Research Articles

ความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างการเปิดรับข่าวสารด้านการเมืองผ่านสื่อใหม่และการรู้เท่าทันข่าวของเยาวชนไทย

Double Link of New Media Exposure to Political News and the News Literacy of Thai Youths

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บทคัดย่อ

วัตถุประสงค์: เพื่อศึกษาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างการเปิดรับข่าวสารด้านการเมืองและการรู้เท่าทันข่าวของเยาวชน

วิธีการศึกษา: การวิจัยนี้เป็นการวิจัยเชิงปริมาณ ใช้การสุ่มตัวอย่างแบบหลายขั้นตอนจากนักศึกษาระดับปริญญาตรีในภาคตะวันออกเฉียงเหนือ จำนวน 1,200 ราย เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูล คือ แบบสอบถาม ซึ่งได้ตรวจสอบความเที่ยงตรงเชิงเนื้อหา และทดสอบความเชื่อมั่นของเครื่องมือโดยใช้สูตรการหาค่าสัมประสิทธิ์แอลฟาของครอนบาค ได้ค่าความเชื่อมั่น 0.93

ข้อค้นพบ: เยาวชนเปิดรับข่าวสารด้านการเมืองจากสื่อสังคมออนไลน์ในระดับปานกลาง ซึ่งมีค่าเฉลี่ยมากที่สุด (Mean= 3.10, S.D = 1.19) มีความสามารถในการเข้าถึงข่าวสารด้านการเมืองในระดับมาก (Mean= 3.80, S.D. = 2.98) มีการตรวจสอบความน่าเชื่อถือของสื่อ/ช่องทางการสื่อสาร และมีการตรวจสอบความถูกต้องและความน่าเชื่อถือของข่าวสารในระดับมาก (Mean= 3.59, S.D = 2.91; Mean = 3.60, S.D. = 2.94 ตามลำดับ) และมีความสามารถในการสื่อสารและการมีส่วนร่วมต่อประเด็นข่าวสารด้านการเมืองในระดับมาก (Mean= 3.57, S.D = 1.75) นอกจากนี้ยังพบว่า ความรู้ด้านการเมืองและคลับเฮาส์ของนักการเมืองหรือผู้มีอิทธิพลทางการเมืองมีความสัมพันธ์กับการรู้เท่าทันข่าวของเยาวชน อย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ 0.01 โดยมีค่าสหสัมพันธ์สูงที่สุด เท่ากับ 0.579 และ 0.567 ตามลำดับ

การประยุกต์ใช้จากการศึกษานี้: สถาบันการศึกษา โดยเฉพาะระดับมัธยมศึกษาตอนปลายควรมีการส่งเสริมกิจกรรมการเปิดรับข่าวสารด้านเมืองในรายวิชา "หน้าที่พลเมือง" เพื่อเสริมสร้างการเป็นพลเมืองที่รอบรู้และเท่าทันข่าวสาร รวมทั้งเตรียมความพร้อมของเยาวชนก่อนก้าวสู่การเป็นผู้มีสิทธิ์เลือกตั้งครั้งแรกในระดับอุดมศึกษา ขณะเดียวกันรัฐบาล พรรคการเมือง และนักการเมืองควรเลือกใช้ political pages เป็น

ช่องทางหลักในการสื่อสารทางการเมือง เพราะสามารถเข้าถึงกลุ่มเป้าหมายที่เป็นเยาวชนได้ครอบคลุมทุก ลักษณะทางประชากรศาสตร์ ทั้งนี้ การรู้เท่าทันข่าวนับเป็นทักษะจำเป็นที่ต้องพัฒนาควบคู่ไปกับการเปิดรับ ข่าวสารจากสื่อสังคมออนไลน์ เพื่อส่งเสริมให้เยาวชนใช้ประโยชน์จากการเข้าถึงแหล่งข้อมูลที่หลากหลาย สามารถวิเคราะห์แยกแยะ และตรวจสอบความถูกต้องและความน่าเชื่อถือของข่าวสารได้อย่างรวดเร็วและ ชาญฉลาด อันจะช่วยลดทอนปัญหาในสถานการณ์ที่สังคมไทยกำลังเผชิญกับความขัดแย้งทางการเมือง และ การแบ่งฝักแบ่งฝ่ายในสังคม และเพื่อจะได้ไม่ตกเป็นเหยื่อของบุคคลที่ไม่ประสงค์ดี

คำสำคัญ: การรู้เท่าทันข่าว การเปิดรับข่าวสาร ข่าวสารด้านการเมือง สื่อสังคม เยาวชน

Abstract

Purpose: The objective of this research was to determine the relationship between media exposure to political news and news literacy of Thai youths.

Methodology: This study applied the Quantitative Research method. Twelve hundred samples were collected through multi-stage sampling from undergraduate students in Thailand's northeastern region. Each university type presented 400 questionnaires used as a research tool for gathering data. The content validity of the questionnaire was examined, and Cronbach's alpha was also applied in a pre-test stage to measure the reliability of the research instrument. The alpha coefficient for all items was 0.93.

Findings: Youths were moderately exposed to news from social media (Mean = 3.10, S.D = 1.19). It was also determined that youths had a high level of accessibility to political news (Mean = 3.80, S.D. = 2.98). The credibility of the channels and the verification of the accuracy and credibility of the news were checked at high levels (Mean = 3.59, S.D = 2.91; Mean = 3.60, S.D. = 2.94 respectively). Youths showed a high level of participation in political issues in general (Mean = 3.57, S.D = 1.75). In addition, it was found that political knowledge and the Clubhouse of politicians/political actors correlated with news literacy at the statistically significant level of 0.01. The highest correlation values were 0.579 and 0.567, respectively.

Applications of this study: Educational institutions, especially at the high school level, should organize activities of political cognizance in the subject of *citizenship* to promote political news exposure to prepare young people to become first-time voters in higher education level. Further, governments, political parties, and politicians should select political pages as the main channel for political communication, because it can reach youths, first-time voters in particular, within all demographics. Also, strengthening news literacy skills among youths is

therefore essential to reduce the impact of news exposure through social media and encourage young people to take advantage of access to various news sources to quickly analyze and wisely verify the accuracy and credibility of news, thereby relieving situations where Thai society faces political polarization and conflicts so as not to be a victim of ill-wishers.

Keywords: News literacy, Media exposure, Political news, Social media, Youths.

1.   Introduction

The Internet has the potential to access large sources of information from all over the world. The development of the Internet connection and modern communication technology has promoted information exposure allowing its audience to keep up with movements and changes in society in various dimensions, including politics.

News is an essential factor in learning, opening one's worldview, and fostering creative thinking and decision making. The person will want more news when there is uncertainty about any matter. As a result, exposure to news through various channels increases. Previous studies have indicated that the opportunity to receive news and motivation for news exposure were related to the news exposure of individuals (Kesici, 2018). Both traditional and new media play an important role in disseminating news. News opportunities may include exposure to traditional media; such as television, and newspapers, as well as exposure to news on the Internet, especially social media, which play an important role in disseminating and providing political information to various groups of people, particularly young people. Therefore, exposure to traditional media has gradually decreased (Svenningsson, 2015). Motivation for news exposure comprises utilitarian/instrumental motives which refer to the direct use of media to achieve goals and ritual/ritualized motives which are motivations related to media; such as habitual media exposure, relaxation (entertainment), or escape from daily activities/problems (Khalifa, Samir, & Ebrahim, 2021). Sharing news through social media has thus become an important component in engaging in news exposure, which may cause changes in its political context. However, the uncontrollable nature of the Internet and the freedom of communication have fueled the spread of 'fake news' in the online world, creating a detrimental impact on society. Therefore, one must be cautious in receiving and disseminating news, so as not to fall victim to such misrepresentations (Poar & Heravi, 2020).

Digital literacy skills have become essential skills in the 21st century, as they link various competencies, including computer literacy, ICT literacy, information literacy, and media literacy (UNESCO, 2018). Algorithm literacy is one of the key elements in helping young people effectively keep up with the news (Swart, 2021), affecting the regulation and dissemination of news differently. A lack of understanding of new media (any media delivered digitally) and its features may result in young users' acceptance of social media messages. For this reason, enhancing digital literacy skills promotes the knowledge and immunity of youths to appropriately receive and use information in today's digital age. Digital literacy skills consist of four key skills: access; evaluation; creation; and the use of tools and technologies. Accessing, evaluating, and generating media content comprise the main working process, and the use of tools and technology are a supporting component for the process of accessing, evaluating, and communicating media messages (Ministry of Digital Economy and Society, 2019). News literacy is defined as knowledge of the personal and social processes by which news is produced, distributed, and consumed; and the skills that allow users some control over these processes (Tamboer, Kleemans, Molenaar & Bosse (2023). Such skills promote the use of critical thinking to determine the credibility of information, distinguish facts from opinions, and avoid the development of unwanted prejudices (Inthanon, 2019). Critical thinking skills, therefore, play an important role in news literacy, as it fosters the ability to consider linking-reference evidence to determine the quality of news (Rosenbaum, Beentjes, & Konig, 2008; Hobbs, 2010). This study aims to integrate digital literacy and critical thinking skills to be used as a guide for studying news literacy under the context of political news exposure through new media in which receivers access a variety of news and, subsequently, can evaluate, communicate, and disseminate or share information.

Although there are many studies on political news exposure through various media, the study of the relationship between news exposure and news literacy among youth in Thai society as well as international contexts has not yet been conducted. As a result, the knowledge of news exposure and news literacy is not keeping up with the news exposure behavior of modern society, especially among those with less maturity and experience. However, younger users are very open to receiving news through new media (Ku *et al.*, 2019). Exposure to new media while unaware of the source's algorithm can cause the receiver to fall into a situation referred to as an 'echo chamber' (Sunstein, 2007) or 'information cocoon'

(Sunstein, 2018); in which the receiver receives only messages that reinforce their thoughts and beliefs. The algorithm at work selects news to be displayed from the recipient's usage history or recorded reactions that may lead to political polarization. Receivers may be victims of intentional misrepresentations of information for personal gain. Moreover, senders lacking an understanding of the principles of journalism may further affect the credibility of their published news. For this reason, news literacy skills are required to analyze news sources and the credibility of the algorithm at work, which will allow younger citizens to keep up with social movements and wisely take advantage of today's new media, thereby helping to drive a strong democratic society.

2.   Purpose

The objective herein was to study the relationship between Thai youths' new media exposure to political news and news literacy. Two hypotheses were developed:

H0: Exposure to political news is not related to youth news literacy.

H1: Exposure to political news is related to youth news literacy.

3.   Related Literature Reviews

3.1   Theories related to Media Exposure

Media exposure refers to the extent to which a receiver is exposed to a particular message or messages presented through various media. Exposure to news may be visual or auditory (Slater, 2004) in different dimensions. The level of willingness to receive information can be classified into four levels: 1) pre-attention; 2) focal attention; 3) comprehension; and 4) elaboration (de Vreese & Neijens, 2016; Shi & Nagler, 2020).

3.2   Motivation for news exposure

Motivation for news exposure (Khalifa, Samir, & Ebrahim, 2021) can be classified into two types:

1)   *Utilitarian/Instrumental motives* refer to the direct use of media to achieve goals or meet different needs, such as the motivation to seek knowledge; including information, news, experiences, and all forms of learning.

2)   *Ritual/Ritualized motives* are motivations related to media; such as habitual media exposure, relaxation (entertainment), or escape from daily activities/problems.

In terms of measuring news exposure, the researcher studied news exposure according to the units of observation; i.e., types of media (new media), types of messages (political news), and specific communication channels (Thairath, Amarin TV, Nation TV etc.). In addition, the conceptualization of exposure was studied; i.e., the frequency and duration of exposure, and its intention or purpose (de Vreese & Neijens, 2016). This research limited the study of political news exposure to three areas; behavior in using the Internet to follow political news, political news selection, and the channels for receiving political news.

3.3   Theories related to news literacy

Inthanon (2019) proposed that news literacy skills encourage the analysis of news to verify and assess the credibility of information, distinguish facts from opinions, avoid prejudices, and detect fake news that is often published on the Internet.

Paor and Heravi (2020) described 'fake news' as being as complex and potentially misleading as political news. It has, however, a broader scope than simply the political dimension. Wardle (2017) classified fake news into two groups for communication purposes:

1)   *Disinformation* is fake news that is intended to harass, vilify, or attack others with the intent to induce society and hide the truth.

2)   *Misinformation* is fake news spread by senders who, with no intention to offend or hurt anyone, but act out of ignorance.

Ku et al., (2019) identified that social media exposure was deeply correlated with critical thinking skills, which are developed from experience. Thus, adults have greater skills than younger individuals. Resulting in fewer information sources and the evidence of credibility, today's youth should be aware of these facets of news media and not become a victim of conflict resulting from different opinions in society (Potter, 2010).

This study, therefore, established a framework to study news literacy under the context of political news exposure through new media by integrating digital literacy skills (Ministry of Digital Economy and Society, 2019). This framework integrates media and information literacy (MIL) skills with news literacy developed by Facebook Thailand in collaboration with the Faculty of Communication Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Office of the Election Commission, the Ministry of Digital Economy, Society Center and Thai news agency, MCOT (Inthanon, 2019); as well as critical thinking skills, an advanced level of media literacy skills (Potter, 2019). Twelve sub-skills under three general skill areas: access; assessment; and

communication and participation are detailed in the research conceptual framework below (Fig. 1).

From a review of relevant literature, the researcher developed a research conceptual framework by defining a single dependent variable (news literacy) and one independent variable (political news exposure) consisting of three sub-issues, namely; the behavior in using the Internet to keep up with political news, selective exposure for political news, and channels for political news exposure (de Vreese & Neijens, 2016). Three news literacy skills are covered: access; assessment; and communication and participation.
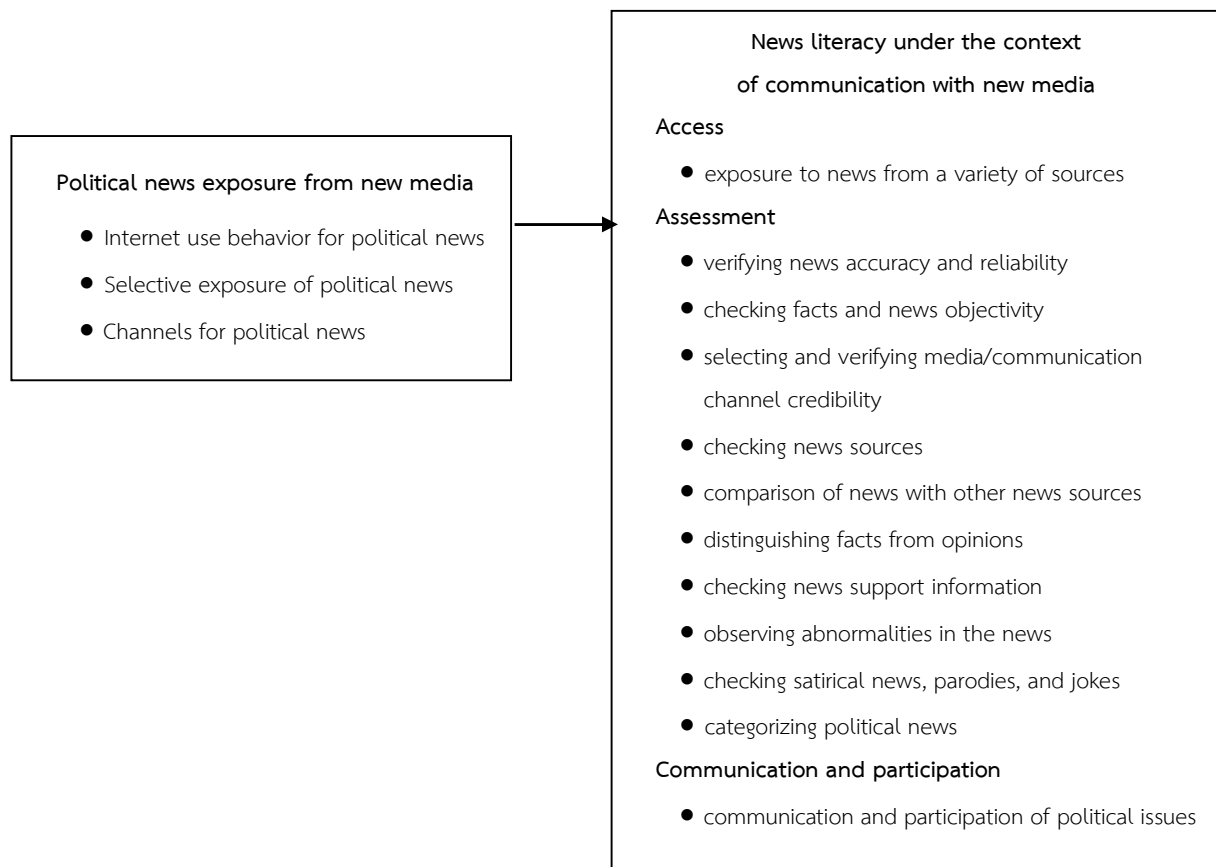
News literacy under the context of communication with new media

Political news exposure from new media
- Internet use behavior for political news
- Selective exposure of political news
- Channels for political news

Access
- exposure to news from a variety of sources

Assessment
- verifying news accuracy and reliability
- checking facts and news objectivity
- selecting and verifying media/communication channel credibility
- checking news sources
- comparison of news with other news sources
- distinguishing facts from opinions
- checking news support information
- observing abnormalities in the news
- checking satirical news, parodies, and jokes
- categorizing political news

Communication and participation
- communication and participation of political issues

Figure 1. Research Conceptual Framework

4.   Methodology

This study applied the Quantitative Research method. The population in this study was students aged 18-22 years studying in higher education institutions in Thailand's northeastern region. A total of 30 universities consisted of three autonomous universities, 19 public universities, and eight private universities. The total population was 276,497 (Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation, 2020). Reports were sent from the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research, and Innovation to each educational institution, as the Ministry is responsible for supervising institutions of higher education in Thailand. Student information can be accessed through the website of the Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation. Using the Taro Yamane formula (Yamane, 1973), the student size for each type of university was 400 at a 97% confidence level, for a total of 1,200 students.

The Multi-Stage Sampling technique was used to obtain the sample group. Firstly, simple random sampling, which was drawn by lottery to select institutions representing each type of university, classified students according to the subject groups offered; such as science and technology, health science and humanities, and social sciences; in line with the educational management guidelines of higher education institutions in Thailand (Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation, 2018).

The tool used for data collection was a questionnaire, carried out from August to September 2022. The researcher examined the validity of the questionnaire by determining the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC), and five content experts gave recommendations for improved quality (Each question had an IOC value of 0.8-1.0). The reliability of the questionnaire was then tested through the responses of 30 students of Khon Kaen University, Nong Khai Campus, Nong Khai, Thailand. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.93, indicating that the questionnaire was of sufficient quality for data collection. Returned questionnaires were checked for completeness by the researcher. Any questionnaires with incomplete data were omitted. Systematic sampling was performed again for replacement, and more questionnaires were sent online to students to obtain a total of 1,200 forms, representing 100% of the respondents.

The collection of data was authorized by each of the universities. The registration division of each university and the lecturer of each program were approached before the questionnaire was sent for research purposes. The questionnaire was developed from concepts, theories, and research related to political news exposure among youths; and consisted of three parts: (1) the students' personal attributes, (2) political news exposure, and (3) news literacy.

Data analyses were performed by descriptive statistics, including Frequency, Percentage, Mean, and Standard Deviation. Data analysis on the relationship between Thai youth's political news exposure and news literacy employed Spearman's correlation coefficient to find the relationship between the two variables, and further used the interpretation criteria according to Vanichbuncha & Vanichbuncha, (2016). The results were categorized as follows: correlation coefficients scored between 0.81-1.00 (very high correlation); between 0.61-0.80 (high correlation); between 0.41-0.60 (moderate correlation); between 0.21-0.40 (low correlation); between 0.01-0.20 (very low correlation); and 0.00 (no correlation)

The research was approved for human research ethics by the Human Research Committee of Khon Kaen University, Khon Kaen, Thailand; under registration number HE 643096.

Table 1 Variables and reliability

Variables	The alpha coefficient
Political news exposure	0.91
News literacy	0.89
All items	**0.93**

5.   Results

The results of the research herein are presented in four issues: 1) characteristics of the youth/sample group; 2) exposure to political news; 3) news literacy; and 4) the relationship between youth exposure to political news and news literacy, which are detailed as follows:

5.1   Characteristics of the youth/sample group

Accounting for a 100 percent response, the student respondents from private universities/colleges, autonomous universities, and governmental universities represented 400 people each, equivalent to 33.30%. In terms of gender, 641 youth respondents were males (53.40%) and 559 were females (46.60%). In the field of study, it was found that most students

(469) studied in the field of Science and Technology (39.10%), followed by Humanities and Social Sciences (401 students, 33.40%), and, Health Sciences (330 students, 27.50%).

5.2 Exposure of political news

An analysis of the behavior of Internet use to keep up with political news found that most youths use smartphones/iPhones to connect and remain current with political news (48.50%). It was found that most students had a purpose for surveillance/increasing politics cognizance (41.30%). In terms of their frequency of use to keep up with political news, it was found that most youths use the Internet every day (45.90%) for periods of generally 1-3 hours a day (70.00%). The analysis of the political news they accessed revealed that the highest level of exposure was political protests/demands (Mean = 4.36, S.D. = 1.25; 54.50%). Regarding channels for political news exposure, it was found that youths were less exposed to political news through other channels, but were moderately exposed to news sources from social media; including newsfeeds, Clubhouses, and political pages (Mean = 3.09, S.D. = 1.09; Mean = 2.92, S.D. = 1.41; and Mean = 2.81, S.D. = 0.89; respectively)

5.3 News literacy

The results found that in terms of accessing political news, a high level of access to political news (Mean = 3.77, S.D. = 2.76) was experienced by our respondents, which occurred from a variety of sources at a high level (Mean = 3.73, S.D. = 2.84); whereas the ability to assess political news was registered at a moderate level (Mean = 3.37, S.D. = 2.96). More specific activity determined that the youths could check the accuracy and credibility of the media/communication channels at a high level (Mean = 3.59, S.D = 2.95, Mean = 3.56, S.D. = 2.71; respectively). Additionally, it was found that their ability to handle satirical news and parody/jokes in politics was also at a moderate level (Mean = 3.10, S.D. = 3.54), which was the least average. In terms of communicating and participating in political news, Thai youths were found to communicate and contribute to political news at a high level (Mean = 3.49, S.D. = 1.04).

5.4   The relationship between exposure to political news and news literacy

The correlation between political news exposure and news literacy among Thai youths examined two variables: the independent variable (political news exposure), consisted of three issues; behavior in using the Internet to keep up with political news, political news selected, and channels of political news. The dependent variable (news literacy), was measured using correlation analysis. The results were as follows:

5.4.1 Internet use behavior in accessing political news

Internet use behavior in accessing political news concerns the frequency of Internet use and the amount of time spent following up on political news, covering four main issues:

1)   Tools used for tracking political news on the Internet. The use of personal computers and notebooks was associated with news literacy at a statistically significant level (0.01), with correlation values of 0.098 and 0.148, which can be interpreted as very low correlations. The use of desktop computers and portable computers (notebooks) connected to the Internet to keep up with political news will increase. Youths will become more literate about political news but at a very small level. The use of an iPad/tablet also produced a low correlation with news literacy at a level of 0.01, with a correlation value of 0.220, which can be interpreted as low correlations. The use of iPads/tablets connected to the Internet to keep up with political news will also increase. Youths will be more literate about political news but to a lesser extent. (Table 1).

2)   Objectives for tracking political news. The objective of political news exposure for the perception/cognizance and diversity of political news correlated with news literacy at a statistically significant level (0.05), with very low correlation values of 0.058 and 0.169, respectively. Exposure to political news for the perception/cognizance of political news and for the diversity of news exposure increases. Youths will be more literate about political news but at a very small level. The diversity of news exposure was associated with youth political news literacy more than exposure to political news for perception/cognizance of political news among youths. While exposure to political information for social utility (social interaction) and entertainment correlated with news literacy at a level of 0.01, with correlation values of 0.279 and 0.219, respectively, which were again interpreted as low correlations. It

can be explained that exposure to political news for social utility (social interaction), for entertainment, or to escape from daily activities/problems suggests that youths will be more literate about political news, but to a lesser extent (Table 1).

3) Frequency of Internet use to follow up on political news. The frequency of Internet use to follow up on political news produced a very low correlation (0.090) with news literacy at a statistically significant level (0.05). It can be explained that Internet use per week (to keep up with political news) increases. Youths will be more literate about political news but at a very small level. (Table 1).

4) Time spent on the Internet to follow up on political news. A perceived low correlation (0.247) was observed between the time spent on the Internet to follow-up on political news with news literacy at a statistically significant level (0.01). It can be explained that the amount of time spent on the Internet to keep up with political news increases. Youths will be more literate about political news but to a lesser extent. (Table 1).

5.4.2 Selective exposure to political news

Selective exposure to political news regarding government operations, opposition operations, and political protests/demands correlated with news literacy at a level of 0.01, with correlation values of 0.338, 0.450, and 0.300, respectively; which were deemed to be low. It can be explained that exposure to news on government operations, the opposition operations and political protests/demands increases. Youths will be more literate about political news, but to a lesser extent. Exposure to news on the opposition operations was mostly related to the youth's political news literacy, followed by exposure to news on government operations and protests/political demands, respectively.

However, openness to news covering elections and political knowledge produced significantly moderate correlation values (0.513 and 0.579, respectively) with news literacy at a level of 0.01. It can be explained that exposure to election news and political knowledge resulted in increased political news literacy among youths at a moderate level. Political knowledge exposure was associated with political news literacy more so than election news exposure. (Table 2).

5.4.3 Channels for political news exposure

Online newspapers, television, radio/podcast, websites of political news, and social media newsfeeds correlated with news literacy at a statistically significant level of 0.01, with correlation values of 0.495, 0.393, 0.429, 0.473, and 0.296 respectively, which were interpreted as low correlations. It can be explained that news exposure through online newspapers, online television, online radio/podcast, political news websites, and social media newsfeeds increases. Youths will be more literate about political news, but to a lesser extent. Exposure to news through online newspapers was directly correlated with political news literacy among young people, followed by news exposure through political news websites and online radio/podcasts, respectively. It was also found that youth exposure to news through social media newsfeeds was least associated with political news literacy.

While politicians' Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, political pages, and Clubhouses correlated with news literacy at a statistically significant level (0.01), moderate correlation values of 0.552, 0.527, 0.512, 0.504, and 0.567; respectively were obtained. It can be explained that political news exposure via the politician's Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, political Pages, and the politician's Clubhouse increases. Youths will be more literate about political news but at a moderate level. The politician's Clubhouse was most associated with youth political news literacy, followed by the exposure of politician's Facebook and Twitter, respectively. It was also found that exposure to news through political pages was the least associated with political news literacy among young people. (Table 3).

Table 1 Correlation coefficient analysis of Internet use behavior to follow up on political news with political news literacy.

	Personal Computer	Note book	iPad/ Tablet	Smart Phone/ iPhone	For perception/ cognizance of political news	For diversity of news exposure	For social utility	For entertain-ment	Frequency of internet use to follow up	Time spent on the internet to follow up	Political news literacy
Personal Computer	1.000										
Notebook	0.213**	1.000									
iPad/Tablet	0.046	0.042	1.000								
Smart Phone/iPhone	-0.259**	-0.145**	-0.011	1.000							
For perception/ cognizance of political news	-0.018	0.013	0.080**	0.345**	1.000						
For diversity of news exposure	0.114**	0.212**	0.229**	0.103**	0.116**	1.000					
For social utility	0.089**	0.182**	0.277**	0.126**	0.017	0.306**	1.000				
For entertainment	0.139**	0.178**	0.184**	0.058*	-0.007	0.266**	0.317**	1.000			
Frequency of internet use to follow up on political news	-0.076**	0.014	0.090**	0.180**	0.106**	0.073*	0.116**	0.080**	1.000		
Time spent on the internet to follow up on political news	0.04	0.128**	0.019	-0.208**	-0.167**	0.03	0.057*	0.073*	0.206**	1.000	
Political news literacy	0.098**	0.148**	0.220**	-0.047	-0.058*	0.169**	0.279**	0.219**	0.090**	0.247**	1.000

Table 2 Correlation coefficient analysis of selected political news and political news literacy.

	Government operations	Opposition operations	Political protests/demands	Elections	Political knowledge	Political news literacy
Government operations	1.000					
Opposition operations	0.426**	1.000				
Political protests/demands	0.441**	0.451**	1.000			
Elections	0.447**	0.574**	0.346**	1.000		
Political knowledge	0.380**	0.555**	0.381**	0.700**	1.000	
Political news literacy	0.338**	0.450**	0.300**	0.513**	0.579**	1.000

Table 3 Correlation coefficient analysis of channels for political news access and political news literacy.

	Online newspaper	Online TV	Online radio/Podcast	Political website	Newsfeed	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	Political pages	Clubhouse	Political news literacy
Online newspaper	1.000										
Online TV	0.740**	1.000									
Online radio/Podcast	0.658**	0.700**	1.000								
Political website	0.673**	0.663**	0.746**	1.000							
Newsfeed	0.367**	0.387**	0.437**	0.395**	1.000						
Facebook	0.521**	0.476**	0.596**	0.604**	0.371**	1.000					
Twitter	0.522**	0.457**	0.596**	0.592**	0.385**	0.869**	1.000				
Instagram	0.541**	0.520**	0.617**	0.631**	0.350**	0.832**	0.853**	1.000			
Political pages	0.510**	0.479**	0.581**	0.546**	0.512**	0.607**	0.612**	0.589**	1.000		
Clubhouse	0.475**	0.390**	0.502**	0.445**	0.313**	0.664**	0.671**	0.673**	0.580**	1.000	
Political news literacy	0.495**	0.393**	0.429**	0.473**	0.296**	0.552**	0.527**	0.512**	0.504**	0.567**	1.000

6.   Discussion

The results showed that exposure to political news is related to youth news literacy. While the proposed hypothesis (H0) was rejected, the hypothesis (H1) was accepted. The findings are discussed below;

The study indicated that youths need to develop political news access and assessment skills to enhance their news literacy as they acquire assessment skills at a moderate level. An S.D. value greater than one reflects that youths have very different skills at both low and high levels. Similarly, the results indicated that young people have political news access skills at a high level, however, the S.D. values greater than 1 again demonstrated the differences in skills. Access to political news is, therefore, another skill that should be developed among young people. As news access is a very important skill acting as a gateway to learning and developing other skills, especially critical thinking skills, which build on news accessibility skills that encourage young people to become informed citizens (Swart, 2021).

Although Clubhouse is the second most popular social media site after Newsfeeds, its high S.D. of 1.41 indicated that the respondents choose Clubhouse for their exposure to political news very differently, since the sample had different demographic characteristics in terms of gender and education (field of study); which consisted of health science, science and technology, and humanities and social sciences. It also covers autonomous universities, public universities, and private universities/colleges; all of which have different target groups in education. In addition, the sample groups had different age ranges, even with undergraduate students. But the age range of 18-22 years old overlaps between Generation Z (aged younger than 20) and Generation Y (aged between 20-41), which may affect different media and news exposure behavior (Sveningsson, 2015; Swart, 2021).

Selective exposure to general political news related to our students' news literacy with the highest correlation, followed by election news. The hypothesis (H1) was accepted. This explains how knowledge of politics promotes political learning and staying up-to-date on political news and events. Audiences, therefore, become more news literate, as they acquire political knowledge that helps them become more informed. In addition, they will be able to check the accuracy and credibility of news by comparing political news with other news sources and to understand how news is produced, distributed, and consumed. Many studies have indicated that access and exposure to political news on a wide range of issues had an

influence on the promotion of political knowledge, thereby encouraging youths to become involved in politics — so much as to become constructive political issue producers. Accessing credible and diverse news is an important basis for promoting effective political communication among others (Hassan *et al*., 2013; Pires, Masanet & Scolari, 2019; Allam *et al*., 2021). Exposure to political news, both in quantity (frequency and accessibility to various sources of information) and quality (ability to seek accurate and reliable news), helps them to distinguish fake news, as it is a key feature of media literacy. At the same time, media literacy is also closely related to news literacy (Ashley, Maksl, & Craft, 2017), as it enhances the skills of effective media usage and wisely evaluates news media messages required in youths' daily life. Therefore, the ability to access information, political knowledge in particular, enhances news literacy (Allam *et al*., 2021).

News exposure through Clubhouse channels correlated with news literacy with the highest correlation compared to other channels, due to their interactive and informal characteristics that reflect a traditional learning environment. The act of 'talking & listening' to one another fosters knowledge transfer without relying on reading skills. The information conveyed acts as an effective 'edutainment' strategy that promotes learning. Sharing and discussing news issues develops a thought process on emerging issues (Swart, 2021). Unlike mass media, its broadcast feature is a live chat. No data are saved, thereby causing the audience to focus on the essence of 'talking issues', which results in active learning. However, access is limited to people who use the IOS system and receive invitations. Clubhouse news enhances political learning and promotes news literacy, as well as its 'audio media' involves a multitasking manner of exposure (Radcliffe, 2021). However, news exposure through this channel still has limitations and there are quite a few issues that should promote caution. Communication in an informal form is a knowledge transfer along with experiences and ideas, which have hidden personal opinions, thereby making the information presented to be biased. There is no communication control in this platform, as Clubhouse is a knowledge and opinion-sharing space on a variety of issues. For this reason, many politicians have turned to Clubhouse to communicate politically about their party, as well as to publicize their own political policies and positions. This will consequently cause political conflicts among audiences, as people tend to be exposed to information that is consistent with their own attitudes, thoughts, and

beliefs; leading to the Echo Chambers and Information Cocoon. However, in high-choice media environments, Clubhouse may be just one option for the audience to receive political news.

Other social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram were also found to be associated with youth news literacy; however, the correlation values were less than that of Clubhouse news. Every source of media has benefits as a channel for disseminating news to the audience, promoting awareness, and keeping them up-to-date with news. Therefore, they can benefit from news in their daily life. Additionally, the features of interaction, real-time hyperlinks, and news alerts promote exposure to diverse news and political debates. This is an important process that promotes political learning (Swart, 2021). The Internet and social media are therefore important information sources for members of society in the modern era (Beam, Hutchens & Hmielowski, 2016). The objectives of media exposure are also critical, as they are related to the utilization of news via social media (Meijer & Kormelink, 2015). People exposed to media messages to guide decisions will accumulate helpful information to support their thinking and decision-making abilities. They are, therefore, aware of what is happening in society more than people who are exposed to entertainment messages. With critical thinking skills, they will wisely learn how to access news through online media and will be able to consider news critically. Their experiences of exposure to information help to distinguish facts and opinions (Diddi & LaRose, 2006; Inthanon, 2019), keeping them up to date with news, disseminated through several channels on various online platforms.

Patterns of online news usage are related to the way audiences access online news. Pull access is defined as active and directed information searching which is a direct form of access to online news and can be mediated by search engines used to search for specific content (information-oriented) or for specific providers (navigation-oriented). The searching goal is known for this mode of navigation, as information is selected based on information seeking. Media plays an important role in expanding a person's knowledge of politics. Push access, on the other hand, is defined as occasional informational yielding in which receivers have no goal of exposure and do not focus on news exposure (Leonhard, Karnowski & Kumpel, 2020). This phenomenon is referred to as 'incidental exposure'. In any case, the receiver would benefit from information less than those who have the goal of seeking information (Oeldorf-Hirsch, 2018), due to the positive correlation between online news with news literacy (Kruikemeier, Lechera & Boyer, 2018). News literacy is of great importance in today's media context because

it allows Thai youths to receive information with judgment, making them aware of how to handle the vast amount of news online and determine which sources are trustworthy and created by professional journalists (Broersma, 2018; Tandoc *et al.*, 2018).

7.   Conclusion and Recommendations

The results showed that Thai youths had the highest level of exposure to political issues regarding political protests/demands (Mean = 4.36, S.D. = 1.25) and were moderately exposed to news from social media (Mean = 3.10, S.D = 1.19). It was also determined that youths had a high level of accessibility to political news (Mean = 3.80, S.D. = 2.98). The credibility of the channels and the verification of the accuracy and credibility of the news were checked at high levels (Mean = 3.59, S.D = 2.91; Mean = 3.60, S.D. = 2.94 respectively). Youths showed a high level of participation in political issues in general (Mean = 3.57, S.D = 1.75). In addition, it was found that political knowledge and the Clubhouse of politicians/political actors positively correlated with news literacy at the statistically significant level of 0.01. The correlation values were 0.579 and 0.567, respectively.

The results showed that political knowledge exposure was associated with news literacy at a moderate level, which had the highest average. It can be explained that political knowledge news helps build news literacy skills better than other kinds of news and information. Thus, educational institutions, especially at the high school level, should organize activities of politics cognizance in the subject of citizenship to promote understanding of rights and duties as citizens and enhance political knowledge exposure to prepare young people for entering higher education and becoming first-time voters. Such activities will familiarize young people with political news and knowledge and will also enhance all skills of news literacy; including accessing, evaluating, communicating, and participating in political news. A strong democracy requires access to high-quality information and the ability for citizens to come together to debate, discuss, deliberate, empathize, and make concessions. These activities will make politics a part of Thai youth's daily lives.

Strengthening news literacy skills among youths is essential to reduce the impact of news exposure through social media; as its messages are one-sided, fragmented, and subjective. In addition, these skills will encourage young people to take advantage of access to various news sources to quickly analyze and wisely verify the accuracy and credibility of

news, thereby relieving the situations where Thai society faces political polarization and conflicts so as not to be a victim of ill-wishers.

This study showed that political pages, despite having the lowest average with an S.D. value lower than 1 (S.D. = 0.89), reflect that young people choose political pages to receive political news at similar levels, despite the wide differences in fields of study, gender, and age. Therefore, governments, political parties, and politicians should select political pages as the main channel for political communication because it can reach youths, first-time voters in particular, within all demographics. Newsfeeds were the most popular (Mean = 3.09, S.D. = 1.09), however, the S.D. value was only slightly more than one, indicating that young people choose newsfeeds for their political news exposure with slight differences, despite the differences in demographics. Newsfeeds, therefore, represents another way to communicate politically with young people, as most of them choose this channel to follow political news.

Further qualitative research must be conducted to investigate the relationship between information exposure and youth literacy in more depth, including factors influencing Thai youths' exposure to news and news literacy. The results may provide a guideline to enhance younger individuals' behavior regarding political news exposure and the news literacy skills required. Also, there should be further study on which groups of Thai youths have low skills of news literacy. The future study will benefit in enhancing their skills to wisely make use of digital media.

8.   Acknowledgement

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