

The Transformation of News Consumption: The Rise of Web News Channels in Himachal Pradesh

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Abstract: This study investigates the rise and impact of web news channels in Himachal Pradesh, particularly in the context of political communication and election coverage. Indian journalism has evolved significantly from its print roots to include television and, more recently, digital journalism. The proliferation of web news channels has transformed news consumption patterns, especially in regions like Himachal Pradesh, where local issues often receive limited coverage from national media.

The research employs both exploratory and analytical methods, engaging a diverse sample of 600 participants, including voters, employees, and owners of web news channels, as well as politicians. Data collection involved meticulously crafted questionnaires, analyzed using SPSS 20 and Microsoft Excel to ensure robust statistical insights.

Findings reveal a growing preference for web news channels over mainstream media, attributed to their accessibility and engaging content. Politicians showed the highest agreement with this trend, while channel employees were more critical. Age also plays a significant role in media preferences, with older voters increasingly favoring web news channels for election-related information.

This study highlights the dynamic nature of the regional media landscape, emphasizing the importance of localized, digital content in engaging a digitally savvy audience. The insights gained underscore the potential of web news channels to reshape political communication and public engagement, suggesting significant implications for media strategies and political campaigning.

Keywords: *Web News Channels, Digital Journalism, Political communication, News consumption patterns*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Indian print journalism has a history spanning nearly 250 years, while television journalism is about 60 years old, and digital or web journalism is just around 15 years old. The foundation of Indian journalism was laid in 1780 with the publication of *The Bengal Gazette* by James Augustus Hickey. Newspapers such as *The Madras Courier*, *The Bombay Courier*, *Sambad Kaumudi*, *Bombay Samachar*, *The Times of India*, *Amrit Bazaar Patrika*, and *The Hindu* played a crucial role in shaping Indian journalism. The media's contribution to India's independence movement is well-documented.

Post-independence, the golden era of Indian television began with the establishment of Doordarshan, India's public service broadcaster, on September 15, 1959. Initially launched with a 5-kW transmitter and a makeshift studio, Doordarshan expanded nationwide by 1982 (Natarajan, 2010). Until 1991, Doordarshan was the sole television broadcaster in India. However, economic liberalization in the early 1990s paved the way for private television channels. By 2005, India had over 200 digital channels, which grew to nearly 800 by 2012, with more than 400 dedicated to news and current affairs. Private channels like CNN, Star Plus, and Zee TV broke Doordarshan's monopoly, initially focusing on entertainment. Eventually, private news channels emerged, catering to niche audiences. To attract viewers and advertisers, news networks began producing diverse, engaging content. The launch of *Zee News* in 1995 marked India's first private news channel, leading to a boom in private television news networks. Prominent media houses such as Aaj Tak, NDTV, India TV, and News 24 transitioned from producing content for Doordarshan to launching their own channels (Natarajan, 2010) (Rajendran, 2019).

By 2010, improved internet speeds, cheaper data, and the rise of

social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, and Instagram accelerated digital adoption in India. Recognizing the growing digital trend among youth, Indian news organizations began establishing their presence on the web. The launch of *India Post Live* on March 31, 2014, marked a significant milestone as India's first live Web TV news conversation channel, pioneering interactive video journalism (Radadiya, 2021).

Unlike the West, where internet adoption followed a gradual progression, India leapfrogged directly into the smartphone era. Most Indians never owned PCs or landlines but embraced smartphones due to their affordability and accessibility. In 2000, only 20 million Indians had internet access, rising to 100 million by 2010, while 1.1 billion remained offline. However, with smartphones and cheap mobile data becoming widespread, internet penetration surged. By 2015, 317 million Indians were online, increasing to 462 million by 2017, with three new users joining every second (Srinivas, 2012).

Web News Channels in Himachal Pradesh

With a literacy rate exceeding 80%, Himachal Pradesh has witnessed a surge in web news channels. National news rarely covers the state's events unless they involve major political developments, natural disasters, or tragedies like landslides, floods, or snowfall. This limited coverage is due to Himachal's small size, its minor role in national politics, and its minimal representation in the Lok Sabha, with only four seats. Most national news networks lack bureaus in the state capital, Shimla, relying instead on stringers or sending reporters from Chandigarh when significant events occur. However, during Assembly elections, web news channels in Himachal Pradesh become highly active, as local issues and public concerns receive little attention from national media (Aggarwal, 2019). The rise of web news channels reflects shifting media consumption patterns and the

AND ENGINEERING TRENDS

growing digital engagement of the population. While print and television previously dominated, the expansion of affordable internet and smartphones has fueled the popularity of web-based platforms. These channels cater to regional linguistic and cultural identities, using social media to amplify their reach. Younger, digitally connected audiences increasingly prefer them over traditional outlets.

Himachal Pradesh's web news channels leverage advanced content management systems and digital distribution networks, focusing on hyper-local news. Their strategies emphasize audience engagement through interactive content, social media, and user feedback. Monetization remains a challenge, with advertising as the primary revenue source, though alternative models like community funding, subscriptions, and sponsored content are emerging (Gupta, 2023). These channels face stiff competition from national and international outlets, constant technological advancements, and credibility concerns in an era of misinformation. To stay relevant, they emphasize credible journalism and technological innovation. Compared to national platforms, they prioritize regional content, making them a vital news source for local audiences. Future trends may include AI-driven news aggregation, immersive storytelling, and hyper-local journalism. However, sustaining growth will require adapting to evolving technology and audience preferences.

II. Review of literature

A review of the literature revealed that web news channels are one of the low-cost organizations that have a significant impact on the younger generation. Web news channels have a big effect on the political views of young people. Today, everyone is present on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, and web news outlets have a 100 percent presence on these social media sites. After conducting a literature review, it was enlightening to know that the practice of journalism has changed since the arrival of web news outlets.

Aggarwal and Kumar (2019) This study examines the notion that, during election campaigns, all media plays a significant role as a source of information for young voters, but some media are more significant than others. The mass media is viewed as the most significant, followed by social media. Outdoor media and group communication were equally essential and were followed by individual communication. This research contradicts the cognitive communication and campaign communication models. Not only were mass media and social media found to be viewed as more essential than other media, but they were also found to be more likely to promote success. Social media, as well as mass media, were found to be more likely than other media to influence youth political efficacy and political involvement.

Kumari (2019) This study's analysis of newspaper content and discussions with Indian mainstream media editors reveal that social media is now integral to news production. Journalists across print, broadcast, and online platforms acknowledge its impact on their work and the profession. Twitter is the most used platform for journalism, while Facebook and WhatsApp dominate personal

use, with WhatsApp gaining traction in newsroom operations.

Indian journalists rely on social media for story leads, news dissemination, and audience engagement, making journalism more interactive. While it facilitates information gathering and audience participation, it also complicates fact-checking and source verification. Social media has become a key news source for mainstream newspapers, influencing traditional journalism practices. Newspapers frequently cite social media, either as primary or secondary sources, often trusting verified accounts. Social media desks in newsrooms now monitor updates, provide story leads, and promote content across platforms, reflecting its growing role in modern journalism.

Kushwaha (2019) This study examined the role of new media in political communication during India's 2014 Parliamentary Elections, emphasizing its growing influence on electoral strategies. While most political parties incorporated social media into their campaigns, its impact on election outcomes varied, highlighting the need to balance online efforts with traditional ground strategies. New media enhances accessibility to political information, enables instant mass reach through platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, and facilitates strategic, targeted campaigning. It also strengthens supporter mobilization, allowing politicians to directly engage with voters and amplify their messages through digital networks. However, while new media provides unprecedented reach and engagement, it does not guarantee electoral success on its own.

Chauhan (2020) The study highlights how social media has transformed newsroom operations in India, influencing news sourcing, selection, production, and dissemination. It proposes the "Four Cs of Social Media Influence"—collaboration, cost-effectiveness, challenges, and compulsions—shaping traditional media's use of digital platforms. Social media fosters participatory journalism, decentralizing news production and enriching mainstream reporting with user-generated content. Real-time footage of events like disasters and riots enhances authenticity and audience engagement. Additionally, journalists' direct interaction with viewers builds trust and credibility, increasing audience engagement with credible sources.

Naidu (2021) This study examines social media's influence on voter behavior in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, comparing it with traditional media. While social media spreads information rapidly, television and newspapers have a stronger impact on voter decisions due to concerns over reliability. The study found that 44.2% of semi-urban and rural residents use social media for politics, spending an average of 1.98 hours daily, though this does not always translate into changed voting behavior. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube influence voter choices, but their impact varies by education and income, with no significant effect from religion. Higher social media engagement correlates with greater political interest and participation, yet political knowledge alone does not alter voting patterns. To maximize influence, political parties must provide credible, engaging content. The study calls for further research on misinformation's role in voter

decision-making.

III.Objectives

1. To explore whether web news channels are more popular than mainstream media

IV. Research methodology and conceptual framework

The current research is aimed at exploring the rise of web news channels in Himachal Pradesh. In order to navigate this uncharted territory, as no prior research has been conducted on this specific topic, the study primarily utilizes two research methods: exploratory and analytical.

4.1. Research Design

In the context of this study, titled "The Transformation of News Consumption: The Rise of Web News Channels in Himachal Pradesh," the geographic focus was on Himachal Pradesh. The research engaged a sample size of 600 individuals, including various stakeholders: 100 employees from web news channels, 50 owners of these channels, 50 politicians, and 400 viewers of these channels.

Primary data was collected through meticulously crafted questionnaires, and subsequent analysis incorporated appropriate statistical tools. The sampling strategy employed purposive sampling, simple random sampling, and cluster and area sampling techniques. The majority of the study's participants ranged in age from 21 to 55 years. Given Shimla's status as the state capital and a hub for numerous web channels, the research was concentrated in the regions of Solan, Shimla, and Kangra in Himachal Pradesh. The selection of Shimla and its surrounding areas was strategic due to the heightened political engagement observed in these regions.

4.2 Tools & Statistical Analysis Techniques

In this study, data is gathered from primary sources and is subjected to rigorous analysis using statistical and mathematical methods. The research process includes posing structured questions based on a 5-point Likert scale to gather information from participants. To mitigate response bias and ensure the reliability of the findings, the questionnaire incorporates both affirmative and negative statements. The data thus acquired is processed and examined using SPSS 20 and Microsoft Excel for comprehensive data analysis.

4.3 Sampling

The objective of this study is to seek answers to one critical question that hold significant relevance and that question was:

To explore whether web news channels are more popular than mainstream media

To achieve this, questionnaires were meticulously developed for four distinct groups of individuals, each designed to elicit insightful responses pertinent to these pressing questions. This approach aims to gather comprehensive and diverse perspectives, thereby enriching the understanding of these vital issues.

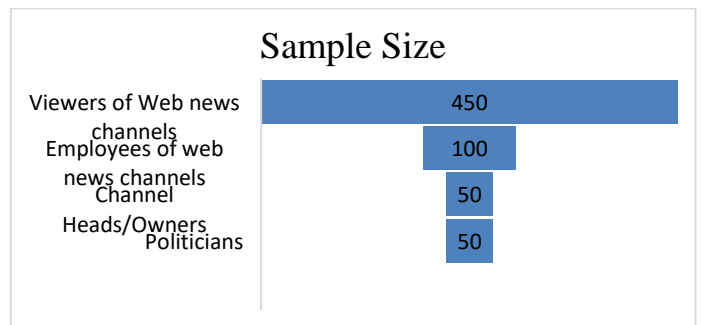
Table Title 4.1: Four different categories of sample for

questionnaire

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4
Voters of Himachal Pradesh/Audience of Web News Channels	Employees of Web News Channels	Channel Heads/Owners of Web News Channels	Politicians/Political Party workers of Himachal Pradesh

Questions were tailored for each of the four respondent groups, ensuring relevant and insightful responses. While some were common across all categories, others were specific to each group, aligning with the study's objectives. This strategic approach helped obtain accurate and objective data for a comprehensive analysis.

Table Title 4.2: Sample size for each questionnaire



For this research, the focus has been on selecting employees and owners of web news channels in Himachal Pradesh that have been operational for several years and have achieved significant viewership. This selection criteria is based on the channels' established presence in the region and their success in attracting a substantial audience.

Table Title 4.3: Top 20 Channels Selected for Employee and Channel Owner Sample

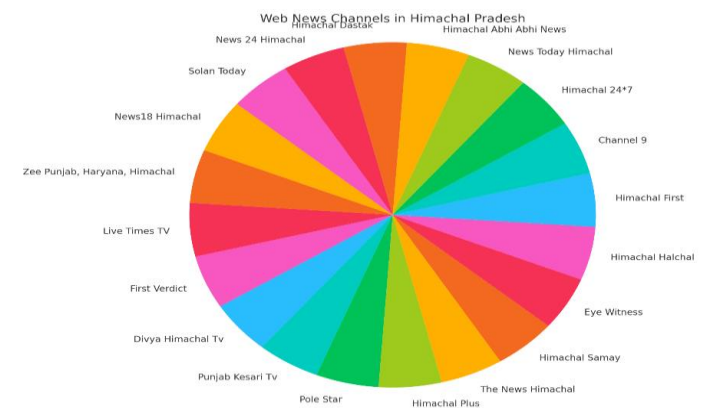


Table 4.3 presents data from prominent web news channels in Himachal Pradesh, along with select others. The study focuses on reputable channels with established operations, noting that many journalists manage their own web channels alongside affiliations with esteemed organizations.

Table Title 4.4: Political Parties Selected for study

Sr. No.	Political Party
1.	Indian National Congress
2.	Bhartiya Janta Party

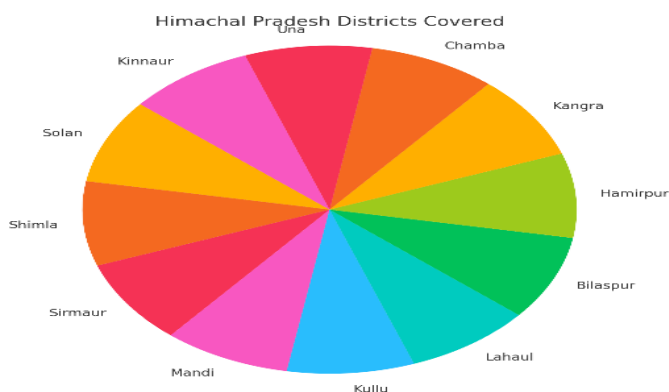
For the purpose of this research, a sample comprising two political parties was selected, namely the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress Party, due to their longstanding influence and presence in Himachal Pradesh. Historically, the political landscape of Himachal has been characterized by a pattern where one of these parties gains power for a five-year term, only to be succeeded by the other in the subsequent term.

Table Title 4.5: Political Party sample size for data collection

Political Party	Sample Size
BJP	25
CONGRESS	25

The study collected data from 50 political respondents, equally divided between Himachal Pradesh's two major parties: the BJP and Congress (25 each). This balanced sampling ensures unbiased comparative analysis of media consumption preferences.

Table Title 4.5: District sample size for data collection



To gather audience/voters data, the research methodology involved selecting samples from residents across all 12 districts of Himachal Pradesh. This approach was adopted to ensure the acquisition of accurate and representative information for the study.

4.4 Data Collection

This research employed a dual-method approach, combining primary and secondary data collection. Primary data provided firsthand insights, while secondary data from existing sources offered context and depth. This integrated approach ensured a thorough and well-rounded analysis.

4.4.1 Primary Data

This research primarily collected data through structured questionnaires completed by participants across 12 districts of Himachal Pradesh. The sample included 600 respondents: 450 web news channel viewers who are also voters, 50 state

politicians, 100 web news channel employees, and 50 channel owners or executives.

Data collection involved in-person visits where tailored questionnaires were administered to four respondent groups—viewers, employees, owners or heads of web news channels, and local politicians. While some questions were common across groups, others were designed to address specific perspectives, ensuring alignment with research objective. This primary data approach provided detailed, targeted insights that secondary sources could not offer, enhancing the study's depth and relevance.

4.4.2 Secondary data

Secondary data for this study was obtained from government publications, books, scholarly articles, journals, periodicals, magazines, and electronic databases. These sources provided valuable insights while ensuring cost-effectiveness and time efficiency. However, verifying their accuracy and reliability was essential to maintain the integrity and validity of the research findings.

4.5 Development of the questionnaire

This method is essential for data collection, allowing exploration of diverse perspectives on the research topic. The questionnaire includes both closed and open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions use a five-point Likert scale, from 'Strongly Disagree' (1) to 'Strongly Agree' (5), enabling quantifiable analysis. Open-ended questions provide respondents the flexibility to express their views in detail, offering qualitative insights. This combination ensures a comprehensive understanding of the subject from multiple perspectives.

V.Data Analysis

Table 5.1: Web news channels have become more popular than mainstream media (Voters/Web Channel Employees/Web Channel Heads/Politicians)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Web news channels have become more popular than mainstream media?	410	2.017	1.0192	.0503	1.918	2.116	1.0	5.0
Voters	108	1.593	1.1110	.1069	1.381	1.805	1.0	5.0
Channel Employees	70	1.900	.7830	.0936	1.713	2.087	1.0	4.0
Channel Owner/Head	50	2.440	.7602	.1075	2.224	2.656	1.0	4.0
Politician	638	1.966	1.0142	.0402	1.887	2.044	1.0	5.0
Total								

+The survey data indicates varying perceptions among distinct stakeholder groups regarding the popularity of web news channels relative to mainstream media. Voters, representing the largest sample size (N=410), reported a mean score of 2.017 with a standard deviation of 1.0192, suggesting a moderate agreement with the statement. Channel Employees (N=108) showed the lowest mean score of 1.593 and a high standard deviation of 1.1110, indicating less agreement and more variability in their responses. Channel Owner/Heads (N=70) provided a mean score

AND ENGINEERING TRENDS

of 1.900, and Politicians (N=50) reported the highest mean score of 2.440, both suggesting different levels of agreement with the popularity of web news channels.

The confidence intervals for mean scores indicate the range in which the true mean score for the population is likely to lie; these intervals are relatively narrow, signifying a moderate level of precision in the estimates. The minimum and maximum scores, ranging from 1.0 to 5.0 across all groups, denote the full scale of the survey responses.

Overall, the aggregated data for the total sample (N=638) yielded a mean score of 1.966 with a standard deviation of 1.0142, which implies a slight inclination towards the web news channels being more popular than mainstream media but with considerable variation across responses.

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Web news channels have become more popular than mainstream media?	Between Groups	27.667	3	9.222	9.317	.000
	Within Groups	627.575	634	.990		
	Total	655.241	637			

In examining the comparative popularity between web news channels and mainstream media, an ANOVA was conducted to assess the variability of responses among different groups. The ANOVA table indicates a significant effect of group type on the perception of popularity. With a sum of squares between groups at 27.667 and within groups at 627.575, the calculated F-value is 9.317. This is associated with a significance level (p-value) of .000, which is below the conventional threshold of .05, indicating that the group differences are statistically significant.

The degree of freedom (df) between groups is 3, reflecting the number of groups minus one, and the df within groups is 634, corresponding to the total number of observations minus the number of groups. The mean square, which is the sum of squares divided by its respective df, is 9.222 between groups and .990 within groups. The relatively high F-value suggests that the variation among group means is greater than what might be expected by chance.

Table 5.2: If you selected option a or b then why (Voters/Web Channel Employees/Web Channel Heads/Politicians)

			Respondents' category				
			Voters	Channel Employees	Channel Owner/Head	Politician	Total
If you selected option a or b then why?	It is readily available.	Count	36	19	6	9	70
		Expected Count	45.0	11.8	7.7	5.5	70.0
		% within If you selected option a or b then why?	51.4%	27.1%	8.6%	12.9%	100.0%
		Standardized Residual	-1.3	2.1	-.6	1.5	
It can be watched anywhere, anytime.		Count	275	68	55	33	431
		Expected Count	277.0	73.0	47.3	33.8	431.0
		% within If you selected option a or b then why?	63.8%	15.8%	12.8%	7.7%	100.0%
		Standardized Residual	-1	-.6	1.1	-.1	
Its news is served by making it interesting.		Count	63	3	7	5	78
		Expected Count	50.1	13.2	8.6	6.1	78.0
		% within If you selected option a or b then why?	80.8%	3.8%	9.0%	6.4%	100.0%
		Standardized Residual	1.8	-2.8	-.5	-.5	
Others		Count	36	18	2	3	59
		Expected Count	37.9	10.0	6.5	4.6	59.0
		% within If you selected option a or b then why?	61.0%	30.5%	3.4%	5.1%	100.0%
		Standardized Residual	-.3	2.5	-1.8	-.8	
Total		Count	410	108	70	50	638
		Expected Count	410.0	108.0	70.0	50.0	638.0
		% within If you selected option a or b then why?	64.3%	16.9%	11.0%	7.8%	100.0%

The data from the crosstabulation presents the distribution of responses across different categories of respondents concerning their reasons for perceiving web news channels as more popular than mainstream media. The largest proportion of voters indicated that their selection is based on the 'availability' of web news channels (51.4%) and their ability to be 'watched anywhere, anytime' (63.8%). In contrast, channel employees constituted a higher than expected count (2.1 standardized residual) who chose 'availability' as their reason, suggesting a significant variance from the expected response distribution.

For the option 'it can be watched anywhere, anytime,' channel owner/heads had a marginally higher count than expected (1.1 standardized residual), while channel employees were slightly less than expected (-0.6 standardized residual), though these deviations were not as pronounced. Interestingly, voters made up the overwhelming majority of those who selected 'its news is served by making it interesting' (80.8%), indicating a strong preference within this group for engaging content delivery.

The 'Others' category also showed a significant discrepancy for channel employees with a standardized residual of 2.5, pointing to a preference for reasons not listed in the main categories.

Overall, the standardized residuals indicate where the observed counts significantly differ from the expected counts, and in this case, channel employees show notable differences in their reasons for the popularity of web news channels. This could imply that the experiences or insights of these respondents regarding web news channels' operations distinctly influence their perceptions.

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	32.219 ^a	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	34.690	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.459	1	.019
N of Valid Cases	638		

The Chi-Square test results indicate a significant association between the categories under investigation. The Pearson Chi-Square value of 32.219 with 9 degrees of freedom and a p-value

AND ENGINEERING TRENDS

of .000 suggests a statistically significant difference between expected and observed frequencies in one or more categories. Similarly, the Likelihood Ratio, another measure of goodness-of-fit, has a value of 34.690 with 9 degrees of freedom, and an associated p-value of .000, corroborating the findings of the Pearson Chi-Square test.

Furthermore, the Linear-by-Linear Association, with a value of 5.459 and 1 degree of freedom, yields a p-value of .019. This indicates that there is a statistically significant linear trend between the ordinal variables being studied. Given that this p-value is greater than .000 but less than .05, the strength of this linear association is less robust than the overall association detected by the Pearson Chi-Square, yet it remains statistically significant.

The total number of valid cases considered in this analysis is 638, providing a substantial sample for the evaluation of the association between the variables in question.

Table 5.3: Which of these media do you prefer to choose for election-related news (Voters)

		Which of these media do you prefer to choose for election-related news?				Total	
		Newspaper	Television	Radio	Web News Channels		
Age	21-30 years	Count	35	95	7	107	244
		Expected Count	32.7	83.3	5.4	122.6	244.0
		% within Age	14.3%	38.9%	2.9%	43.9%	100.0%
		Standardized Residual	-.4	1.3	.7	-1.4	
	31 - 40 years	Count	13	30	1	64	108
		Expected Count	14.5	36.9	2.4	54.3	108.0
		% within Age	12.0%	27.8%	.9%	59.3%	100.0%
		Standardized Residual	-.4	-1.1	-.9	1.3	
	41 - 55 years	Count	7	15	1	35	58
		Expected Count	7.8	19.8	1.3	29.1	58.0
		% within Age	12.1%	25.9%	1.7%	60.3%	100.0%
		Standardized Residual	-.3	-1.1	-.2	1.1	
Total	Count	55	140	9	206	410	
	Expected Count	55.0	140.0	9.0	206.0	410.0	
	% within Age	13.4%	34.1%	2.2%	50.2%	100.0%	

The data illustrates the distribution of preferred media sources for election-related news among three distinct age cohorts: 21-30 years, 31-40 years, and 41-55 years. In the youngest cohort (21-30 years), a slight overrepresentation in the preference for Television and a notable underrepresentation for Web News Channels were observed, as evidenced by the standardized residuals of 1.3 and -1.4, respectively. In this group, 43.9% favored Web News Channels while 38.9% preferred Television.

The middle age group (31-40 years) showed a higher preference for Web News Channels (59.3%) than expected, with a standardized residual of 1.3, while Television showed a negative residual of -1.1, indicating less preference than anticipated.

Among the oldest participants (41-55 years), the preference for Web News Channels was also higher than expected (60.3%), with a standardized residual of 1.1. Here, Television again had a lower preference than expected.

The total counts for each media type align with the expected counts, confirming the sample size's adequacy. Overall, the data suggests a trend where Web News Channels are preferred over traditional media such as Newspapers and Television, especially among the middle and older age cohorts. This reflects a possible shift in news consumption patterns, which may be attributed to the accessibility and perceived immediacy of web-based news sources.

In sum, these results underscore the significance of age as a determinant of media preference for election-related news, with a clear inclination towards digital media among the surveyed population.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.739 ^a	6	.097
Likelihood Ratio	10.973	6	.089
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.494	1	.011
N of Valid Cases	410		

The analysis conducted through Chi-Square tests investigates the presence of a statistically significant relationship between age groups and their media preferences for election-related information. The Pearson Chi-Square value of 10.739 with 6 degrees of freedom (df) results in an asymptotic significance (p-value) of .097. This p-value is marginally above the conventional alpha level of .05, suggesting that there is not a statistically significant association at the 5% significance level. However, it indicates a trend that could be considered notable and may warrant further exploration, especially in a larger sample size or different contexts.

The Likelihood Ratio, another measure of the goodness-of-fit, stands at 10.973 with 6 df, yielding a p-value of .089, which supports the Pearson's findings and suggests a similar conclusion regarding the overall association.

Significantly, the Linear-by-Linear Association shows a value of 6.494 with 1 df and has a p-value of .011, indicating a statistically significant linear trend between the ordinal variables. This suggests that as age increases, there may be a consistent trend in the change in media preference for election-related news.

The total number of valid cases for this analysis is 410, which is a substantial number to support the reliability of the test results.

VI. Discussion

Popularity of Web News Channels vs. Mainstream Media

The data from Table 5.1 reveals the perceptions of different stakeholders on the popularity of web news channels compared to mainstream media. The mean scores indicate varying levels of agreement among the groups:

Voters: With a mean score of 2.017, voters exhibit moderate agreement with the statement that web news channels are more popular than mainstream media. The relatively high standard deviation (1.0192) suggests diverse opinions within this group.

Channel Employees: This group shows the lowest mean score (1.593) and the highest standard deviation (1.1110), indicating less agreement and more variability. This could reflect a more critical perspective on the popularity of web news channels, possibly due to their direct involvement in the industry.

Channel Owners/Heads: With a mean score of 1.900 and a lower standard deviation (0.7830), this group's responses are less varied and suggest moderate agreement.

Politicians: Politicians report the highest mean score (2.440) with

AND ENGINEERING TRENDS

a relatively low standard deviation (0.7602), indicating stronger agreement that web news channels have become more popular.

The ANOVA results further support these findings, indicating statistically significant differences between the groups ($F=9.317$, $p=0.000$). This suggests that perceptions of web news channels' popularity vary significantly across different stakeholders.

Reasons for Preference

Table 5.2 analyzes the perceived popularity of web news channels across respondent groups. The most common reason is accessibility anytime, anywhere, cited by 63.8% of voters, 15.8% of channel employees, 12.8% of owners/heads, and 7.7% of politicians. Notably, channel employees and politicians emphasize availability, while voters primarily appreciate the engaging content, with 80.8% selecting this option.

Media Preference for Election-Related News

Table 5.3 focuses on voters' media preferences for election-related news across different age groups. The youngest cohort (21-30 years) shows a balanced preference for web news channels (43.9%) and television (38.9%), while older age groups (31-40 years and 41-55 years) increasingly favor web news channels (59.3% and 60.3%, respectively).

The Chi-Square tests indicate a marginally significant association between age and media preference (Pearson Chi-Square $p=0.097$, Likelihood Ratio $p=0.089$), with a significant linear trend (Linear-by-Linear Association $p=0.011$). This suggests that as age increases, there is a notable shift towards preferring web news channels over traditional media for election-related information.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.739 ^a	6	.097
Likelihood Ratio	10.973	6	.089
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.494	1	.011
N of Valid Cases	410		

VI. Conclusion

The analysis indicates that web news channels are perceived as more popular than mainstream media by various stakeholders, with notable differences in the strength of this perception. Politicians show the highest level of agreement, while channel employees are more critical. The primary reasons for this popularity are the accessibility and engaging nature of web news channels.

Furthermore, age significantly influences media preferences for election-related news, with a clear trend towards increasing preference for web news channels among older voters. This shift underscores the growing importance of digital media in political communication and public engagement, particularly in the context of elections.

Overall, these findings suggest a dynamic media landscape where web news channels are becoming increasingly influential, potentially reshaping how political information is consumed and disseminated. Future research could further explore these trends and their implications for media strategies and political

campaigning.

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