538 students participated in this study. Ninety percent of the respondents were undergraduate students ($n = 476$), and 10 % ($n = 54$) graduate students. Of those, 38% ($n = 201$) were male and 62 % ($n = 326$) were females. Seventy six percent ($n = 401$) of the respondents came from the College of Arts and Sciences which is the biggest college in the university. Ten percent ($n = 55$) were from the college of medicine and the remaining percentage came from all the other nine colleges namely college of engineering, college of business administration, physical therapy, college of nursing, college of education, computer science, public health, and visual and performing arts. The students' ages range from below 18 to above 50 years old. Majority of them were from the ages of 18-21 which comprised 69% ($n = 366$) followed by those of the ages of 22-25 which comprised 21% ($n = 111$). As expected, most of the respondents were white-non Hispanics (55%, $n = 288$), followed by African-Americans (11%, $n = 56$), Asian-Americans (10%, $n = 52$), Hispanics (10%, $n = 52$), Asian-Pacific Islander (5%, $n = 24$), Native American (.6%, $n = 3$) and those identified themselves as others 10% (n = 52). When asked about their political stance, 31% ($n = 160$) were liberal, 24% ($n = 125$) conservative, 23% ($n = 119$) moderate, 14% ($n = 73$) independent, and the rest identified themselves as either libertarian or apathetic. (See Table 1).

Table 1. Demographics

Demographic	Category	N	%
Student classification			
	Undergraduate	476	90
	Graduate	54	10
Sex			
	Male	201	38
	Female	326	62
College/Major			
	College of Arts and Sciences	401	76
	Medicine	55	10
	Engineering	29	6
	College of Business Administration	16	3
	Physical Therapy	8	2
	Nursing	6	1
	College of Education	4	.8
	Computer Science	4	.8
	Public Health	4	.8
	Visual and Performing Arts	2	.4
Age			
	15-17	8	2
	18-21	366	69
	22-25	111	21
	26-30	33	6
	31-40	11	2
	51-60	1	.2
Race			
	White-non Hispanic	288	55
	African American	56	11
	Asian American	52	10
	Hispanic	52	10
	Asian-Pacific Islander	24	5
	Native American	3	.6
	Others	52	10
Political Stance			
	Liberal	160	31
	conservative	125	24
	Moderate	119	23
	Independent	73	14
	Libertarian	12	2
	Others	30	6

As mentioned in the preceding chapters, respondents were asked what news medium they more likely to believe if they received conflicting versions of the same news story. Newspapers were the medium respondents were most inclined to believe

(42%, *n* = 225) followed by television (24 %, *n* = 130), online news (22%, *n* = 120), radio (5%, *n* = 29), other sources (3%, *n* = 18), and news blogs (2%, *n* = 13).

These results seemed to be supported by the respondents' choice of online news source. When asked about their preferred online news source, sites linked to newspapers were the most preferred (41%, *n* = 217), news search engines was the far second (26.4%, *n* = 140), sites linked to television ranked third very closely (25.8%, *n* = 137), and others (7 %, *n* = 37).

The semantic differential scales of 1 through 7 where 1 reflected the most positive responses and 7 the most negative were used to measure responses to credibility of television and online reports, credibility of television and internet as media, and credibility of news on these media. In some cases items were reversed, and later recoded.

Respondents viewed the expertise and education of television reporters (*M* = 3.16) higher than their intelligence (*M* = 3.23), authority (*M* = 3.33) and their trustworthiness (*M* =3.77). Online news reporters generally were less credible than their television counterparts. Participants measured their trustworthiness (*M* = 4.00), expertise (*M* = 3.72), authoritativeness (*M* = 3.85), education (*M* = 3.64) and their intelligence (*M* = 3.49). In all the parameters used in evaluating reporters, online reporters were perceived more negatively than the television reporters.

Television as a medium, however, was perceived to be more biased (*M* = 5.39) than the internet (*M* = 4.96). Television was also adjudged as lesser objective (*M* = 4.15) and more politically influenced (*M* = 5.36). Internet's subjectivity (*M* = 4.03) and political leanings (*M* = 4.83) were perceived to be lower.

On news credibility, based on all the factors used, online news was perceived to be a little bit more credible than television news. Television news was perceived to be more likely not presenting the whole story ($M = 5.30$) than online news ($M = 4.50$). The same observations were made on the other variables wherein students had more favorable perceptions of the online news except on the way they are presented. Television news was considered better presented ($M = 3.39$) than online news ($M = 3.67$). (See Appendix B for the means and standard deviations of all the constructs).

Factor analysis

Factor analysis was used to investigate the interrelationships of all the original scales within their specific constructs. Specifically principal component analysis was used. Items measuring television reporter credibility were together subjected to a factor analysis. The same procedure was done for the items measuring online reporter credibility, media credibility of both television and the internet, and credibility of news presented on these two media.

The analyses showed the common underlying dimensions for the variables. Items measuring television and online reporters' credibility resulted in a simple structure with all items sorting into a single factor as originally theorized. Thus, only one factor was extracted from each of these two groups of variables. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for television and online reports scales were .80 and .83, respectively. Subsequently these variables were collapsed into two single variables named *TV reporter credibility index* and *Online reporter credibility index*. (See Table 2).

Table 2. Factor Loadings for TV and Online Reporter Credibility

Factor	Item	Factor Loading
TV Reporter Credibility		
	Expert/Amateurish	.79
	Stupid/Intelligent (recoded)	.65
	Intellectual/Uneducated	.82
	Trustworthy/Unreliable	.77
	Authoritative/Disrespected	.72
Online Reporter Credibility		
	Expert/Amateurish	.80
	Stupid/Intelligent (recoded)	.60
	Intellectual/Uneducated	.83
	Trustworthy/Unreliable	.78
	Authoritative/Disrespected	.83

Scree plot of Eigenvalues was evaluated to identify the number of factors to retain

for the scale for television credibility as a medium. Three factors were observed to have

Eigenvalues ranging from 1 to 5.5. The first factor contained seven items and was

identified as *TV medium comprehensiveness. TV medium comprehensiveness* comprised

of the freshness, comprehensiveness, activeness, responsiveness, dependableness, depth,

and openness of the medium. The second factor consisted of six items and was named *TV*

medium public interest, which covered the medium's consideration of the interest and

needs of its audiences and the public. The third factor had two items and was identified as

TV medium fairness. Fairness covered the absence of bias and political leanings. (See

Table 3).

Table 3. Factor Loadings for TV Medium Credibility

Factor	Item	Factor Loading
TV Medium Comprehensiveness		
	Active/Passive	.59
	Close minded/Open minded (recoded)	.58
	Comprehensive/Incomprehensive	.69
	Irresponsible/Responsible (recoded)	.58
	Shallow/Deep (recoded)	.53
	Objective/Subjective	.47
	Stale/Fresh (recoded)	.63
TV Medium Public Interest		
	Accurate/Inaccurate	.54
	Trustworthy/Untrustworthy	.64
	Cares about its audience's needs/Does not care about its audience's needs	.66
	Emotional/Detached	.62
	Is concerned about the public interest/Is concerned about making profits	.60
	Is concerned about the community's well being/ Is not concerned of the community's well being	.58
TV Medium Fairness		
	Biased/Unbiased (recoded)	.72
	With political leanings/No political leanings	.74

The items measuring the internet's credibility as a medium were also subjected to a factor analysis and yielded three factors with Eigenvalues ranging from 1 to 4.5. The first factor covered the medium's accuracy, trustworthiness, comprehensiveness, accountability, and depth. This was named *online medium trustworthiness*. The second factor included the following items: cares about its audience, emotion, public interest, active, and community well being. This factor was named *online public interest*. The third component, which focused on the absence of bias and political leanings, open-minded, objectivity, and freshness, was labeled *online medium objectivity*. Five items load under each of the components. (See Table 4).

Table 4. Factor Loadings for Internet Medium Credibility

Factor	Item	Factor Loading
Online Medium Trustworthiness		
	Accurate/Inaccurate	.86
	Trustworthy/Untrustworthy	.84
	Comprehensive/Incomprehensive	.54
	Shallow/Deep (recoded)	.45
	Irresponsible/Responsible (recoded)	.66
Online Medium Public Interest		
	Cares about its audience's needs/Does not care about its audience's needs	.59
	Emotional/Detached	.60
	Is concerned about the public interest/Is concerned about making profits	.78
	Active/Passive	.55
	Is concerned about the community's well being/Not concerned about the community's well being	.71
Online Medium Objectivity		
	Biased/Unbiased (recoded)	.74
	Close minded/Open minded (recoded)	.53
	Objective/Subjective	.34
	With political leanings/No political leanings	.74
	Stale/Fresh (recoded)	.83

Scree plot of Eigenvalues was likewise evaluated to identify the number of factors to retain for the scale for television news credibility. The two components had Eigenvalues ranging from 1 to 5. The first component contained six items and was identified as *TV news objectivity*. This *TV news objectivity* comprised of the variables, unbiased, tells the whole story, accurate, does not invade privacy, not opinionated, and well presented. The second factor contained four items and was named *TV news trustworthiness* which covered the items fair, trustworthy, public interest, and factual. (See Table 5).

Table 5. Factor Loadings for TV News Credibility

Factor	Item	Factor Loading
TV News Objectivity		
	Is biased/Is unbiased	.65
	Doesn't tell the whole story/Tells the whole story (recoded)	.78
	Is accurate/Is inaccurate (recoded)	.70
	Invades people's privacy/Respects people's privacy (recoded)	.72
	Does not separate fact from opinion/Does separate fact from opinion (recoded)	.72
	Poorly presented/Well presented (recoded)	.36
TV News Trustworthiness		
	Is fair/Is unfair	.64
	Can be trusted/Cannot be trusted	.78
	Is concerned about the public interest/Is concerned about making profits	.84
	Is factual/Is opinionated	.80

The Internet or online news characteristics scale similarly had two components.

Both components had Eigenvalues ranging from 1 to 4.5. The two components were

grouped exactly like that of television news. The two components were then named as

online news objectivity and *online news trustworthiness.* (See Table 6).

Table 6. Factor Loadings for Online News Credibility

Factor	Item	Factor Loading
Online News Objectivity		
	Is biased/Is unbiased	.73
	Doesn't tell the whole story/Tells the whole story (recoded)	.74
	Is accurate/Is inaccurate (recoded)	.72
	Invades people's privacy/Respects people's privacy (recoded)	.65
	Does not separate fact from opinion/Does separate fact from opinion (recoded)	.74
	Poorly presented/Well presented (recoded)	.56
Online News Trustworthiness		
	Is fair/Is unfair	.56
	Can be trusted/Cannot be trusted	.78
	Is concerned about the public interest/Is concerned about making profits	.79
	Is factual/Is opinionated	.78

Subsequently the different factors belonging to the same component for all the constructs were collapsed and were submitted to Cronbach's reliability tests. The Cronbach's alphas for each of the components for medium credibility are presented in the Table 7. The reliability coefficient for these components range between .50 to .80 with the highest coefficient found in the internet factor component 1 and the lowest alpha found in television component 3. Although the magnitude of some of these reliability coefficients seemed low they were reasonable for the number of items used in computing the alpha.

Table 7. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability for TV and Internet Media Credibility

Medium	Factors	Cronbach's Alpha
Television		
	TV Medium Comprehensiveness	.79
	TV Medium Public Interest	.76
	TV Medium Fairness	.50
Internet		
	Online Medium Trustworthiness	.80
	Online Medium Public Interest	.72
	Online Medium Objectivity	.58

The Cronbach's alphas for each of the components for news characteristics were likewise presented in Table 8. The reliability coefficient for these components range between .79 to .85 with the highest coefficient found in the television factor component 2 and the lowest alpha found in internet component 2.

35

Table 8. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability for TV and Internet News Credibility

Medium	Factors	Cronbach's Alpha
Television		
	TV News Objectivity	.81
	TV News Trustworthiness	.85
Internet		
	Online News Objectivity	.82
	Online News Trustworthiness	.79

After the factors were determined, as reported above, the items contributing to each construct were collapsed into single variables forming the indices. These indices were used in the regression analysis. Table 9 presents the new variables, their means and standard deviations.

Table 9. Mean and Standard Deviations for New Indices

Media	Indices	M	SD
Television			
	TV Reporter Credibility Index	3.33	1.03
	Television Medium Comprehensiveness	3.95	.93
	TV Medium Public Interest	3.80	1.03
	TV Medium Fairness	5.38	1.14
	TV News Objectivity	4.51	1.04
	TV News Trustworthiness	4.18	1.19
Internet			
	Online Reporter Credibility Index	3.74	.99
	Online Medium Trustworthiness	3.90	.98
	Online Medium Public Interest	3.81	.99
	Online Medium Objectivity	4.21	.87
	Online News Objectivity	4.33	.99
	Online News Trustworthiness	4.07	1.04

Regression

To determine the factors affecting mediated news credibility, four major regression models were run, where *mediated news credibility* was the dependent variable and the independent variables came from different television and online scales reported in Table 9.

Effects of television variables on mediated news credibility

For this model the independent variables that were used were the six indices for television: *TV reporters' credibility index*, *TV medium comprehensiveness, TV medium public interest, TV medium fairness, TV news objectivity* and *TV news trustworthiness.* The overall model for TV scale was statistically significant (F (6, 511) = 76.66, $p < .001$). The obtained R^2 for the model was .47 indicating that 47 % of the credibility of mediated news can be accounted for by the television scales. The typical prediction error was .80 on a scale of 1 to 7. The obtained predicted equation was given by: Mediated News Credibility = .51 + .20 (*TV reporters' credibility index*) + .20 (*TV medium comprehensiveness*) + .17(*TV medium public interest*) + .12 (*TV medium fairness*) + .22 (*TV news objectivity*) + .17 (*TV news trustworthiness*).

Thus, one unit changed in *index TV reporters' credibility* would lead to .20 change in the dependent variable, *mediated news credibility,* holding other variables constant. Similarly, one unit change in *TV medium comprehensiveness* would result in a .20 change in the dependent variable holding other variables constant. Similar computations can be given for the rest of the independent variables (*TV medium public interest, TV medium fairness, TV news objectivity, and TV news trustworthiness*).

The regression coefficient for each of the six independent variables were statistically significant implying that each contributed uniquely to the dependent variable mediated news credibility: *TV reporters' credibility index* (t (537) = 4.80, $p < .001$), *TV medium comprehensiveness* (t (537) = 3.52, $p < .001$), *TV medium public interest* (t (537) = 3.49, $p < .01$), *TV medium fairness* (t (537) = 3.54, $p < .001$), *TV news objectivity* (t (537) = 4.40, $p < .001$), *TV news trustworthiness* (t (537) = 4.53, $p < .001$).

Effects of online variables on mediated news credibility

The regression analysis based on the internet items was also statistically significant (F (6, 489) = 26.36, $p < .001$). The obtained R^2 for this model was .24 which means that these items accounted for 24 % of the credibility of mediated news. The adjusted R^2 was .24 and the typical prediction error (RMSE) was .95 on a scale of 1 to 7.

In contrast to the TV scale variables only two of the internet scale variables uniquely contributed to the model. These were O*nline reporters' credibility index* and O*nline news trustworthiness*. Consequently, the model was rerun using only the two significant variables and the R^2 was .23 implying that the two internet variables (O*nline reporter credibility index and online news trustworthiness*) account for 23 % of the variance in the dependent variable, mediated news credibility. The regression equation based on this model was given by Mediated News Credibility = 1.26 + .31 (O*nline reporter credibility index*) + .30 (*Online news trustworthiness*).

Effects of all the constructs on mediated news credibility

A third model was run by combining all the significant variables for the three constructs (reporters, media and news characteristics) for both TV and internet scale and regressing them on the dependent variable, mediated news credibility. The obtained R^2

for this model (R^2 = .48) was statistically significant (F (3, 483) = 149.47, p < .001). This implied that about 48% of the variance in mediated news credibility can be accounted for by these three constructs. The adjusted R^2 was .48 with a typical prediction error of .79 on a scale of 1 to 7. The regression equation for this model was given by mediated news credibility = .81 + .44 (reporters' credibility) + .12 (media credibility) + .64 (news characteristics).

Nonetheless, only two of the variables in this model contributed in explaining the variability in the dependent variable. They were reporters' credibility (t (537) = 6.77, p < .001), news characteristics (t (537) = 9.44, p < .001). The factors under medium as a construct were statistically insignificant. This model was run to know the extent to which these three constructs influence the dependent variable, credibility of mediated news.

Effects of significant constructs under both medium on mediated news credibility

A fourth model was run by combining both the significant TV and internet scale variables and regressed them on the dependent variable, mediated news credibility. The obtained R^2 for this model (R^2 = .53) was statistically significant (F (8, 487) = 69.07, p < .001). This implied that about 53% of the variance in mediated news credibility can be accounted for by these eight variables from both media. The adjusted R^2 was .52 with a typical prediction error of .76 on a scale of 1 to 7. The regression equation for this model was given by mediated news credibility = -.44 + .14 (*TV reporters credibility index*) + .13 (*Online reporters credibility index*) + .22 (*TV medium comprehensiveness*) + .13(*TV medium public interest*) - .11 (*TV medium fairness*) + .25 (*TV news objectivity*) + .10 (*TV news trustworthiness*) + .20 (O*nline news trustworthiness*).

Each of the eight variables in this model uniquely contributed to explaining the variability in the dependent variable. Thus, for *TV reporter credibility index* (t (537) = 3.17, $p < .01$), *Online reporter credibility index* (t (537) = 3.10, $p < .01$), *TV medium comprehensiveness* (t (537) = 3.86, $p < .001$), *TV medium public interest* (t (537) = 2.60, $p < .05$), *TV medium fairness* (t (537) = 3.25, $p < .01$), *TV news objectivity* (t (537) = 5.22, $p < .001$), *TV news trustworthiness* (t (537) = 2.10, $p < .05$), and *Online news trustworthiness* (t (537) = 5.2o, $p < .001$). This meant that all the indices under television are significant in influencing the credibility of mediated news but not for the internet. Only two indices under the internet uniquely contributed in explaining the variability of the dependent variable. These were *Online reporter credibility index* and *Online news trustworthiness*. The assumed reason for this result would be explained in the discussion under chapter 7.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Most trusted medium

Participants were asked which medium they were most inclined to believe as a news source. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine whether their choice of news medium affected their perceptions of television and online reporters' credibility, fairness, comprehensiveness, and concern for the public interest of television as a medium, trustworthiness and concern for the interest of the public, and objectivity of the internet as a medium, and objectivity and trustworthiness of television and online news. There were statistically significant differences between groups in their perceptions of television news reporters (F (5,526) = 9.82, $p < .001$). Participants who viewed newspapers ($M = 3.30$, $SD = .94$) as the most reliable news source were the most likely to

view television news reporters less credible compared to those who prefer television as the most reliable news source ($M = 2.92$, $SD = .10$). Similarly, it appeared that people who viewed television as the most reliable news source were most likely to view television news reporters as credible compared to those who prefer radio ($M = 3.84$, $SD = 1.06$) and news blogs ($M = 3.97$, $SD = .98$).

There also were statistically significant differences between groups in their perceptions of online news reporters ($F (5,504) = 3.99$, $p < .01$). Those who viewed online as the most reliable news source were more likely to view online reporters as credible ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 1.01$) than those who prefer television ($M = 3.67$, $SD = .93$) and newspapers ($M = 3.88$, $SD = .95$).

Significant differences were likewise noted between groups regarding their perceptions of television as a comprehensive source of news ($F (5,522) = 11.95$, $p < .001$). Participants who viewed news blogs as the most reliable news source ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 1.07$) had more negative perceptions of the comprehensiveness of television as a medium than those who chose radio ($M = 4.32$, $SD = .83$), online news (($M = 4.12$, $SD = .94$), and television ($M = 3.53$, $SD = .83$).

There also were group differences regarding perceptions of television as a medium that cares for the interest of the public ($F (5,525) = 10.23$ $p < .001$). Respondents who were more inclined to consider television ($M = 3.38$, $SD = .97$) as a reliable news source had more positive perceptions of television's consideration of public interest than those who chose newspaper ($M = 3.76$, $SD = .94$), online news ($M = 4.07$, $SD = 1.07$), and radio ($M = 4.36$, $SD = 1.11$).

Those who chose television as their most trusted medium ($M = 5.13$, $SD = 1.18$) likewise were more likely to believe that television was a fair medium than those who chose online ($M = 5.58$, $SD = 1.07$). The statistical differences between groups were significant ($F(5,528) = 3.22$, $p < .01$).

On the other hand, those who perceived online news ($M = 3.39$, $SD = .92$) as the most reliable news source were more likely to consider the internet as a trustworthy medium than those who chose television ($M = 3.95$, $SD = .91$), radio ($M = 4.07$, $SD = 1.24$), and newspaper ($M = 4.11$, $SD = .93$). Their differences were statistically significant ($F(5,520) = 10.59$, $p < .001$).

Likewise, significant differences were noted between those who perceived the internet as an objective medium ($F(5,514) = 5.28$, $p < .001$). Those who chose news blogs ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 1.11$) as the more reliable source of news had a more positive attitude towards the objectivity of the internet than those who chose radio ($M = 3.91$, $SD = .92$), online news ($M = 3.98$, $SD = .99$), newspapers ($M = 4.28$, $SD = .77$), and television ($M = 4.35$, $SD = .79$).

Those who chose television as their most trusted medium ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 1.04$) likewise believed that television news were more objective than those who chose newspapers ($M = 4.55$, $SD = 1.00$), online ($M = 4.72$, $SD = .94$), and news blogs ($M = 4.86$, $SD = .92$. The statistical differences between groups were significant ($F(5,527) = 10.70$, $p < .001$).

Statistically significant differences were also noted between groups that consider news from television trustworthy ($F(5,526) = 11.24$, $p < .001$). Those who chose radio ($M = 4.80$, $SD = 1.01$) as the most reliable news source were most likely to have negative

perceptions of the trustworthiness of news from television than those who chose online news ($M = 4.46$, $SD = 1.20$), newspapers ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 1.14$), and television ($M = 3.73$, $SD = 1.11$).

There also were statistically significant differences between groups in terms of the objectivity of online news ($F(5,523) = 6.76$, $p <.001$). Students who perceived online news as the most reliable news source were more likely inclined to believe online news was objective ($M = 3.93$, $SD = .96$) than those who chose television ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 1.05$), and newspapers ($M = 4.51$, $SD = .91$).

Likewise statistically significant differences ($F(5,520) = 3.53$, $p < .01$) were found between those who perceived web logs as the most reliable news source. They more likely considered online news as trustworthy *($M = 3.79$, $SD = 1.09$)* than those who favored newspapers ($M = 4.15$, $SD = .99$), television ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 1.05$), and radio ($M = 4.33$, $SD = .97$).

Statistically significant differences were also noted between groups on their view of the overall credibility of news as presented in mass media ($F(5,527) = 12.45$, $p <. 001$). Participants who viewed television as the most reliable news source ($M = 3.19$, $SD = .89$) had higher credibility perception of the credibility of mediated news than those who chose newspapers ($M = 3.66$, $SD = 1.05$), online news ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 1.11$) and radio ($M = 3.97$, $SD = .95$).

Demographic influence

Graduate and undergraduate student respondents showed significant differences with regard to their perception of the objectivity of the internet as a medium (F (1, 513 = 6.57, $p < .05$). Graduate students had a more positive perception ($M = 3.92$, $SD = .98$) than their undergraduate counterparts ($M = 4.26$, $SD = .85$).

Similarly, significant differences were noted among the students from the different colleges in terms of their perceptions of the fairness of television as a news medium (F (9,518) = 2.39, $p < .05$) Those from the college of education ($M = 5.87$, $SD = 1.31$) had least favorable perception of the fairness of television as a medium than those from the college of medicine ($M = 5.63$, $SD = 1.18$), the college of arts and sciences ($M = 5.42$, $SD = 1.13$), the college of business administration ($M = 4.78$, $SD = 1.25$) and the colleges of nursing ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 1.14$) and physical therapy ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 1.13$), and computer science ($M = 4.38$, $SD = .48$).

Significant differences between sexes were likewise noted in their perceptions of television news anchors or reporters (F (1,522) = 4.86, $p < .05$), television's comprehensiveness as a medium (F (1,518) = 15.37, $p < .001$), television's consideration of the interest of the public (F (1,521) = 6.87, $p < .05$), and credibility of news as presented in the different mass media (F (1,521) = 10.28, $p < .01$). Females generally had more positive perceptions of television and mediated news than their male counterparts. Female students' view of television reporters was more affirmative ($M = 3.25$, $SD = .98$) than males' ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 1.10$). Females had a more favorable opinion of television as a comprehensive source of news ($M = 3.81$, $SD = .89$) than males ($M = 4.14$, $SD = .96$) and also were more likely to consider television as a medium that

considers the interest of the public ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 1.00$) than males ($M = 3.94$, $SD = 1.05$). Likewise, females had more favorable perceptions of the credibility of news as presented in the different media ($M = 3.51$, $SD = 1.03$) versus males ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 1.14$).

Age difference did not make much difference among the groups as to their perceptions of the different indices except for the objectivity of the internet as a medium ($F(4,510) = 4.27$, $p < .01$). Older students had more favorable view of the internet as an objective medium than the younger students. Those whose ages ranged from 31- 40 years ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 1.25$) had more favorable perception than those with ages 26-30 ($M = 3.89$, $SD = .98$), 22-25 ($M = 4.10$, $SD = .88$), and 18-21 ($M = 4.30$, $SD = .82$).

Race had a statistically significant effect on students' views on the fairness of television as a news medium ($F(6,519) = 2.97$, $< p .01$) and objectivity of the internet as a news medium ($F(6,505) = 2.60$, $< p .01$). African Americans had the most favorable perception of the fairness of television ($M = 4.86$, $SD = 1.16$). Hispanics ($M = 5.40$, $SD = 1.17$), and white, non-Hispanics ($M = 5.49$, $SD = 1.10$) had least favorable perception. Asian Americans ($M = 3.10$, $SD = .69$) had a more favorable attitude toward the objectivity of the internet as a medium than African Americans ($M = 4.05$, $SD = .79$), Hispanics ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 1.06$), and white-non Hispanics (($M = 4.35$, $SD = .82$).

Students' political stance also had a strong influence on their perceptions of television reporters ($F(5,510) = 3.74$, $p < .01$). Liberals had higher credibility perceptions of television reporters ($M = 3.22$, $SD = 1.05$) than moderates ($M = 3.23$, $SD = .90$), conservatives ($M = 3.25$, $SD = .91$), independents ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 1.12$), and libertarians ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 1.15$).

Respondents likewise showed significant differences as to their consideration of television as a medium that delivers comprehensive news ($F(5,506) = 4.59$, $p < .001$). Conservatives had the most favorable reaction ($M = 3.82$, $SD = .72$), followed by liberals ($M = 3.90$, $SD = .97$), independents ($M = 3.92$, $SD = .98$), and moderates ($M = 3.92$, $SD = .88$). Libertarians had the least favorable view ($M = 4.86$, $SD = .92$).

Significant differences were also noted between groups in relation to television news objectivity ($F(5,510) = 3.63$, $p < .01$). Libertarians were more likely to be skeptical of the objectivity of television news ($M = 4.99$, $SD = .77$) than moderates ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 1.08$). Students' political stance also affected their opinions of television news' trustworthiness ($F(5,509) = 2.49$, $p < .05$). Libertarians consistently had the most negative attitude toward television news ($M = 4.98$, $SD = 1.06$) as compared to independents ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 1.30$), liberals ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 1.16$), conservatives ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 1.06$), and moderates ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 1.14$).

Students also showed significant differences in their consideration of the internet as a news medium that cares about the public ($F(5,504) = 2.60$, $p < .05$). Libertarians showed a more favorable perception of the internet ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 1.01$) than independents ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 1.00$), conservatives ($M = 3.80$, $SD = .89$), and moderates ($M = 3.90$, $SD = .93$). Likewise, differences were noted between groups of their perception of the internet as objective medium ($F(5,499) = 2.80$, $p < .05$). The independents had a more favorable perception ($M = 4.04$, $SD = .81$) than liberals ($M = 4.08$, $SD = .83$), and conservatives ($M = 4.40$, $SD = .96$).

Groups also reflected statistically significant differences in the overall credibility of news as presented on the different media ($F_{(5,509)} = 4.96$, $p < .001$). Moderates were more likely to trust news from mass media ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 1.00$) than independents ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 1.29$).

Chapter Seven

DISCUSSIONS

This study was designed to measure credibility of mediated news by first establishing effective and reliable measures of three mass communication constructs believed to be the dimensions of news credibility of the two media researched for this study. These three constructs were reporter credibility, medium credibility, and the credibility of the news itself. This study theorized that there are factors under each construct that influence its credibility and that the credibility of these constructs has a domino effect on the credibility of mediated news.

The factors used in measuring the aforementioned constructs as presented in chapter 6 were reliable and statistically significant. As the constructs were properly measured, they in return could be used as parameters in measuring and evaluating the credibility of mediated news.

Reporter credibility, medium credibility, and news credibility were hypothesized to have direct effect on the credibility of mediated news. This study found that this assumption has a strong foundation. This finding answered the first research question: *What factors determine the perceived credibility of news from television and the internet?* This likewise, supported hypothesis 1, which claimed that the credibility of television and online reporters had a direct effect on the perceived credibility of news as presented in these two media respectively.

This finding supports past studies on source credibility like that of McCorskey (1966) that included authoritativeness as a factor that influence credibility; Berlo, Lemert, and Mertz (1969) that included trustworthiness as a dimension of source credibility; and Hovland et. al (1953) that claimed expertise as a factor. This result of the study also supports other researchers' criticism of Jacobson's (1969) study of medium credibility for his consideration of medium credibility as a single dimension. This study determined that medium credibility is not one-dimensional considering the 15 factors used and that all proved to be highly reliable. Since only a few studies of news credibility itself were conducted in the past the finding in this study may be of significance in future studies.

The study also showed through regression analysis that the three constructs, media credibility, news quality, and reporter credibility, had different effects on the credibility of the news from the two media. For television, the medium's credibility and the news quality had the greatest influence followed by the credibility of the reporters. For online news, the quality of the news and the reporters' credibility had the greatest effect and medium credibility had the least effect.

This finding answered research question 2: *Which variables have the strongest effect on the ultimate credibility/believability of the mediated news in general?* This in return proved the second hypothesis to be correct: *A medium's credibility has direct influence on the perceived credibility of the mediated news.*

As Bucy (2003) and Kiousis (2001) claimed, media credibility does not focus on the characteristics of the presenters but rather on the medium used in transmitting the message or news. In this research work it was found that the internet and television were

assessed differently. This was despite the fact that audiences used the same scales in evaluating reporters on both media.

It should be noted though that despite the fact that both media were evaluated differently, they being different and distinct, their credibility as a medium influenced the credibility of the mediated news. It should also be noted that at the time of this study, there is a dearth of literature and studies assessing the degree of influence of all these constructs on the credibility of mediated news.

Research question 3 asked: *To what extent do news characteristics affect the credibility of the mediated news report in general?* It is generally accepted that the characteristics of both television and online news and television and online reporters' credibility influence the general perception of the credibility of news as presented on the different media. In this study these two constructs explained 48 % of the variance of the credibility of mediated news.

Research question 4 asked: *To what extent do news presenters, medium, and news credibility affect the credibility of mediated news in general?* This research question sought to determine the extent to which the three mass media constructs (reporters' credibility, medium credibility, and news credibility) affect the credibility of mediated news. Findings partially supported hypothesis 4, which claimed that all three of these constructs affect the overall credibility of news across all mass media. It seemed that using the same factors to measure both television and internet as news medium would not work. A separate and distinct measurement should be used in evaluating the credibility of television and the internet as news media due to their idiosyncratic qualities and characteristics.

It is, however, logical to conclude that using the same scales or measurements in evaluating reporters and news from both media are plausible.

It should be noted that these mass communication constructs are not the only dimensions that explain the concept of mediated news credibility. For instance, television's three main variables, (reporter, medium, and news credibility) explained only 48% of the credibility of mediated news. Mediated news credibility obviously is a concept that could not be measured in a simple way. The instrument used in this study obviously did not include all the factors that could have explained the credibility of mediated news. It could also be theorized that there are other factors that are totally independent and unique that could not be included in the scales used. Past studies mentioned in the first three chapters of this paper may justify the acceptability and rationalization of this result.

The processing and acceptance of a message are influenced by various conditions and circumstances as mass communications theories are trying to explain. Theories discussed in the previous chapters like cognitive dissonance, cognitive response theory, selective exposure, elaboration likelihood model, and uses and gratifications explain how people process, receive and perceive mediated messages like news. Cognitive and psychological processes take place every time audiences are exposed to the media. Their past experiences or restored knowledge are additional factors that influence them in their perceptions of the news presented to them. This explains that not only the communication constructs used in this study influenced the perceptions of the respondents in evaluating mediated news. Their personal biases, political stance, and presuppositions could have influenced them as well. Hence, these factors could not all be

loaded in one single measure to explain totally and comprehensively mediated news credibility.

Nevertheless, through this study, it was settled that mass media audiences scrutinize news anchors or reporters both on television and online. They are evaluated whether they are expert, intelligent, educated, trustworthy, or authoritative. Their individual reputations directly affected the believability of the mediated news.

It is also worthy to note that one if not the primary considerations of mass media news consumers is the quality of the news being presented. They assess the news and evaluate it at its face value. They look for trustworthy, objective, balance, factual, and non-partisan news.

The results indicated that television and the internet were evaluated differently and uniquely. Television was evaluated on its speed in broadcasting the news to the public, its consideration of the interest of its viewers, and fairness of its reportage. The internet was evaluated more on its trustworthiness, public interest, and objectivity.

The finding that television was evaluated and considered on its comprehensiveness and speed in bringing the news to its clientele was intriguing and interesting because news websites most of the time breaks the news before television does. Online news sites linked to television and newspapers more often break and update their news online before broadcasting or printing it. News that comes in before regular broadcasts are first put online. Moreover, online news provides more details of the news story than on television. The participants in this study did not seem to appreciate these facts. Nonetheless, it could be assumed that even if students knew that online news was fresher and more comprehensive than television's, they were more likely to distrust the

internet as evidenced by their responses to the survey. Results showed that trustworthiness was considered one of the measures they generally used in evaluating a medium's credibility but this did not have any statistically significant effect on their perceptions of the internet.

It could be gleaned that each medium has its own unique attributes that affect the viewers' or readers' processing of the news. It has been said the television is the medium that most involves its audiences (Andreoli & Worchel, 1978). Hence, it already has an advantage over the other media. Nonetheless, the evaluation of the credibility of the media must not be narrowly focused whether it is broadcast, print, or web but more on the individual networks or publishers. Each of the television networks, cable TV and newspapers build their own reputation, whether independent and balanced or politically biased.

While it was established that students looked into all the three constructs (reporters, medium, and news) in evaluating the overall credibility of mediated news, it is also important to look into how they rated the credibility of reporters, the media used, the news itself, and their general perception of the news being presented to the public by the different mass media outlets. From a range of 1 to 7 where 1 is the highest, the survey showed that the majority of the student respondents rated television reporters' credibility at 4. This showed that the perceived credibility of television reporters was borderline positive. Their saving grace, however, was the cumulative percentage of students who rated television reporters' credibility from 1 to 3.8 which comprised 71% ($n = 381$) of the total sample while those who rated them below 4 comprised 19% ($n = 102$).

This finding should be of concern to television network managers to see to it that their television anchors and reporters maintain a high degree of credibility or else the fleeting confidence of the television audience will fall over the fence into the negative side. This study does not recommend ways to project and maintain the credibility of reporters but it shows the measures that audiences used in evaluating them.

Television as a medium was rated positively on its fast delivery of news. Almost three quarter (70 %) of the students considered television as a medium that provides comprehensive and fresh news. Nonetheless, the same respondents (82%) said they do not believe that television is a fair medium. They believed that the medium was biased, had overt political leanings, and was profit-oriented. This finding supports past studies that claimed that if the source of the information or news is perceived to have something to gain to from it is presenting, the source is perceived less trustworthy. For example, if a television network is perceived profit-oriented if it broadcasts a break-through in medicine or science by a multinational drug company, the viewers may perceive the news as a paid broadcast even it is not. Likewise, if a network is considered conservative or liberal anything that it presents on the opposition view may be considered untrustworthy. If the medium has no political color and has nothing to gain from the news or issues it presents then the medium is perceived to be more trustworthy, hence, more credible.

The study also showed that television news is not very trustworthy. Twenty percent of 534 respondents rated television news's trustworthiness at 4 on a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 is the highest. The other 33% of the respondents rated the medium 1- 3.50 and the rest of the respondents (47%) rated it from 4.50- 7. The rating below 4 meant that the respondents did not believe in the trustworthiness of television news.

54

The rating of the trustworthiness of television news almost failed and the appraisal of the objectivity of television news definitely fell short based on the students' evaluation. Seventy one percent of the 535 respondents said they did not consider news from television objective. When asked if they considered television news trustworthy, only 33% of them were somewhat sure that they consider it trustworthy, 20 % were just neutral and the remaining 47 % expressed distrust.

If 82% believed that television was not free from bias and political influence, 71 % said that television news was subjective, and the medium's trustworthiness rating was just borderline positive, the people in the industry should be alarmed and act. There are problems that need to be fixed. Television's reputation as a source of credible news is at stake. As mentioned in the introduction, this might be the result of controversial issues linked to television news reporters in the past, not to mention the presentation of fake investigative news just to win awards. The distrust in the fairness of television could also be attributed to the public's perception in the United States that mass media entities are politically tainted.

The data gathered showed that respondents evaluated online news primarily on the credibility of the reporter and the news itself rather than on the medium. For television, the medium is a primary consideration. Again, this could be attributed to the fact that mass media in the United States are perceived to be politically tainted and do not show much independence. This could be seen in the responses of the participants in the survey wherein political leanings was a very strong measure used on television but not on the internet. Conceivably, online news was perceived not to be penetrated yet by political bias; hence, the perception that this medium is less politicized.

The political stances of the students likewise supported the preceding observation. Libertarians were the most skeptical of television but most friendly to the internet. The moderates and the independents were second to the libertarians, while conservatives and liberals had the most favorable perceptions of television. They could have been thinking of their favorite television networks when they were responding to the survey. It is assumed that their favorite stations were the ones that share their political views.

The inclusion of the question as to what news source the respondents were more inclined to believe if they received conflicting reports of the same news story tended to support the Gaziano and McGrath (1986) study, which showed that television was the most trusted and favorite news source. However, when it came to complex and controversial issues, newspapers were considered most reliable. In this study, a huge majority of the students chose newspapers. Would this mean that perceptions of the credibility of the different mass media two decades ago have not changed? This is a comforting finding for newspapers. Much has been made on the death of newspapers and the rise of the internet as a replacement. This study did not confirm this trend. It also confirmed that the students are relatively media literate. Although they might watch television news broadcasts on stations that support their own political bias, they are savvy enough to know this. When it comes to the need for trustworthy news and news background, students in this study turned to newspapers.

Chapter Eight

CONCLUSIONS

The credibility of the news itself, its quality, how it is constructed and presented are major criteria mass media audiences consider in their evaluation of mediated news. Mass media audiences do not only focus on the image of the reporters/anchors presenting the news, or the media used, but are also particular about the packaging and elements of the news itself. This goes to show that mass media consumers are fastidious. In this regard, mass media practitioners should guard themselves.

As discussed in the preceding chapter, the credibility of mediated news and the two mass media were borderline. It should be noted that the respondents in this study were university students. Students are presumed to be more adaptable to the current trend, pop culture and to the "commodities" mass media offer than older generations. Nonetheless, it seemed that the students themselves are not quite content with the media.

If students have this level of cynicism and skepticism, the older and experienced generation could possibly have higher distrust and pessimism of the media. Students should not be underestimated in their ability to evaluate news and news media but considering their ages and assumed preferences, they are supposed to be more content of the media than other age groups. Having said this, there are great challenges mass media networks and media practitioners must face.

Based on the evaluations of the respondents, they perceived the media in the United States to have strong political leanings. Their perceptions are tainted with political color, an instance which should not exist in media under ideal circumstances. The media several decades ago were considered as society's watchdog. They existed independently and worked for the community's well being. They served as the public's eye, making sure that government systems function for the people's welfare. This made the media belong to the so-called fourth estate. The "watchdog" function of the media nowadays seems to be vanishing, if not totally disappeared. Media are now perceived to be highly commercialized and are not concerned of the interest of the public but are concerned with making profits.

The media, nonetheless, should not take all the blame for the decline of its credibility. Mass media audiences themselves patronize politically colored media. As mentioned, some studies cited in the review of literature, people tend to patronize media entities that share their political views. Media consumers themselves forget that the media should be apolitical.

Not only politics is a termite that is eating away at the credibility of mediated news and the mass media in general, but also the greed for money. Mass media entities are now owned by conglomerates whose primary goal is not to serve the public but to amass large amounts of wealth. The social responsibility function of the media is now secondary, if not totally abandoned. News is no longer sought and presented with the intention of informing the public but to have something to sell in the airwaves, online, and in print.

While there is an alarming downfall of the credibility of mass media, the advent of new media may salvage the situation. New media provide an array of choices for the public. Nonetheless, it is startling to know that there are students who have not adapted yet to the use of new media. As mentioned earlier, there were student respondents who admitted that they did not have competence in evaluating the internet as an online news medium, online news, and online reporters respectively because they do not surf the net for news. They still get their news from traditional media like television, newspapers, and radio. There might be only a few of the students who admitted confining themselves to using the traditional media, but the majority's choice of newspapers as their most trusted medium when they receive conflicting versions of the same news story is telling. Newspapers which are perceived to be a dying source of news is still considered the most trusted medium among students. If the respondents in the survey were World War II babies, their choice of newspaper might not be surprising but these students are from Generation Y.

What do these findings tell us? It is not yet safe to presume that the internet and other new media will put to an end traditional media. These media have their own "personalities" that make them unique from each other; hence, they could not be replaced by only one single medium. Their popularity and patronage may diminish but it will take time before they are totally abandoned or become extinct.

This realization also takes us to another noteworthy finding of this study, which is the difference of television and internet as news media. It was found that television as a medium was evaluated differently from the internet. Although both media have audio and visual features, as discussed in the previous chapters, the internet was primarily judged

on its trustworthiness while television was evaluated primarily on the speed of delivering news. While some other factors like concern for the public interest and having no political leaning were considered in evaluating the internet, these factors did not have a statistically significant influence on the credibility of mediated news. Would this mean that the measures used were not appropriate for the internet or is the internet not perceived yet as a news media but a medium that cater services other than news? This could be a good topic for future research. It is also noteworthy and could also be an interesting focus of future study that a reasonable number of students do not surf the internet for news and admitted that they could not evaluate online news because they only got their news from the traditional media.

The data and findings in this study were based on students' perceptions and may be considered not to be representative of the vast majority of mass media clientele. Nevertheless, the findings should not be underestimated and taken for granted for students' views are germane in planning and evaluating the media industry. The students are present and future customers and consumers of mass media, both in viewership and sponsorship.

Finally, despite the limitations of this study especially on its methodology using a convenience sample of students, it is believed to have contributed new findings to the body of knowledge. There is still a need for further study of the degree of influence of all the three constructs on the credibility of mediated news. Future studies may also consider finding the other factors that influence the credibility of news which the three constructs could not cover. A separate study using the same constructs applying to the different mass media may also yield more meaningful results.

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APPENDICES

SECTION 1:

Instructions: Please circle the response that best represents your perceptions of the following:

1. Please think of **television news reporters/anchors** you are familiar with. On the items below, please indicate your perceptions about the **television news reporters/anchors** you have in mind.

Expert	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Amateurish
Stupid	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Intelligent
Intellectual	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Uneducated
Trustworthy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unreliable
Authoritative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Disrespected

2. Please think of **online news reporters** you are familiar with. On the items below, please indicate your perceptions about the **online news reporters** you have in mind.

Expert	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Amateurish
Stupid	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Intelligent
Intellectual	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Uneducated
Trustworthy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unreliable
Authoritative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Disrespected

Appendix A continued

SECTION 2:

Instructions: Please circle the response that best represents your perceptions of the

following:

3. Please indicate your perceptions of **television as a news medium** based on the
   measures below.

Accurate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	inaccurate
Trustworthy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	untrustworthy
cares about audience's needs/interests	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Does not care about audience's needs/ interests
Biased	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	unbiased
Emotional	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	detached
close minded	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	open minded
is concerned about the public interest	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Is concerned about making profits
Active	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	passive
comprehensive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	incomprehensive
Irresponsible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	responsible
Shallow	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	deep
Objective	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	subjective
With political leanings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	No political leanings
Stale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	fresh

Appendix A continued

4. Please indicate your perceptions of **the internet as a news medium** based on the

measures below.

Accurate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	inaccurate
Trustworthy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	untrustworthy
cares about audience's needs/interests	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Does not care about audience's needs/ interests
Biased	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	unbiased
Emotional	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	detached
close minded	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	open minded
is concerned about the public interest	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Is concerned about making profits
Active	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	passive
Comprehensive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	incomprehensive
Irresponsible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	responsible
Shallow	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	deep
objective	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	subjective
With political leanings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	No political leanings
stale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	fresh
Is concerned about the community's well being	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Is not concerned about the community's well being

Appendix A continued

SECTION 3:

Instructions: Please circle the response that best represents your perceptions of the following:

5. Please think about the **news stories presented on television** and circle the option that best represents your perceptions of **the characteristics of the news you view on television.**

Is fair	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Is unfair
Is biased	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Is unbiased
Doesn't tell the whole story	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Tells the whole story
Is inaccurate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Is accurate
Invades people's privacy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Respects people's privacy
Does not separate fact from opinion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Does separate fact from opinion
Can be trusted	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Cannot be trusted
Is concerned about the public interest	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Is concerned about making profits
Is factual	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Is opinionated
Poorly presented	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Well presented

Appendix A continued

6. Please think about the **news stories presented online** (internet) and circle the
   option that best represents your perceptions of the **characteristics of the news
   you read online**.

Is fair	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Is unfair
Is biased	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Is unbiased
Doesn't tell the whole story	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Tells the whole story
Is inaccurate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Is accurate
Invades people's privacy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Respects people's privacy
Does not separate fact from opinion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Does separate fact from opinion
Can be trusted	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Cannot be trusted
Is concerned about the public interest	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Is concerned about making profits
Is factual	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Is opinionated
Poorly presented	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Well presented

Appendix A continued

SECTION 4:

7. Use the items below to tell us about your **overall perception of news as presented on the different media.**

Believable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unbelievable
Stupid	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Intelligent
Intellectual	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Uneducated

8. If you receive conflicting versions of the same news story from the different mass media, which medium are you **most inclined** to believe? Please circle your choice **(choose only one)** from the media listed below based on your perception of their reliability as your source of news/information.

    A. Newspaper

    B. Television

    C. Radio

    D. Online news sources

    E. News Web logs

    F. others: _____ (Pls. specify)

9. Which is your preferred on-line news source? Please circle the letter of your choice.

    A. On line news sites linked to newspaper

    B. On line news sites linked to television/cable TV

    C. News search engines like Google

    D. Others (please specify) _____

Appendix A continued

SECTION 5:

Demographics:

10. Please provide information about yourself by checking the space provided before each item that best describes you.

a) Are you a graduate or undergraduate student?

___Undergraduate

___graduate

b) What college does your field of specialization/major fall under?

___College of Arts and Sciences

___College of Business Administration

___Computer Science

___Medicine

___College of Engineering

___College of Education

___College of Nursing

___Public Health

___Physical Therapy

___Visual and Performing Arts

___School of Architecture and Community   Design

Appendix A Continued

c) What is your sex?

    ___Male

    ___Female

d) What is your age? It ranges from?

    ___15-17

    ___18-21

    ___22-25

    ___26-30

    ___31-40

    ___41-50

    ___51-60

    ___61 or over

e) What is your race?

    ____African-American

    ____Asian-American

    ____Asian-Pacific Islander

    ____Hispanic

    ____Native American

    ____White, non-Hispanic

    ____others (please specify) _____

Appendix A continued

f) How would you describe your political stance?

        ___Conservative

        ___Independent

        ___Liberal

        ___Libertarian

        ___Moderate

        ___ Others (please specify) _____

Means and Standard Deviation for all the Constructs

Construct	Item	M	SD
TV Reporter credibility			
	Expert/Amateurish	3.16	1.34
	Stupid/Intelligent (recoded)	3.23	1.36
	Intellectual/Uneducated	3.16	1.40
	Trustworthy/Unreliable	3.77	1.51
	Authoritative/Disrespected	3.33	1.27
Online Reporter Credibility			
	Expert/Amateurish	3.72	1.33
	Stupid/Intelligent (recoded)	3.64	1.30
	Intellectual/Uneducated	3.49	1.21
	Trustworthy/Unreliable	4.00	1.35
	Authoritative/Disrespected	3.85	1.2
TV Medium Credibility			
	Accurate/Inaccurate	3.57	1.53
	Trustworthy/Untrustworthy	3.76	1.50
	Cares about audience's needs/Does not care about audience's need	3.74	1.55
	Biased/Unbiased (recoded)	5.39	1.44
	Emotional/Detached	3.50	1.50
	Close minded/Open minded (recoded)	4.41	1.38
	Is concerned about the public interest/Is about making profits	4.36	1.65
	Active/Passive	3.23	1.36
	Comprehensive/Incomprehensive	3.51	1.45
	Irresponsible/Responsible (recoded)	3.81	1.43
	Shallow/Deep (recoded)	4.57	1.33
	Objective/Subjective	4.15	1.43
	With political leanings/No political leanings (recoded)	5.36	1.36
	Stale/Fresh (recoded)	4.03	1.45
	Is concerned about the community's well being/Is not concerned about the community's well being (recoded)	3.85	1.50

Appendix B continued

Construct	Item	M	SD
Online Medium Credibility			
	Accurate/Inaccurate	3.82	1.42
	Trustworthy/Untrustworthy	4.04	1.38
	Cares about audience's needs/Does not care about audience's need	3.75	1.42
	Biased/Unbiased (recoded)	4.95	1.47
	Emotional/Detached	3.85	1.42
	Close minded/Open minded (recoded)	3.84	1.46
	Is concerned about the public interest/Is about making profits	3.95	1.54
	Active/Passive	3.46	1.40
	Comprehensive/Incomprehensive	3.40	1.25
	Irresponsible/Responsible (recoded)	1.07	1.27
	Shallow/Deep (recoded)	4.23	1.21
	Objective/Subjective	4.03	1.32
	With political leanings/No political leanings (recoded)	4.83	1.43
	Stale/Fresh (recoded)	3.41	1.43
	Is concerned about the community's well being/Is not concerned about the community's well being (recoded)	4.05	1.39
TV News Credibility			
	Is fair/Is unfair	4.04	1.40
	Is biased/Is unbiased	4.97	1.43
	Doesn't tell the whole story/Tells the whole story (recoded)	5.30	1.43
	Is accurate/Is inaccurate (recoded)	4.14	1.40
	Invades people's privacy/Respects people's privacy (recoded)	4.71	1.48
	Does not separate fact from opinion/Does separate fact from opinion (recoded)	4.53	1.48
	Can be trusted/Cannot be trusted	4.29	1.39
	Is concerned about the public interest/Is concerned about making profits	4.20	1.53
	Is factual/Is opinionated	4.19	1.43
	Poorly presented/Well presented (recoded)	3.39	1.43

Appendix B continued

Construct	Item	M	SD
Online News Credibility			
	Is fair/Is unfair	3.90	1.28
	Is biased/Is unbiased	4.75	1.36
	Doesn't tell the whole story/Tells the whole story (recoded)	4.50	1.49
	Is accurate/Is inaccurate (recoded)	4.14	1.29
	Invades people's privacy/Respects people's privacy (recoded)	4.50	1.38
	Does not separate fact from opinion/Does separate fact from opinion (recoded)	4.39	1.38
	Can be trusted/Cannot be trusted	4.23	1.34
	Is concerned about the public interest/Is concerned about making profits	4.01	1.41
	Is factual/Is opinionated	4.15	1.28
	Poorly presented/Well presented (recoded)	3.67	1.25