POLITICAL UPHEAVAL AND NEWS MEDIA WE CHOOSE: TRUST ACROSS PLATFORMS DURING IMRAN KHAN'S NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between different forms of news consumption and trust in media coverage regarding the no-confidence motion against former prime minister Imran Khan within the framework of social capital theory. A self-administered survey questionnaire was used to collect data from 1464 university students. The results of the study revealed that different forms of news consumption are associated with varying levels of trust in media coverage, particularly when analyzed across different media platforms. News consumption via traditional media was significantly correlated with trust in print and broadcast media coverage, but not with digital media coverage. In contrast, online news consumption was found to be significantly associated with trust in digital media coverage, but not with traditional media coverage. Additionally, incidental news exposure was solely associated with trust in digital media coverage. The results further indicated that trust in digital platforms was higher than trust in conventional media during the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan. Overall, the results highlight the need for robust adaptive strategies to restore public trust in conventional media.

INTRODUCTION

In today's high choice media environment, the rapid growth of digital platforms has drastically changed news consumption patterns and led to a global decline in news media trust (Kalogeropoulos et al., 2019; Park et al., 2020). The debate of multiplatform news consumption and its impact on trust in news media has gained significant scholarly attention. In contemporary fragmented media environment, it has become increasingly significant to understand how various forms of news media shape trust across different platforms. In modern democracies, the news media play a critical role in formulating public opinion by presenting a factual account of events occurring within and beyond the state. Media not only help in informed decision-making but also reinforce the democratic functions of governance. Trust in news media is inevitable for the smooth functioning of the democratic system (Müller, 2013), as elements like skepticism or cynicism are detrimental to political stability (Schreier, 2009; Siu-kai, 1992). The credibility of news platforms shapes consumption behaviors (Yuan, 2011) and encourages the masses to participate in

civic/political activities (Ans et al., 2022; Nah & Yamamoto, 2020; Onyechi & Adeitan, 2019).

In a diverse digital media landscape, audiences increasingly confront challenges related to the credibility of news. The rise of social media networks has triggered a significant global shift in audience attention toward digital platforms, raising critical concerns about the reliability of news content (Martens et al., 2018). Consequently, news consumers have become more skeptical regarding the authenticity of information they receive through mainstream and alternative news outlets, and ultimately, they fall prey to misinformation/disinformation (Cooke, 2018; Lee et al., 2023). Misinformation/disinformation reduces news consumption and decreases the level of trust in news media (Hameleers et al., 2022). Additionally, the transformation of news media owing to the proliferation of digital networks has significantly influenced audience consumption preferences and patterns. Trust in news media is not merely a matter of organizational/institutional reputation, but is also formed by the broader technological and social contexts in which news is consumed by audience. News consumers now come across information in increasingly complex media environment. This paradigm shift has intensified the struggle for audience trust and engagement.

In the foregoing scenario, it is worthwhile to study news media trust in the backdrop of cross-platform consumption patterns. In this regard, it is important to investigate whether different forms of news consumption contribute to media trust across multiplatform in a similar manner or otherwise. Despite a growing body of research on media trust, the role of trust in influencing audience preferences for different news platforms remains unclear. This study attempts to contribute to the ongoing debate by exploring the relationship between news consumption and trust in news media across different platforms under the umbrella of social capital approach. The study sets out the following objectives:

1. To explore the relationship between different forms of news consumption (traditional, online, and incidental) and trust in media coverage (print, broadcast, and digital) regarding the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan.

2. To assess the level of public trust in conventional and social media during the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan.

Literature Review

Several research studies offer insights into the relationship between news consumption and trust in news media. Mistrust in news media is a grave concern across the globe. Yuan (2011) observed that audiences use multiple platforms for news consumption, and the perceived trustworthiness of platforms affects their news media choice. Generally, news consumers make a selection of a specific platform they trust (McCracken, 2011). Factors such as accuracy, objectivity, ethical journalism, transparency and media literacy are believed to strengthen public trust in news media (Dvorkin, 2021; Kanižaj, 2019). Conversely, perceived bias, misinformation, fake news, algorithmic curation, and inadequate accountability are commonly associated with lower media trust (Valenzuela et al., 2021; Wasserman & Madrid-Morales, 2019). A higher trust in media outlets increases intentional media usage (Taneja & Yaeget, 2019). Previous studies have found a significant correlation between news consumption and media trust (Brancu & Turcu, 2023; Fernandez-Planells, 2015; Nelson & Kim, 2020; Schranz et al., 2023).

The literature pertaining to media trust and credibility research suggests that news consumption through traditional media strengthens trust in news media, while online news consumption is associated with lower trust. Park et al. (2020) identified that higher use of social media for news declined trust in news media across the globe. Furthermore, Kalogeropoulos et al. (2019) conducted a study to empirically verify the relationship between news consumption and media trust. The results revealed a significant relationship between mainstream news sources and trust in news media. The results further showed that social media usage for news erodes trust in news. Similarly, the study conducted by Fletcher and Park (2017) indicated that

individuals having a lower level of trust in news media mostly preferred non-mainstream news platforms such as social media. Sabatini and Sarracino (2019) mentioned that social media engagements tend to decrease social and institutional trust. Most of the previous studies articulated that mainstream news sources have a positive and significant relationship with trust in news media, while non-mainstream news sources, like social media, decline trust in news media which is alarming from credibility perspective (Rashidian et al., 2018; Tsfati & Ariely, 2013; Tsfati, 2010; Tsfati & Cappella, 2003). In Pakistan Nasir et al. (2024) noted a significant decline in newspaper and radio consumption. However, television consumption was found as a popular source among youth, especially for the purpose of infotainment.

Contrary to the results of the afore-reviewed studies, various research studies acknowledged the role of social media with respect to news media trust. Hariyani et al. (2025) examined the influence of social media activity on trust level in traditional and social media among a sample of 300 respondents. The results demonstrated that social media activity has positive and direct effects on the perceived legitimacy of news on social media. However, no significant effects were observed with regard to news on traditional media. Moreover, Kalogeropoulos et al. (2021) asserted that audiences aggrieved with the partial and selective coverage of traditional media rely on alternative news sources such as social media. Likewise, Vermeer et al. (2022) asserted that trust and consumption of non-mainstream news sources are linked with trust and usage in social media.

Turcotte et al. (2015) held that friends' suggestions on social media enhanced trust in media. Likewise, Russmann and Hess (2020) identified peers as important influencers and information providers in the process of information orientation. The study conducted by Ardèvol-Abreu and Gil de Zúñiga (2016) revealed a significant relationship between trust in social media and online news exposure. However, social media trust was not found to have a positive association with traditional media exposure.

The results of previous scholarly studies are contradictory with regard to the relationship between news consumption and media trust. Several factors, such as audience background, political inclination, frequency and type of news consumption, content presentation, perceived credibility of journalists, writing style, high-tech functionalities, etc., affect the level of public trust in news media (Kohring & Matthes, 2007; Sundar, 2015). In Pakistan, we have little understanding of the relationship in question. Therefore, it is imperative to explore the relationship between news consumption across different platforms and news media trust in the context of the first successful motion of no-confidence against Imran Khan. Therefore, the study posed the following hypotheses:

H_1: *Traditional media news consumption is positively associated with trust in print media coverage of the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan.*

H_2: *Traditional media news consumption is positively associated with trust in broadcast media coverage of the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan.*

H_3: *Traditional media news consumption is positively associated with trust in digital media coverage of the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan.*

H_4: *Online news consumption is positively associated with trust in print media coverage of the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan.*

H_5: *Online news consumption is positively associated with trust in broadcast media coverage of the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan.*

H_6: *Online news consumption is positively associated with trust in digital media coverage of the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan.*

Few studies have examined the influence of incidental news exposure on news media trust. Much of the existing literature has focused primarily on the effects of active/ intentional news consumption on media trust. Recently, Park and Lee (2023) explored the relationship between incidental news exposure on social networking sites and trust in news media among a sample of 1296 respondents. The results demonstrated a negative association between incidental

exposure to news and trust in news on social media.

Goyanes (2019) argued that news consumers' preferences, consumption and trust increase the probability of being incidentally exposed to news. In addition, Fletcher and Nielsen (2017) expressed that online news users, especially youngsters, are more incidentally encounter news content than non-users. In previous studies, incidental news exposure is associated with higher social media usage (Ahmadi & Wohn, 2018; Oeldorf-Hirsch, 2017). Thus, there is a strong probability that incidental news exposure will have a stronger relationship with trust in digital media coverage. The following hypotheses are postulated to examine the possible relationship between incidental news exposure and trust in media coverage.

H₇: *Incidental news exposure is positively associated with trust in print media coverage of the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan.*

H₈: *Incidental news exposure is positively associated with trust in broadcast media coverage of the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan.*

H₉: *Incidental news exposure is positively associated with trust in digital media coverage of the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan.*

Mont'Alverne et al. (2022) identified the reasons behind trust gaps, especially when it comes to digital platforms. The study concluded that public perception concerning cross-platform information varies substantially due to several factors, such as the platform itself, the background of the audience, country, and the type of news.

Zhang and Zhang (2024) in their study identified that traditional and social media influenced public trust in different manner. More particularly, the role of traditional media was more influential in political governance. Fotopoulos (2023) explored the difference between conventional and new media with respect to news consumption and trust. The results demonstrated that older participants placed greater trust in conventional media compared to online platforms. However, younger participants expressed a stronger preference for social media channels than for print media. Alzubi (2023) also obtained similar results while

exploring media consumption habits. Likewise, the study conducted by Sun et al. (2023) revealed a significant association between social media consumption and general trust. However, the effects were statistically insignificant in the case of traditional media. Additionally, Gainous et al. (2019) observed a positive association between trust in social media and protest drive. The study further revealed that traditional media played a negative role during the political upheaval.

As the results of previous studies are not in consonance, therefore to enquire into the difference in level of public trust between traditional and social media users during the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan, the study asks the following research question:

RQ1: *Is there a significant difference in trust level between conventional and social media users concerning media coverage of the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan?*

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of the study is grounded in the social capital approach. Although social capital represents a broad theoretical framework to which several scholars have contributed, the present study relies primarily on Robert D. Putnam's concept of social capital. According to Putnam (2000, 2002), relationships among individuals form social networks, norms, and trustworthiness. Trust is the most important element of social capital. According to Putnam, social capital persists if trust prevails in relationships (Häuberer, 2011). Trust is broadly categorized into two types: interpersonal trust and institutional (or organizational) trust. Williams (2012) expanded the discourse on trust within the framework of social capital by introducing informational trust as a distinct category. This study focuses specifically on institutional and informational trust. In this context, institutional trust refers to trust in various print, broadcast, and digital media organizations, whereas informational trust pertains to trust in media coverage of the no-confidence motion against former Prime Minister Imran Khan. Information seeking via traditional and online media boosts social

capital (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2012). Bonding and bridging social capital describe the ways in which individuals interact within a social group or community. Bonding social capital refers to strong ties among members of a relatively homogeneous community, whereas bridging social capital refers to weaker ties that connect individuals across heterogeneous groups (Claridge, 2018). This study employs the social capital framework to examine whether news consumption across different media platforms fosters institutional and informational trust.

Method

Quantitative methodology, vis-à-vis cross-sectional survey design, was employed to carry out this study. By using a self-administered questionnaire, survey data were obtained from 1500 respondents aged 18 to 33 studying at five higher education institutes of Lahore, selected through convenience sampling technique. These institutions included Punjab University, Lahore University of Management Sciences, Govt. College University, Lahore College for Women University and University of Lahore. 36 questionnaires were excluded from the final analysis due to incomplete responses; therefore, the final analysis was based on data obtained from 1,464 respondents.

Measures
Independent Variable
News Consumption

The study gauges three forms of news consumption, using scales adapted from Strauß et al. (2020, 2021). The first two forms represent active/intentional news consumption, i.e. traditional media news consumption and online news consumption. Participants recorded their responses on a 5-point scale (1 = *Never*; 5 = *Very often*). The traditional media news consumption scale included three items (α = .69), while online news consumption scale comprised eight items (α = .81). Additionally, the study measured incidental news exposure (INE), which comprised two items (α = .68).

Dependent Variable
News Media Trust

Adapted news media trust (NMT) scale developed by Strömbäck et al. (2020), this study measured trust in media coverage (print, broadcast, and digital) regarding the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan on a 5-point Likert Scale *(1= Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree)*. Trust in media coverage for each medium was measured separately. Internal consistency reliability was estimated using Cronbach's alpha and the following results were obtained:

Constructs	Cronbach's α
Trust in print media coverage	.74
Trust in broadcast media coverage	.72
Trust in digital media coverage	.70

NMT Scale included the following five items:
1.   [Newspapers / News Channels / SNS] are fair when covering the news regarding the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan.
2.   [Newspapers / News Channels / SNS] are unbiased when covering the news regarding the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan.
3.   [Newspapers / News Channels / SNS] tell the whole story when covering the news regarding the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan.

4.   [Newspapers / News Channels / SNS] are accurate when covering the news regarding the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan.
5.   [Newspapers / News Channels / SNS] separate facts from opinions when covering the news regarding the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan.

Control Variables

Gender, locality, age, qualification and financial status were included as control variables.

Statistical Analysis

IBM SPSS Statistics 25 was used to analyze the statistical data. Partial correlation analysis was run to assess the direction and strength of relationships between variables. Subsequently, a Pearson bivariate correlation test was performed to check the relationship between different forms of news consumption and trust in media coverage. In addition, a paired sample t-test was conducted to compare levels of trust in conventional media and social media.

Results

The descriptive analysis of data reflects that 568 (38.8%) participants of the study are male, while 896 (61.2%) are female. With respect to age distribution, the vast majority of participants, 1346 (91.9%), are aged between 18 to 22 years, 112 (7.7%) participants are from the age group of 23 to 27 years, 4 (.3%) are between 28 to 33 years and only 2 (.1%) are over 33 years old. As regards education level, 1368 (93.4%) are bachelor's students, 73 (5%) are master's students, 19 (1.3%) are studying at M.Phil level, and only 4 (.3%) are PhD candidates.

The results of descriptive analysis pertaining to participants' news consumption habits revealed that the majority spent minimal time reading newspapers (M=1.51, SD=1.10) and listening radio (M=1.12, SD=0.49). Likewise, overall television news consumption was relatively low (M=2.32, SD=1.23). However, majority of the participants spent a major portion of their time using SNS (M=3.35, SD=1.73) and the internet (M=4.70, SD=1.38) to get the latest news/information. These results indicate a significant shift from traditional media to digital platforms.

Table 1

Correlation

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Traditional media news consumption	-	.187***	.120***	.075**	0.051	0.01
2. Online news consumption	-	-	.296***	-0.017	-0.019	.106***
3. Incidental news exposure	-	-	-	0.004	-.063*	.072**
4. Trust in print media coverage	-	-	-	-	.123***	.120***
5. Trust in broadcast media coverage	-	-	-	-	-	.318***
6. Trust in digital media coverage	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note. * = correlation is significant at 0.05, ** = correlation is significant at 0.01, *** = Correlation is significant at 0.001

Partial correlation analysis was run after controlling the socio-demographics to determine the direction of association between variables. Results revealed that traditional media news consumption is significantly associated with online news consumption, incidental news exposure and trust in print media coverage, having no relationship with trust in broadcast and digital media coverage. Likewise, online news consumption demonstrated a significant positive relationship with incidental news exposure and trust in digital media coverage. Incidental news exposure showed a positive association with trust in digital media coverage but negatively correlated with trust in broadcast media coverage. Additionally, trust in print media coverage indicated a positive correlation with trust in broadcast and digital media coverage. Similarly, trust in broadcast media strongly correlated with trust in digital media.

Table 2

Correlation between Traditional Media News Consumption and Trust in Print Media Coverage

	Traditional Media News Consumption	Trust in Print Media Coverage
Pearson Correlation	1	.072**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.006
N	1464	1464

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Pearson Product Moment Correlation was applied to find out the relationship between news consumption via traditional media and trust in print media coverage. Findings revealed a significant and positive relationship at a significant level as p=.006 and r=.072, supporting H1. However, the strength of this correlation is weak as its value is .072. The results showed that individuals who tend to consume news through traditional media placed a greater trust in print media coverage during the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan. The result implies that the increasing level of traditional media news consumption enhances trust in print media coverage.

Table 3

Correlation between Traditional Media News Consumption and Trust in Broadcast Media Coverage

	Traditional Media News Consumption	Trust in Broadcast Media Coverage
Pearson Correlation	1	.079**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.02
N	1464	1464

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The relationship between traditional media news consumption and trust in broadcast media coverage is significant, as Pearson's r statistic value is .079 and the significant value (bilateral) is less than <.001, rendering support to H2. The relationship is significant but small, as its value is .07.

Table 4

Correlation between Traditional Media News Consumption and Trust in Digital Media Coverage

	Traditional Media News Consumption	Trust in Digital Media Coverage
Pearson Correlation	1	-.003
Sig. (2-tailed)		.921
N	1464	1464

H3 postulated a positive relationship between incidental news exposure and trust in digital media coverage. The findings show that there exists no relationship between traditional media news consumption and trust in digital media coverage (r=-.003, p=.921). Thus, H3 was not supported.

Table 5

Correlation between Online News Consumption and Trust in Print Media Coverage

	Online News Consumption	Trust in Print Media Coverage
Pearson Correlation	1	-.024
Sig. (2-tailed)		.364
N	1464	1464

H4 posited a positive association between online news consumption and trust in print media coverage. There exists no significant relationship between online news consumption and trust in print media coverage. H4 was not supported.

Table 6
Correlation between Online News Consumption and Trust in Broadcast Media Coverage

	Online News Consumption	Trust in Broadcast Media Coverage
Pearson Correlation	1	-.030
Sig. (2-tailed)		.250
N	1464	1464

H5 is also not supported as no significant relationship was observed between online news consumption and trust in broadcast media coverage (r=-.030, p=.250).

Table 7
Correlation between Online News Consumption and Trust in Digital Media Coverage

	Online News Consumption	Trust in Digital Media Coverage
Pearson Correlation	1	.086**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
N	1464	1464

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (bilateral).

Pearson Product Moment Correlation was employed to ascertain the relationship between online news consumption and trust in digital media coverage. Findings indicate a significant relationship (r=.086, p=.001), lending support to H6. The result led us to infer that a higher level of online news consumption increases the level of trust in digital media coverage.

Table 8
Correlation between Incidental News Exposure and Trust in Print Media Coverage

	Incidental News Exposure	Trust in Print Media Coverage
Pearson Correlation	1	.000
Sig. (2-tailed)		.987
N	1464	1464

H7 assumed that incidental news exposure would have a positive relationship with trust in print media coverage. Findings indicated a statistically insignificant relationship (r=.000, p=.987). Hence, H7 is not proved.

Table 9
Correlation between Incidental News Exposure and Trust in Broadcast Media Coverage

	Incidental News Exposure	Trust in Broadcast Media Coverage
Pearson Correlation	1	-.075**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
N	1464	1464

The results revealed a significant negative correlation between incidental news exposure and trust in broadcast media coverage (r=-.075, p=.004). Therefore, H8 is not supported.

Table 10

Correlation between Incidental News Exposure and Trust in Digital Media Coverage

	Incidental News Exposure	Trust in Digital Media Coverage
Pearson Correlation	1	.078**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
N	1464	1464

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (bilateral).

H9 postulated a positive correlation between incidental news exposure and trust in digital media coverage. The results demonstrated a positive relationship between incidental news exposure and trust in digital media coverage (r=.078, p=.003), rendering support to H9.

Table 11

Comparing Trust Levels: Conventional Vs. Social Media

Paired Sample Statistics	Types of Media	Mean	SD	Correlation	t	Df	Sig.
	Trust in conventional media	14.22	3.76				
	Trust in social media	15.33	4.06				
Paired Sample Correlations				.290			.000
Paired Samples Test		-1.11	4.66		-9.11	1463	.000

In order to assess the trust level across conventional and social media as stated in research question No.1, a paired sample *t*-test was conducted. The results revealed that trust in social media (M = 15.33, SD = 4.06) was significantly higher than trust in conventional media (M = 14.22, SD = 3.76), $t(1463)$= -9.11, p <.001, Cohen's d=-0.24. These results reflect that the majority of respondents placed greater trust in social media as compared to conventional media during the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan. Additionally, the paired-samples correlation revealed a positive relationship, indicating that individuals who trusted one type of media also tended to trust the other, although the effect size was small. Overall, the results highlight that trust in social media exceeded trust in conventional media during this period.

Discussion

Drawing upon social capital theory, this study explored the relationship between intentional/incidental news consumption and trust in media coverage regarding the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan. H1 to H9 were formulated to examine the possible association between different forms of news consumption and trust in media coverage across multiple platforms. The results of the present study support hypothesis No.H1, H2, H6, and H9. The findings warrant an in-depth discussion.

The key results of this study indicate that traditional media news consumption is significantly correlated with trust in conventional media coverage (print & broadcast). However, the relationship is insignificant in the case of trust in digital media coverage. These findings support the

results of earlier studies (e.g. Kalogeropoulos et al., 2019; Park et al., 2020; Tsfati & Ariely, 2013). Consistent with previous studies (Ardèvol-Abreu & Gil de Zúñiga, 2016; Hariyani et al., 2025; Vermeer et al., 2022), online news consumption is found to be significantly correlated with trust in digital media coverage, but not with trust in both print and broadcast media. Unlike the previous study conducted by Park and Lee (2023), this study has found a significant relationship between incidental news exposure and trust in digital media coverage. Nevertheless, the effects of incidental news exposure are statistically insignificant with regard to traditional media coverage. Besides, the findings highlight that the participants placed a greater trust in social media than in traditional media during the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan. The overall results of this study suggest that news consumption across multiple media platforms is associated with news media trust in a distinct manner, specifically when analyzed across different media platforms. The findings underscore the urgency for robust adaptive strategies to restore public trust in traditional media channels and encourage intentional/active news consumption to counter misinformation/disinformation in the digital media age.

The results further support the theoretical assertions of social capital theory. Social capital strengthens trust and social cohesion. Only one component of social capital is focused in this study, i.e. trust (institutional/informational). The significant relationship as observed in this study between news consumption via traditional media and trust in media coverage (print & broadcast) is allied with the notion of bonding social capital. Despite the increasing popularity of digital networks, conventional media is still regarded as a key medium for reinforcing shared values and norms within homogenous groups (Mavluda & Orzibekov, 2025). Moreover, the positive association between online news consumption and trust in digital media coverage appears to support the concept of bridging social capital. Digital platforms promote diverse perspectives and connect heterogeneous communities across a wide range of networks (Montgomery, 2018). Overall, news consumption is found to be associated with both institutional and informational trust. Notably, the findings that participants placed greater trust in digital media than in traditional media during the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan reinforces the notion of a shifting pattern in social capital formation and increasing diversity.

In addition to the theoretical framework of social capital, the results of this study also support core assumption of media dependency theory, which posits that greater reliance on media enhances its cognitive, affective, and behavioral effects (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976). In the context of this research, media dependency theory offers valuable insights into news consumption patterns and varying levels of media trust among university students, suggesting that audiences tend to become more curious and increasingly reliant on media during times of political crisis. Consequently, a higher dependence on a particular news medium may shape individuals' overall trust in the media or in specific media outlets.

Certain limitations of the present research can be addressed in future studies. Firstly, causality could not be established due to the cross-sectional survey design employed in this study. Secondly, self-reported measures may have introduced recall bias. Thirdly, the results can't be generalized to the broader population, as the sample was not representative. Despite limitations, the study offers valuable insights to understand the effects of cross-platform news consumption on trust in news media during a time of political crisis. The policymakers, media practitioners, researchers and content strategists may utilize the results of this study to devise future policies/guidelines.

In terms of future research, other dimensions of news media trust should be evaluated in view of cross-platform news consumption, such as trust in journalists, general news media trust, trust in individual media brands, etc. Moreover, underlying mechanisms affecting the causal relationship between news consumption and media trust need to be studied to extend the scope of media trust

research. Further empirical researches are required to develop a richer understanding of the proposed relationship in different cultural and political backgrounds.

Conclusion

Summarizing the preceding discussion, this study has shown that news consumption significantly affects trust in news media. Through an analysis of cross-sectional data obtained from 1464 university students, the study identified that different forms of news consumption are associated with news media trust in a distinct manner, particularly when examining this relationship across different news media. In addition, trust in digital platforms was higher than in traditional news platforms during the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan. These findings underscore the urgent need for adaptive strategies to restore public trust in traditional media channels.

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