

PERCEPTION TOWARDS THE CREDIBILITY OF INFORMATION IN INTERNET AMONG YOUNG MALAY GENERATION

Prof. Madya Dr. Mohd Sazili Shahibi
Malay Thought & Leadership Institute,
Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)
Aras 3, Blok 11,
Intekma Resort & Convention Centre
40000 Shah Alam, Selangor Darul Ehsan
sazilishahibi@yahoo.com

Mazwani Ayu Mazlan
Faculty of Information Management
UiTM Kampus Puncak Perdana,
No. 1, Jalan Pulau Angsa AU10/A,
Section U10, Shah Alam
Selangor, 40150
Malaysia
mazwaniayu@gmail.com
Contact No.: 603-79622063
Contact No.: 6019-2377540

Hamka Mohd Noor
Malay Thought & Leadership Institute,
Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)
Aras 3, Blok 11,
Intekma Resort & Convention Centre
40000 Shah Alam, Selangor Darul Ehsan
hamka_mn90@yahoo.com

Muhammad Saufi Mohd Hanafiah Malay Thought & Leadership Institute,
Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)
Aras 3, Blok 11,
Intekma Resort & Convention Centre
40000 Shah Alam, Selangor Darul Ehsan
msaufi1990@yahoo.com

Abstract

The study is about the perception of students on the credibility of information on internet. The main objective of this study is to identify the factors that influence the perception of young Malay generation, especially from University students. The statistical techniques used in this study are Descriptive Statistics, Chi-Square Test of Independence and Multiple Linear Regression Analysis. The findings found that majority of students have a neutral perception on information's reliability, accuracy, fairness, importance and depth. In addition, students also were discovered to be depending on the reliability, fairness, importance and depth of the data in preferring a particular type of information. Web design, influence of other internet users and information sources were the factors found to be significantly influencing the credibility of information on internet.

Keywords: Internet, Information, Perception, Credibility, Malay

1. STUDY BACKGROUND

The importance of information is intrinsic and undeniable as a human life. By benefiting the information, human can use it as a medium to integrate knowledge with the development of civilization. Nowadays, in the information technology era, young people especially, have been using internet and surfed with variety of information on internet. However, not all of the accessible information in the internet is true and accurate. This will lead huge impacts on society especially among the internet users. The impacts could influence the users' behavior and their decision making. Moreover, with the development of the social network such as Blog, Youtube, Facebook, Twitter and others, people become more freely to share opinion, information and anything without limitation of boundary where the information are not filtered. However, the accessible sources of internet also have negative impact which can provoke sensitive issues such as racism and religion. Hence, this will lead bad impact toward the stabilization and prosperity among races. The freedom of information brought by internet technology without rules and knowing the credibility of the information will influence the way of thinking on society especially to the young Malay generation who will be the leader of the country in the future.

2. LITERITURE REVIEW

Nowadays, young people in Malaysia seek information for various purposes, especially for learning processes which can be accessed without limits from Internet. Unfortunately, not all of the information they get from the internet are credible. Credibility is one of the criteria using to filter unbelievable information (Wathen and Burkell, 2002). Credibility defines as "judgments made by a perceiver concerning the believability of a communicator" (O'Keefe, 1990). As the information on the internet spread easily without being monitored by any authorities on its credibility, many studies have been made by researchers to see whether the credibility can influence the perceptions of internet users, and how credible the information on internet compared to the old mass media such as television, newspaper and radio.

One of the examples of the studies is a study on “Perceptions of Internet information credibility”, conducted by Flanagin and Metzger (2000). The research is about comparing the credibility of information between television and Internet besides the credibility of various types of information on different media. The results show that the internet information was as credible as television. They also found that credibility among different types of information perceived, such as news and entertainment, are varied by media channels or sources. In other words, the sources of the information provide different credibility on the particular types of information.

Another example was conducted by Mehrabi D. et. al (2009) on “News Media Credibility of the Internet and Television” to determine the factors that influence non-academic professional staff’s perception towards media credibility. The survey had used systematic sampling method on 270 samples. The results of the study revealed that television is more credible than Internet. It was also found that there is positive significant relationship between issue, media reliance and media usage with perception of the internet and television credibility (Mehrabi D. et. al, 2009). The study is quite similar with the Flanagin and Metzger (2000). Hence, to further the study on examining the credibility on internet, a study on students’ perception on internet credibility is conducted to expand the knowledge of the Internet information. In this study different measurement aspects and factors will be investigated to determine the credibility of information on internet and the user’s perception on the information.

According to Stair R. (2008), there are several aspects that can be used in measuring particular information which are the accuracy and efficiency of the information, cost to get the information, level of its reliability and the testability of the information. On the other hand, according to another research made by Johnson et. al. (2008), they have done on study of credibility of information based on credibility index which combined aspects of believability, fairness, accuracy, and depth of the information. In the study, they had compared the differences in perceptions of blog credibility between respondents who heavily rely on blogs to those who lightly rely on them. The study addressed judgments regarding the believability, fairness, accuracy, and depth of information provided in blogs. Based on their result by using those aspects, they found heavy users viewed blogs as more credible overall than did light blog users.

One of the factors that are affecting the perception of the credibility of information on internet, based on previous research by Luo (2006), he found *on-screen characters (OCS)* such as human-like and cartoon-like characters used in website interface gave big impact on the credibility of information on internet users. On-screen characters from perspective of business, the unique of design of the web site and *on-screen characters (OCS)* influences the trust of customers in internet because it is designed to provide convenient services for both customers and sellers. This proved that the web design can help long term relationship between customers and sellers in term of perceptions in business.

The information source from internet also is a factor that influenced perception on credibility of information on internet (Rieh S. Y et. al., 1998). They had conducted a study that used common patterns for identifying authority and quality of information in the Web by assessing source credibility at both institutional and individual levels. In their study, it was found that people often started to search in the Web by visiting sites that they learned about from experts, friends in faculty, professors, published articles, and newspapers. It is because people thought that these types of authoritative sources guaranteed information quality because they were uncertain of how to judge quality in the Web without external authority (Rieh S. Y et. al., 1998). The study also found people tended to ask other people who are more reliable by checking with an authoritative print source. The findings also had supported Wilson (1983) arguments

about the relationships between cognitive authority, source credibility, and information which claimed that people apply some sorts of tests for recognizing the cognitive authority of a text through personal authority, institutional authority, document type and the content of text (Rieh S. Y et. al., 1998).

Another factor that influence the perception is influence of other internet users. Houston J. B. et. al. (2011) had done a study of understanding on how user comments influence individual perception of media bias and third person perception in online political news. The results from the study indicated that user comment can influence perceptions of bias in media depictions of presidential candidates (Houston J. B. et. al., 2011), In addition he found user comments also can influence perceptions of how much online news affects the political attitudes of others (third-person perception). Hence, they have proved that there is relationship between the influence of others internet users towards the perception on the particular information.

In a nutshell, based on the previous studies, web design, information resources and influence of other internet users are found to be factors that may influence the perception of information credibility on internet users. Hence, reinvestigation on the factors will be implemented on students to see whether they were influenced on the factors or not.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The main objectives of the research are:

- To investigate the relationship between the type of information preferred by students in the Internet and their perception on the information credibility on the internet whether it is reliable, accurate, fair, important and depth.
- To identify the factors that influences the perception of the younger generation, especially the students on the credibility of information on the internet.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is a quantitative research where the data is primary data were gathered from questionnaires. This study is single cross-sectional design where only one sample of respondents is

drawn from the target population, and information is obtained from this sample only once. Data collected were based on convenience sampling since the respondents were selected mainly from the UiTM around Shah Alam. Four campuses of UiTM have been chosen as the avenue for data collection; which are UiTM Shah Alam, UiTM INTEC Section 17 Shah Alam, UiTM Puncak Perdana and UiTM Puncak Alam. A total of 509 questionnaires were distributed to the students and all of the questionnaires were completed and received back from the students. Chi-square test of independence and multiple linear regression were used to analyze the data collected.

4. FINDINGS

Objective 1: To investigate the relationship between the type of information preferred by students in the Internet and their perception on the information credibility on the internet whether it is reliable, accurate, fair, important and depth.

4.1 Chi-Square test

The Chi-Square test of Independent was used for this objective. Based on Table 1, we can conclude that:

1. There is a significant relationship between types of information that students most preferred on internet and the perception levels on its reliability, $\chi^2 (12) = 28.30, p = .005$
2. There is a significant relationship between types of information that students most preferred on internet and the perception levels on its fairness, $\chi^2 (12) = 21.58, p = .043$
3. There is no significant relationship between types of information that students most preferred on internet and the perception levels on its accuracy, $\chi^2 (12) = 16.16, p = .184$
4. There is a significant relationship between types of information that students most preferred on internet and the perception levels on its importance, $\chi^2 (12) = 22.72, p = .030$
5. There is a significant relationship between types of information that students most preferred on internet and the perception levels on its depth, $\chi^2 (12) = 39.07, p < .001$

Table 1: Summary of Chi-Square Tests

No	Variables (Perception Level)	Chi-Square	Degrees of Freedom	P-value
1	Reliability	28.30	12	.005
2	Fairness	21.58	12	.043
3	Accuracy	16.16	12	.184
4	Importance	22.72	12	.030
5	Depth	39.07	12	<.001

Objective 2: To identify the factors that influences the perception of the young generation, especially the students on the credibility of information on the internet.

To achieve Objective 2, Multiple Linear Regression was used in this study. The result found that the regression model was significant [$F(3, 494) = 18.9$, $p\text{-value} < .001$] where the factors only explain 10.4% of the variation in the student's perception on overall information credibility on internet. Remaining 89.6% were explained by other unknown factors. From the three factors of the regression model, all of the factors were significant which have positive relation with the perception of overall information credibility on internet. Based on the contribution of all factors on the model, the most influence factor on the overall students' perception is information sources. Then it is followed by web design and influence of other internet users.

Table 4.9: Coefficient of Independent Variables

Model	B	Standard Error B	
Constant	1.902	.195	
Web Design	.122	.043	.133**
Information Sources	.182	.047	.176***
Influence of Other Internet Users	.116	.033	.154**

Note: $R^2 = .104$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

CONCLUSION

Students Perception on Particular Types of Information on Internet.

Based on the results, we can conclude that the information types which include of religion, academic, politic, sport, current news, business and others information (eg. entertainment and fashion) have a relationship with students' perception based on its reliability, fairness, importance and depth. On the other hand, we also can say that students prefer particular type of information depend on the level of their perceptions on the reliability, fairness, importance and depth of the information. However, we do not have any evidence to say that most information type preferred by student have a relationship on the accuracy of the information.

Factors that Influence the Credibility of Information on Internet

Interestingly, all of the chosen factors that have been tested in the multiple linear regression have relationships and influential on overall information credibility perception. It was concluded that information sources is the most influential in determining the students' perception on overall information credibility. Then it is followed by web design and influence of other internet users. All of the factors have positive relationship with the overall perception. Besides that, this finding had also supported almost similar research made by Rieh S. Y et. al. (1998) that said there is relationship between information source type and information credibility and Houston J. B. et. al. (2011) that said there is a relationship between other internet users(third-person) influence on information credibility on internet.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the results, there are several recommendations have been made. Firstly, young generation should review the accuracy of the information before determining the credibility of the information. Do refer from many references and resources to determine the validity of the information. Secondly, the factors that can influence the minds of the young generation should be monitored and a law should be enforced to control the factors so that young generation will not be influenced on unhealthy thoughts that may ruins the harmonization of this country.

REFERENCES

Flanagin, A. et al (2007). The Role of Site Features, User Attributes, and Information Verification Behaviors on the Perceived Credibility of Web-Based Information. *New Media and Society*, 9(2), 319-342.

Houston J. B., Hansen G. J. and Nisbett G. S. (2011), Influence of User Comments on Perceptions of Media Bias and Third-Person Effect in Online News retrieved on 15 June 2013 from <http://enx.sagepub.com/content/5/2/79.short>

Johnson T. J. & Kaye B. K (2000), Using is believing: the influence of reliance on the credibility of online political information among politically interested Internet users, *J&MC Quarterly*, Vol. 77, No. 4, pp 865-879.

Luo, F. T (2006), On- screen characters: their design and influence on consumer trust. *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 20 No. 2, pp 112-124.

Mehrabi D. et al (2009). News Media Credibility of the Internet and Television, *European Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (2009), pp 136-148

O'Keefe, D. J., 1990. Persuasion: theory and research. Newbury Park: CA: Sage.

Rieh S. Y., Belkin N. J (1988). Understanding Judgment of Information Quality and Cognitive Authority in the WWW retrieved on 11 June from citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.107.8991&rep=rep1&type=pdf

Stair, R. (2008). Principle of information system: a managerial approach. 8th ed. Canada: Thomson Course Technology, pp 6-7.

Wathen, C. N., and Burkell, J., 2002. Believe It or Not: Factors Influencing Credibility on The Web. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 53(2), 134-144.

Wilson, P. (1983). Second-hand knowledge: An inquiry into cognitive authority. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.