Predictors of News Media Credibility: Contributions of Demographics, Attitudinal and Perceptual Factors

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Abstract
Scholars have long been attentive to the ever-changing news consumption patterns and have studied how the audiences expose to the media and their perceived trust levels in news media. There is a large volume of published studies describing the public perceptions on the media credibility. However, a little is known in the context of Somalia. Thus, this study examined how the Somali youth perceive the media credibility and its predicting factors. Using a stratified convenient sampling with self-administered questionnaire, this study collected data from youth in the capital city of Mogadishu, Somalia. Analysed with SPSS software, the study's results revealed internet use for news consumption was prevalent compared to traditional news media. The study also suggested an education level difference in perceived news media, where less educated ones less perceived the news credibility. Lastly, regression analysis revealed several contributing factors towards news media credibility: newspaper use, radio use, attitude towards news credibility of traditional media platforms, as well as perceived press freedom. The contributions of the study are further explained.

Keyword: News media, media credibility, youth, press freedom, attitude towards news.

Introduction

Over the past two decades, the digital media and internet-based news consumption have tremendously increased, where millions of audiences across the globe seek daily information and news from these platforms (Andaleeb & Rahman, 2015; Shearer & Mitchell, 2021). The audiences are driven by numerous motives for the exposure to digital and new technologies including news consumption, entertainment and communication (Antunovic et al., 2016; Flanagin & Metzger, 2000). With emerging new technologies such as social media platforms, which reflected in wider news distribution, the literature suggests news is consumed by everybody intentionally or unintentionally (Ahmed et al., 2018; Antunovic et al., 2016). A three-stage route of news consumption were suggested by Antunovic et al. (2016) namely directed consumption, incidental consumption, and routine surveillance. Students and youth are mostly likely to go online for their news seeking habits, accessing it through various devices such as mobile phones, computers or other smart devices (Poushter, 2016).

With expanded news-consumption patterns globally, there are trust issues that are emerging as a significant predictor of news media. Trust is indispensable at both an individual level or a societal level, where it has a major impact on numerous societal and individual aspects such as "economic growth and efficiency in market economics, provision of public goods, social integration, co-operation and harmony, to personal life satisfaction, and democratic stability and development, and even good health and longevity" (Delhey & Newton, 2003, p.3).

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Over the past decades, the news media credibility has received considerable critical attention from scholars. They examined this concept from perspectives of both developed and developing nations, suggesting various factors to be credibility predictors. For instance, using a student and adult sample, Bucy's (2003) study suggested the synergetic effects presence between on-air and online new consumption patterns. Comparing American and South Korean samples, Choi et al., (2015) found that Koreans perceived news to be more credible if they received it from a television or a newspaper. Recent studies also considered the source of the news and its perceived credibility. Pjesivac et al., (2018) found that their study participants perceived expert sources such as scientist as more credible than those non-experts such as social media creators.

More recently, there has been a growing number of publications focusing news media credibility perceptions across multiple platforms (Keib & Wojdynski, 2018; Payne & Dozier, 2013; Pjesivac et al., 2018; Tsfati & Ariely, 2014; Zhang et al., 2014). Despite a growing body of literature on this subject currently exists, there is a scarcity of scholarly works on how Somali youth perceived news media credibility. As such, the current study attempted to examine the predictors of news media credibility, taking into account the potential explanation of attitudinal and perceptual factors along with demographic factors. Specifically, this study examined

1) differences in amount of time spent with the news media;
2) level of news media credibility;
3) attitudes towards news media and press freedom;
4) demographic differences in terms of news media credibility; and
5) predictors of news media credibility.

Literature Review

Media Credibility: An overview

Scholars have long been examining media credibility and considered it as a complex and multidimensional concept. They employed various approaches to address how, what and why people trust the media organisations and its content (Abdulla et al., 2005; Andaleeb & Rahman, 2015). The emergence of media credibility concept dates back to early 1950s when researchers evaluated how media consumers assess the credibility of the source (communicator) (El-Nawawy, 2006). Although the concept is widely examined in the communication discipline for decades, there is no universal definition on what constitutes "trust or credibility" (Fisher, 2016; Hopmann et al., 2015) and this led to the use of various operationalisation and measures. However, scholars do agree that credibility is an important precursor that determines people's desire to interact with the media content particularly in the contemporary media landscape (Chung & Nah, 2013; Keib & Wojdynski, 2018). Media credibility can be defined as 'the assessment of believability and trustworthiness of a message based on a multitude of factors involved in communication, such as message source, message content, and the medium through which the message is presented' (Carr et al. 2014, p.455).

The credibility scholarship has been examined from the perspective of two major aspects namely medium credibility and source credibility (Golan, 2010; Kiousis, 2001). The first perspective focused on how specific news channel such as television, radio or newspaper is perceived by the audiences. A number of scholars have examined how both traditional and new media perceived by the audience and reported mixed results, where a majority of the studies found television to be perceived as most credible (Andaleeb & Rahman, 2015; Bucy, 2003; Carr et al., 2014; Stroud & Lee, 2013; Yamamoto & Nah, 2018).

The second perspective (source credibility) has concentrated on how messages are influenced by different communicator characteristics, and it was the "focus of the early persuasion studies" (Johnson and Fahmy 2008, p.339). Unlike medium credibility, numerous researches were conducted from this perspective tapping audiences' evaluations on sources (i.e., authors) of the news articles (Appelman & Sundar, 2016; Meyer et al., 2010; a. Miller & Kurpius, 2010). Early studies on this perspective have pioneered by the scholars at Yale University led by Carl Hovland (Hovland & Weiss, 1951), who have conducted numerous studies on how media audiences perceived the characteristics of the source, and have inspired subsequent studies on the topic (Johnson & Fahmy, 2008; Zhang et al., 2014). They found that that two

factors determine source credibility namely expertise and trustworthiness. Although there are other factors identified by other studies, these two predictors continued to be the most prominent and strong determinants of the source credibility as perceived by the audiences (Johnson & Fahmy, 2008). Thus, the current study contributes to the first perspective of media credibility: how media users perceive the medium credibility.

To understand media credibility perceptions from the viewpoints of the audiences, scholars have examined this concept from mainstream media perspectives such as television (Andaleeb et al., 2012; Andaleeb & Rahman, 2015; El-Nawawy, 2006; Stroud & Lee, 2013) radio (El-Nawawy, 2006), and newspapers (Yamamoto & Nah, 2018). Furthermore, scholars have examined how audiences perceived the emerging new media technologies such as online news platforms (Bucy, 2003; Cassidy, 2007; Johnson & Kaye, 2010b), online polls (Kim, Weaver, & Willnat, 2000), blogs (Johnson et al., 2008; Johnson & Kaye, 2010a; Sweetser et al., 2008), social media platforms (Kaye & Johnson, 2017; Keib & Wojdynski, 2018) and citizen journalism (Carr et al., 2014; Chung & Nah, 2013). Even some studies have examined more than one platform in a single study (Choi et al., 2015; Idid & Wok, 2006; Kim & Johnson, 2009; Kiousis, 2001; Zhang et al., 2014).

Measures of Media Credibility:

Scholars have employed different scales for measuring media credibility. Evan though extensive measures exist, no agreed and comprehensive measures exist among the scholars. However, Gaziano and McGrath (1986) proposed one of the most extensively employed measures of media credibility. Their study evaluated how audiences perceive the credibility of television and newspapers. They proposed a 12-item scale using semantic-differential scale and asked the respondents whether they perceive newspaper/television news as (fair, unbiased, tells the whole story, accurate, respects people's privacy, watch after readers/reviewers interests, concerned about the community's well-being, separates fact and opinion, can be trusted, concerned about public interest, factual, has well trained reporters) (Gaziano & McGrath, 1986).

Criticising the Gaziano and McGrath's credibility scale as lacking face validity, Meyer (1988) proposed a narrow version of their scale, consisting of five items: Fair, unbiased, tells the whole story, accurate and could be trusted. The Gaziano and McGrath's scale and its narrow versions was subsequently adopted in numerous studies that examined the credibility of a range of platforms (Abdulla et al., 2005; El-Nawawy, 2006; Rimmer & Weaver, 1987).

In measuring television credibility, Andaleeb & Rahman (2015) employed a four-item scale: trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, and willingness to recommend a specific television to an individual. Moreover, Lock and Seele (2017) developed a four-factor credibility scales for testing readers' perceived credibility of corporate social responsibility reports. These factors were understandability, appropriateness, truth, sincerity, with a total of 16 items.

Items reported by studies on traditional mainstream media also guided the credibility measures of internet studies. For instance, Bucy (2003) utilized a five-item scale to measure television and internet credibility among US respondents. Flanagin and Metzger (2000) also employed a five-item credibility scale in their assessment of television, newspaper, radio and the Internet. Four items of credibility such as believability, accuracy, lack of bias and depth of information were reported in Johnson and Kaye's studies on Internet credibility (Johnson & Kaye, 2002), blog credibility (Johnson & Kaye, 2004) and online credibility (Johnson & Kaye, 2010b). A more recent study also used a five-item scale of story credibility on Facebook: trustworthy, believable, accurate, competent and expert (Keib & Wojdynski, 2018).

Factors Influencing Media Credibility

1) Demographic variables

Media scholars have long examined the demographic variables and their prediction on various media variables. Credibility studies is no exceptional in this regard. Mixed results were reported in the literature regarding demographic factors' prediction on media credibility. Gender and education were found to have significant prediction on television credibility among Bangladeshi respondents (Andaleeb et al., 2012),

indicating that women rated television as more credible while highly educated individuals rated the opposite. Bucy (2003) found that age predicts television and internet credibility among US students, meaning that older students rated the television and internet as less credible.

In their comparative study of US and Korean college students, Choi et al. (2015) found age factor to be a significant determinant of television and newspaper credibility among Korean young adults compared to their US counterparts. Tsfati and Ariely (2014) found a gender and education relationship with trust in media among respondents across 44 countries but not age factor. That is, males and highly educated individuals are more skeptical about media trustworthiness. Golan and Baker (2012) reported a negative correlation between religion and media credibility, indicating that Mormon college students had low credibility assessments of mainstream media. In contrast, Cassidy (2007) found that demographic factors such as gender, education, age, and ethnicity had no significant impact on online news credibility among US journalists. A recent study also reported a mixed finding. While it revealed that educational attainment had significant prediction on local newspaper credibility, the gender did not exert any impact on this variable (Yamamoto & Nah, 2018). With these contradicting results, this paper posited the following hypotheses:

H_1: Male and female youth and those with different educational backgrounds differ in their perception about news media credibility.

H_2: Education level and gender significantly predict news media credibility among the youth.

2) Media use

Scholars have long examined media exposure among various segments of the society, providing contradicting results on most favorite platforms for news consumption and its perceived believability. Media consumers are motivated by a number of factors to expose to media content including social, personal or cognitive needs (Ahmed, 2018; Blumler & Katz, 1974; Dhaha, 2013; Payne & Dozier, 2013; Rubin, 1984, 2009).

Numerous studies found that television is the most preferred platform for news consumption followed by the newspapers (Ahmed, 2014; Andaleeb & Rahman, 2015; Freeman, 2013; Wok et al., 2011). Using a sample of Malaysian registered voters, Ahmed (2014) found that television was their first choice for obtaining news related to politics and public affairs, followed by newspapers and the internet. Unlike Bangladesh and other developing countries (Andaleeb & Rahman, 2015), radio remains the most popular medium in Somalia.

Previous research have suggested a positive association between media use and media credibility (Andaleeb et al., 2012; Bucy, 2003; Flanagin & Metzger, 2000; Golan & Baker, 2012; Hopmann et al., 2015; Idid & Wok, 2006; Kalogeropoulos et al., 2019; Strömbäck et al., 2020). This indicates that a higher exposure to media is related to a higher level of trust in the media.

New media (i.e., internet) was found to be rated as more credible than the mainstream media among a sample of undergraduate students coupled with another sample of non-college participants. Comparing citizen journalism and mainstream media, Carr et al. (2014) found that skepticism and cynicism play a moderating role in media credibility perceptions. This indicates that those who are skeptics and cynics are more likely to perceive citizen journalism as believable, compared to non-cynics and non-skeptics who perceive the opposite. Contrary to this, El-Nawawy (2006) found that radio use (Radio Sawa, a US-sponsored platform targeting Arab population) was not correlated with news media credibility. Despite a plethora of publications on news media credibility, there is a limited understanding on how Somali youth perceive the news media and what factors contributed to it. With these contradicting findings discussed above, the following hypotheses are posited:

H_3: Time spent with Radio News is higher than the time spent with newspapers, radio and internet

H_4: News media use is positively related to news media credibility

H_5: Media systems believability is positively correlated with news media credibility.

3) Perceptual and attitudinal factors

Along with demographics, media exposure and media systems believability, the literature also looked at other potential contributing factors to

news media credibility. Two promising factors included press freedom and attitudes towards news media. Even though attitude towards news media is essential in understanding how it contributes to credibility perceptions, this concept is rarely addressed in the literature. Sun (2014) found that attitude towards media significantly predicted newspapers' credibility in Hong Kong. This indicates the more positive attitude held by the audiences the more they likely to perceive a higher credibility perceptions of newspapers. Focusing on how selective exposure to the media content predicts media attitude, Arendt et al. (2019) found that attitude towards the medium (television) positively predicted its exposure. Moreover, previous studies established a positive association between attitude towards the news and news consumption in the context of mobile phones and social networking sites (Ahmed et al., 2018; Lee & Chyi, 2014).

In their study on public evaluation on press during crisis, Bucy's et al. (2014) study revealed that press freedom positively predicted the media credibility, taking two British scandals as an example. In another study, Wei and colleagues found that level of press freedom negatively predicted mobile new consumption among college students in in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore (Wei et al., 2013).

Previous research findings into the relationship between media credibility and press freedom perceptions have been inconsistent and contradictory. Using a sample of Arab audiences, Johnson and Fahmy (2008) found that press freedom was not correlated with Al-Jazeera television credibility. However, station's reliance was its credibility predictor along with age factor. Evan though they could not find a positive relationship between media credibility and press freedom, they noted that this does reflect that their sample would not support press freedom. On a scale of five-point, their sample rated 4 for the station's possible contribution in increasing press freedom and that it allows different opinions. Similarly, using indicators from Reporters Sans Frontières, Media Sustainability Index, Gallup Poll, World Bank's World Governance Indicator and UNDPs HDI, Soon and Tan (2016) found that press freedom has no impact on media credibility using a secondary data of over 40 countries. With these contradicting evidences, the following hypotheses were postulated:

H6: Attitude towards news media is positively correlated with news media credibility.

H7: Press freedom is positively correlated with news media credibility.

Method

Generally, researchers are expected to decide on their epistemological standing. This means that the research should determine what comprises knowledge (Bryman, 2012). There are a number of epistemological positions such as post-positivist, interpretivist, and pragmatic approach.

As such, this study is situated within the post-positivist approach as epistemological standing. This approach upholds the usage of scientific methods in order for the researcher to come up with conclusions on realities under investigation (Bryman, 2012). One of the distinctive features for the post-positivist approach is that the theory development is deductive, where the researcher initially develops the hypotheses and empirically tests them (Creswell, 2014).

This study adopted survey method with the convenience stratified random sampling procedure for selecting samples for the study. The main strata of this procedure was based on location (district), in order to collect proportionate samples for each districts in Banadir Region, Somalia. In this way, a total of 321 respondents were selected for the study, which fairly represented the population of youths in Bandir Region in Somalia. This sampling procedure was useful because the sub-divisions of the sample were not equal. This also helped the researcher to represent specific characteristics of those sub-divisions in the final sample (Creswell, 2014).

Trained enumerators had distributed the survey questionnaires and they were available to respond to any inquiry. The participants were selected from all seventeen districts in Banadir region in order to maximise the plausibility of the study results. After two weeks of field study, and after eliminating incomplete responses, a total of 321 valid responses were retained for further analysis.

This study employed a number of variables (dependent and independent variables) in order to test the study hypotheses and conclude about its

objectives. The following variables were used in the current study:

- ***Demographic profiles:*** gender, education level, age, and marital status, with various categories for each of them.
- ***News media use:*** participants were asked to indicate how much time they spent with television news, newspaper news, radio news and internet news, using the following scale, where 0=none, 1=less 30 minutes, 2=30-60 minutes, 3=1-2 hours, 4= 2-3 hours, 5=more than 4 hours.
- ***Media systems believability:*** participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with four items concentrating on television believability, newspaper believability, radio believability and Internet believability. These items were rated using a five-point Likert Scale of disagree/agree form.
- ***News media credibility:*** this variable was measured with five items that were borrowed from earlier literature on media credibility (Carr et al., 2014; Cheng & Lo, 2012; Meyer, 1988).These indicators were measured using a five-point Likert scale of agreement and disagreement form. An acceptable reliability index was reported for this variable (α=.669).
- **Attitude towards news:** this variable was measured using three items that were adapted from the literature (Lee & Chyi, 2014) and were rated using a five-point Likert scale. An example of this variable include "getting the news is enjoyable to me". The index for this variable was suitably reliable (α=.687).
- **Press freedom:** this variable was measured with four items that were adapted from the literature (Johnson & Fahmy, 2008) and were rated using a five-point Likert scale. A satisfactory reliability score of .648 were reported for this variable.
- The data was collected from all seventeen districts in Banadir region using a convenience stratified random sampling. A number of demographic variables were addressed in this study namely gender, age, education level and marital status. As for the gender variable, about two-thirds (61.4%) of the participants were males and slightly more than one-third were females. Slightly more than three quarters (78.5%) of the respondents were aged between 18 to 27 years; few of them (11.8%) were aged between 28 and 32 years, where very few of them (9.6%) were above 33 years. With regard to education level, about seventy percent of the respondents hold university degree; about ten percent of them hold diploma certificate; another ten percept each hold primary and secondary certificates. Almost sixty percent (59.5%) of the study participants were singles at the time of data collection; slightly more than one-third (38.6%) of them were married and less than two percent were widow/divorced.

The completed questionnaires were numbered and prepared for the data entry. The researcher himself has keyed-in all the questionnaires in the SPSS software and conducted a screening and scrutiny analysis, using descriptive and frequencies, in order to detect any typo errors or outliers.

The data was analysed with SPPS software using descriptive statistics, t-tests, One-Way ANOVA, Pearson correlation and Hierarchical regression analysis. The descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations and frequencies were used to analyse the news media credibility, attitude towards news and press freedom perceptions. Independent t-test were conducted to analyse the gender differences in terms of news media credibility, whereas paired sample t-test was used to analyse time spent with the media and media systems believability. One-Way ANOVA test was used to conclude about education level differences with regard to news media credibility. Finally, hierarchical regression was used to test the predictors of news media credibility using a number of blocks.

Findings

News media use

Table 1 shows the results of paired sample t-test for the time spent with news media. There were three pairs comparing time spent with radio compared to other channels such as television, newspaper and the Internet. The radio was chosen

since it is historically the most popular media channel in Somalia due to higher literacy rates and the dominance of the nomadic culture. Although the Internet is available mostly to the youth, the radio listening is still dominant.

The results suggested a significant difference between time spent with radio news compared to television news (t=3.849, p=.000), newspaper news (t=8.854, p=.000) and the Internet news (t=-4.982, p=.000). This means that the study participants spent more time with radio news than television and newspaper news. However, they spent more time with the Internet news compared to radio news.

In addition, the findings revealed a significant relationship between time spent with radio news and time spent with television, newspaper and the Internet news, with varying degree. It means that those who spent time with radio news are more likely to spent time with the news from other channels. In summary, the results suggested that respondents spent more time with the new media compared to traditional media.

Table 1: Paired Sample t-test for time spent with radio compared to other media

No.	Variables	Mean	SD	R	p	t	df	p	Cohen's d
Pair 1	Time spent with Radio news	2.55	1.585	.183	.001	3.849	320	.000	0.277
	Time spent with Television news	2.11	1.592						
Pair 2	Time spent with Radio news	2.55	1.585	.184	.001	8.854	320	.000	0.634
	Time spent with Newspaper news	1.57	1.503						
Pair 3	Time spent with Radio news	2.55	1.585	.144	.010	-4.982	320	.000	0.361
	Time spent with Internet news	3.14	1.685						

Note: these items were measured Using the following scale, where 0=none, 1=less 30 minutes, 2=30-60 minutes, 3=1-2 hours, 4= 2-3 hours, 5=more than 4 hours.

1. Media systems believability

In order to assess media channels' believability, a paired sample t-test was conducted. Again, radio believability has been compared with the believability of other media such as television, newspaper and the Internet. Three pairs have been conducted. The results in Table 2 displays that there is no difference between those who find radio as believable and those who find television as believable (t=-.097, p=.923).

In contrast, a significant difference between radio believability and newspaper believability was observed (t=6.218, p=.000). This indicates that the study participants find the radio (M=2.93, SD=1.137) more believable than the newspapers (M=2.43, SD=1.102). Analogous to time spent with the Internet, this study suggested a significant differences between radio believability and Internet believability (t=-3.787, p=.000), which means that participants found the Internet (M= 3.26, p=1.259) as more believable than the radio (M=2.93, SD=1.137).

Table 2: Paired Sample t-test for media systems believability

No.	Variables	Mean	SD	R	p	t	df	p	Cohen's d
Pair 1	Radio believability	2.93	1.137	-.029	.604	-.097	320	.923	0.008
	Television believability	2.94	1.271						
Pair 2	Radio believability	2.93	1.137	.167	.003	6.218	320	.000	0.45
	Newspaper believability	2.43	1.102						
Pair 3	Radio believability	2.93	1.137	.153	.006	-3.787	320	.000	0.28
	Internet believability	3.26	1.259						

Note: These items were measured Using this scale 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=slightly agree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

In terms of the correlation among these variables, the results suggested a positive relationship between radio believability and newspaper believability (r=.167, p=.003) as well as between radio believability and Internet believability (r=.153, p=.006). This indicates that participants who reported higher level of believability in radio also reported significantly higher levels of believability in newspapers and the Internet. Unexpectedly, there was no evidence about the relationship between radio believability and television believability (r=-.029, p=.604). Remarkably, the results of the media systems believability suggests that traditional media (radio, newspaper and television) are less believable than the new media (Internet).

2. News media credibility

To assess the means of the indictors as well as overall news media credibility, a one-sample t-test was performed. This test was conducted to determine whether news media credibility score was different from the defined score at 3.0. The results, displayed in Table 3, suggested that the respondents showed a medium agreement to the dimensions of this variable.

Respondents moderately agreed that the news media from Somali news organizations are believable (M=2.44, SD=1.213, t=-8.280, p=.000), accurate (M=2.40, SD=1.041, t=-10.402, p=.000), trustworthy (M=2.46, SD=1.145, t=-8.381, p=.000), unbiased (M=2.50, SD=1.157, t=-7.671, p=.000) and complete (M=2.70, SD=1.185, t=-4.567, p=.000). In addition, the overall news media credibility was also rated as somewhat medium (M=2.50, SD=0.754, t=-11.871, p=.000). Surprisingly, the mean scores for the individual dimensions and overall news media credibility was not high. This indicates that the respondents perceived news media as less credible (slight agreement towards majority of the dimensions).

Table 3: News media credibility

No.	Variable/items	M	SD	t	p	Cohen's d
1.	Believable	2.44	1.213	-8.280	.000	0.462
2.	Accurate	2.40	1.041	-10.402	.000	0.581
3.	Trustworthy	2.46	1.145	-8.381	.000	0.468
4.	Unbiased	2.50	1.157	-7.671	.000	0.428
5.	Complete	2.70	1.185	-4.567	.000	0.255
6.	Overall News Media Credibility	2.50	0.754	-11.871	.000	0.663

Note: These items were measured Using this scale 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=slightly agree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

3. Perceptual and attitudinal factors

One-sample t-test was performed in order to determine whether the scores for attitude towards news and press freedom was significantly different from the cut-score of 2.5. The results, displayed in Table 4, suggested that all dimensions as well as overall attitude towards news media showed significant t-test. This indicates that respondents agreed that getting the news is enjoyable to them (M=2.93, SD=1.295, t=5.970, p=.000), getting the news is advantageous to them (M=3.15, SD=1.265, t=9.155, p=.000) and getting the news makes them more knowledgeable about the current affairs (M=3.21, SD=1.325 t=9.627, p=.000). Moreover, the overall variable of attitude towards news was in positive direction (M=3.10, SD=1.016, t=10.522, p=.000).

This study also attempted to examine how the study participants perceived the press freedom in the country. The results of one-sample t-test, presented in Table 4, reveals that respondents somewhat agreed that Somali media are free to do coverage for any issue (M=2.20, SD=1.245, t=-11.48, p=.000), Somali media enjoys good freedom of publishing (M=2.58, SD=1.270, t=-5.976, p=.000), Somali media should be allowed to work free from any government control (M=2.78, SD=1.325, t=-3.033, p=.003) and Somali media should be allowed to freely criticize the government (M=2.90, SD=1.411, t=-5.084, p=.000). Overall, the respondents perceived that

Somali media enjoys medium freedom (M=2.61, SD=0.916, t=-7.552, p=.000).

Table 4: Attitude towards news media and press freedom

No.	Attitude towards News Media	M	SD	t	p	Cohen's d
1.	Getting the news is enjoyable to me	2.93	1.295	5.970	.000	0.333
2.	Getting the news is advantageous to me	3.15	1.265	9.155	.000	0.511
3.	Getting the news makes me more knowledgeable about current affairs	3.21	1.325	9.627	.000	0.537
4.	***Overall Attitude towards News Media***	3.10	1.016	10.522	.000	0.587
	Press Freedom					
1.	Somali Media are free to do coverage for any issue	2.20	1.245	-11.48	.000	0.641
2.	Somali Media enjoy good freedom of publishing	2.58	1.270	-5.976	.000	0.334
3.	Somali Media should be allowed to work free from any government control	2.78	1.325	-3.033	.003	0.169
4.	Somali Media should be allowed to freely criticize the government	2.90	1.411	-5.084	.000	0.284
	Overall Press freedom	2.61	0.916	-7.552	.000	0.422

Note: These items were measured Using this scale 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=slightly agree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

4. Demographics differences in terms of news media credibility

Two variables are selected to examine the differences in terms of news media credibility namely gender and education. These variables were selected due to their prevalence in the literature. To test the differences between males and females with regard to their perceptions on news media credibility, independent sample t-test was performed. Table 5 shows an overview of the statistics of t-test analysis. The t-test assumptions were checked before taking a further step. The Levene's test for equality of variance produced an insignificant F score (F=.212, p=.646), which indicated that equal variances are assumed. The results of t-test that are presented in Table 5 suggested that males (M=2.45, SD=.768) and females (M=2.58, SD=.727) are not significantly different in their perceptions towards the news media credibility (t_{319}=-1.579, p=.115). It is apparent from the results that males and females perceived news media credibility in a similar way.

In order to compare education level differences in perceptions of news media credibility, a One-Way ANOVA test was conducted using a Post Hoc Scheffe technique. In order to come up with a meaningful and simple categories of the education, those with primary education and below were recoded as less educated (n=43); those with secondary education and diploma certificate were recoded as moderately educated (n=53); and those with university degree and above were recoded as highly educated (n=225).

Table 5: Independent sample t-test showing gender differences in terms of news media credibility

Dependent variable	Gender	N	M	SD	t	df	p	Cohen's d
	Categories				-1.579	319	.115	
News media credibility	Male	197	2.45	.768				0.174
	Female	124	2.58	.727				
	Total	321						

Note: Levene's test for equality of variance, F=.212, p=.646, thus equal variances are assumed

The results are presented in Table 6. It shows that there are significant differences in news media credibility perceptions among less educated, moderately educated and highly educated respondents ($F_{3,320}$= 3.527, p=.031). However, the percentage of variance in news media credibility as accounted for by the education level was minimal (eta squared=0.022).

A further test was performed using post hoc Scheffe technique in order to see which categories are significantly differing from each other. The results suggested significant differences between less educated (M=2.23, SD=.752) and moderately educated individuals (M=2.62, SD=.732). This indicates that moderately educated youth perceived news media as credible compared to less educated ones. Nevertheless, no significant differences were observed between less educated and highly educated as well as between moderately and highly educated participants.

Table 6: One-Way ANOVA and Post Hoc Scheffe showing differences among different levels of study in terms of news media credibility

Variable	Education level	N	M	SD	F	df	p	Comparison
News media credibility	Less educated	43	2.23	.752	3.527	320	.031	Less-Moderately
	Moderately educated	53	2.62	.732				
	Highly educated	225	2.52	.751				
	Total	321	2.50	.754				

Note: Effect size for ANOVA (partial eta-squared)= 0.022

5. Predictors of news media credibility

In order to evaluate the predictors of news media credibility, a multiple hierarchical regression analysis was performed. The demographic variables such as gender and education level were entered into the first block, news media use such as time spent in television, radio, newspapers, and Internet were entered into the second block. Media systems believability such as television believability, radio believability, newspapers believability and the Internet believability were entered into the third block, whereas the perceptual and attitudinal factors such as press freedom and attitude towards news were entered into the last block. Before interpreting the results, the assumptions of regression analysis was checked and found to be robustly achieved. A multicollinearity check was performed using tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) as shown in Table 7. No collinearity issue was detected since the scores of tolerance and VIF were below the threshold of 1 and 5 respectively (Chatterjee & Yilmaz, 1992).

Table 7 provides the summary statistics for the main predictors of news media credibility. The results of the regression test indicated that a number of variables have contributed in predicting news media credibility among the study participants. First, demographic variables particularly education and gender had no prediction on news media credibility. In other words, news trust is not associated with males and highly educated individuals.

Table 7: multiple regression analysis showing predictors of news media credibility

Predictors	Beta (β)	T	p	Tolerance	VIF
Demographic Variables					
Gender	.009	.192	.848	.966	1.036
Education	-.033	-.694	.489	.948	1.055
	$F_{2, 320}$=1.727, p=.179, Adjusted R^2=.005, (f^2=*.0050)*				
News Media Use					
Time spent with Television News	.022	.427	.670	.774	1.291
Time spent with Newspaper News	.095	1.814	.071	.759	1.317
Time spent with Radio News	-.132	-2.662	.008	.859	1.164
Time spent with Internet News	.094	1.953	.052	.899	1.112
	$F_{6, 320}$=3.928, p=.001, Adjusted R^2=.052, (f^2=*.055)*				
Media Systems Believability					
Television believability	-.035	-.683	.495	.801	1.249
Newspaper believability	.137	2.726	.007	.829	1.206
Radio believability	.125	2.506	.013	.845	1.183
Internet believability	.071	1.480	.140	.907	1.102
	$F_{10, 320}$=6.255, p=.000, Adjusted R^2=.141, (f^2=*.164)*				
Perceptual and Attitudinal Variables					
Attitude towards news media	.414	8.261	.000	.835	1.197
Press freedom perceptions	.128	2.529	.012	.819	1.220
	$F_{12, 320}$=14.053, p=.000, Adjusted R^2=.329 (f^2=*.490)*				

Second, although news media use (both traditional and new media) were found to have significantly predicted news media credibility ($F_{6, 320}$=3.928, p=.001), with a reasonable percentage of 5.2% (Adjusted R^2=.052), it is noticeable that radio usage only negatively and significantly predicted news media credibly (β=-.132, t=-2.662, p=.008), compared to television use (β=.022, t=.427, p=.67), newspaper use (β=.095, t=1.814, p=.071) and Internet use (β=.094, t=1.953, p=.052). This means that higher radio news use is associated with low level of news media credibility.

Third, media systems believability has managed to contribute about 14% of variance in news media credibility (Adjusted R^2=.141). The effect of this contribution can be considered as medium effect (f^2=.164). Two measures of this variable were able to predict news media credibility ($F_{10, 320}$=6.255, p=.000). Specifically, news media credibility among the study respondents was positively and significantly predicted by newspaper believability (β=.137, t=2.726, p=.007) and radio believability (β=.125, t=2.506, p=.013). This indicates that a higher level of news media credibility is associated with higher level of trust in both the newspapers and radio. In contrast, television believability (β=-.035, t=-.683, p=.495) and Internet believability (β=.071, t=1.480, p=.140) had failed to exert any impact on news media credibility. This means that that news media credibility has nothing to do with trust in television and the Internet.

Finally, the perceptual and attitudinal factors had made the highest contribution towards news media credibility (almost one-third, Adjusted R^2=.329). What stands out in the Table 7 is the large effect size that attitudinal and perceptual factors exerted on news media credibility (f^2=.490). The results suggested that attitude towards the news (β=.414, t=8.261, p=.000) had highest prediction on news media credibility than press freedom (β=.128, t=2.529, p=.012). This indicates that the more positive the attitude of the respondents towards news the higher the possibility of perceiving the news media as credible.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study sets out to examine news media credibility predictors by looking at the contribution of demographic characteristics, perceptional and attitudinal factors. Employing a convenience stratified sampling of Somali youth living in Benadir region, the study revealed significant differences in terms of educational level, indicating that those moderately educated perceived news media as more credible than the less educated participants did. This finding is contrary to previous studies (Tsfati & Ariely, 2014; Yamamoto & Nah, 2018), which have suggested that highly educated individuals are more skeptical than the less educated ones. A possible explanation of this

inconsistency might be related to the preferred platform, where someone perceived their preferred media channel as more credible (Johnson & Fahmy, 2008). Moreover, this study found that males and females are not significantly different in terms of news media credibility. This result seems to be consistent with those found by a previous study (Yamamoto & Nah, 2018) and contradicts of those found by others (Andaleeb et al., 2012; Tsfati & Ariely, 2014).

This study postulated that radio news consumption is higher than the other platforms such newspaper, television and the internet. Thus, this study found partial support for this assumption. The results discovered that youth spent more time with radio compared to television and newspapers but not the internet, indicating that internet news consumption was predominant among the youth compared to other traditional media channels. On one hand, this result corroborates the ideas of Ahmed (2018), who suggested that Somali college students exposed most often to news through social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter. On the other hand, this finding is contrary to previous studies (Ahmed, 2014; Andaleeb & Rahman, 2015; Freeman, 2013), which have suggested that television as the most desired platform for news consumption.

Another postulation by this study is related to credibility perceptions. This study found that the youth perceived internet as more believable compared to radio, which indicates support for the findings of Carr et al. (2014). This finding also supports the notion that the higher exposure to a medium is related to its perceived credibility as found by previous studies (Hopmann et al., 2015; Kalogeropoulos et al., 2019; Strömbäck et al., 2020).

Participants in this study have rated the Internet as the most credible among the news channels. Two explanations are possible for this finding. First, the respondents may evaluate the credibility based on the rapidity of content availability rather than the medium. Through the online news portals, they can access news instantaneously. The second explanations is related to the sample characteristics. This study collected data from the capital city of Banadir region, where internet technologies and education sectors have immensely evolved in recent years. Thus, the Internet could be their favourite medium. The literature also supports this notion (Johnson & Fahmy, 2008; Tsfati & Ariely, 2014) where one evaluates his or her most used medium as most believable source. Finally, the bivariate correlation test revealed a positive relationship between internet believability and radio believability. This indicates that those who perceived radio as believable also perceived the Internet to be believable.

Moreover, this study postulated that demographic variables, news media use, media systems believability, attitude towards news media and press freedom perceptions are predictors of news media credibility. The study found a partial support for these postulations. The highest variance (33%) in news media credibility was accounted for by perceptual and attitudinal factors (press freedom and attitude towards news media). This is followed by media systems believability (television believability, radio believability, newspaper believability, and internet believability) with about 14% of the variance, and news media use (time spent with radio, television, newspaper, and internet) with almost 6% of the variance. Only one indicator of news media use (time spent with radio) was able to exert a significant negative impact on news media credibility. This finding contradicts of that found by El-Nawawy (2006), which suggested that radio use was not associated with its credibility perceptions. Two indicators of media systems believability (radio believability and newspaper believability) had significant positive prediction on news media credibility. This result is in agreement with those obtained by previous research (Andaleeb et al., 2012; Golan & Baker, 2012; Hopmann et al., 2015; Strömbäck et al., 2020).

This study also found attitude towards news media significantly and positively explained news media credibility among the youth. This indicates that the more positive attitude held by the youth towards the news, the more likely they perceive it as credible. This finding mirrors those of the previous studies that have examined the relationship of media use with its perceived credibility perceptions (Ahmed et al., 2018; Arendt et al., 2019; Lee & Chyi, 2014; Sun et al., 2014). For instance, Sun et al. (2014) found a significant prediction of attitude towards media on newspapers' credibility among a sample of Hong Kong audiences.

This study postulated a significant prediction of press freedom on news media credibility. The results supported this hypothesis. This indicates that those who hold a positive perception of press freedom are likely to perceive the news media as credible. Although these results differ from some published studies (Johnson & Fahmy, 2008; Soon & Tan, 2016), they are consistent with those of Bucy et al. (2014) who studied public evaluation of the press during crisis.

Finally, the most surprising aspect of the data lies in the insignificant contribution of the demographic variables such as gender and education. This means gender and education level were not able to exert significant impact on news media credibility. This indicates being male and highly educated individual is not associated with credibility towards the news media. Although this finding supports the findings of previous research (Cassidy, 2007; Yamamoto & Nah, 2018), which could not establish a positive prediction, it contradicts the findings of other studies (Andaleeb et al., 2012; Tsfati & Ariely, 2014), that found a positive relationship between media use and media credibility.

Despite these promising results of our study, there are some deficiencies that need to be addressed by the future research. This study focused on news media as general. Further segmentation of news (local vs. international news, soft news vs. hard news) is needed in order to account for greater variance. The literature (Miller & Kurpius, 2010) suggests that hard news is perceived more credible than the soft news. Furthermore, it is suggested for future studies to employ a diverse sample (different age categories and occupations) to gain a better understanding of the prediction of news media credibility. Using a convenience sample is another limitation of this study. It is recommended to employ probability-sampling approach in order to generalise these results to the wider population. Finally, brand loyalty may explain partly the news media credibility (Oyedeji, 2010). To illustrate this, the BBC radio (Somali service) has long history with the Somali audiences and it was the only alternative news source during the military regime, during which the country has only radio station. Maybe the brand loyalty particularly with BBC facilitates a higher credibility index. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies should examine media use and media systems believability with special reference to specific platforms.

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