

The inCredibles: Quezon City Residents' Assessment of the Credibility of Local Broadsheets and Primetime TV News Programs

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The study explores two kinds of media credibility—in terms of source and media forms—by determining the public's perception of the credibility of 1) specific media news sources; and 2) broadsheets and TV news programs in general. The sample consists of 112 Quezon City residents 18 years old and above who were selected using systematic random sampling. Results show that for newspapers, the Philippine Daily Inquirer and the Philippine Star were perceived to be equally credible, and that they were also seen as more credible than Manila Bulletin. For evening news programs, meanwhile, 24 Oras was seen as more credible than TV Patrol. In general, both broadsheets and TV news programs were seen as equally credible by the respondents. There were generally no significant differences in media credibility ratings across respondent groupings according to age and educational attainment; only older respondents and respondents with less education saw TV news programs as more credible than broadsheets.

Mass media play a vital role in society. Media organizations influence and are also influenced by social forces, either for positive or negative ends. Social forces include other social, political and economic interest groups and institutions which greatly affect the content of media messages, particularly the news.

Some observers, both within and outside the media, have noted a decline in the quality of news stories and reporting. They have expressed concern that news values have become blurred, and reality and drama are sometimes interchanged. Frank Rich, a columnist of the *New York Times*, has noted a steady shift from the use of journalistic standards to those of show business in news reporting (The Decline of TV News Credibility, 2006).

This scenario has serious implications on the credibility of news media and news media organizations. Researches conducted by The General Social Survey and The Pew Research Center for People and the Press (in Doherty, 2005) found declining trends in public trust of the media. In the Philippines, questions about unethical practices in the media have been raised. Hofileña (2004) cited several instances when some media practitioners set aside truth in news reporting in exchange for personal monetary gains.

It is in the light of these questions about media integrity and credibility that the present study was undertaken. This study hopes to contribute to a better understanding of the situation of media practice in general, and news reporting in particular, in the Philippines. Since TV is the most widely patronized medium in the Philippines (Social Weather Stations [SWS], 2003 in Hofileña, 2004) and the newspaper is considered to be the most serious of all news media that is traditionally dedicated to hardcore news (Abdulla et. al, 2002), the researchers chose to have a closer look at these two forms of mass media.

This study focused on identifying which medium—newspaper or television—is deemed more credible by Quezon City residents as source of news using the following criteria: fairness, balance, trustworthiness, completeness, accuracy, training, news treatment, morality, honesty, reliability, format, interpretation, objectivity, coherence, and comprehensibility.

Problem and Objectives

Thus, this study aims to answer the question:

RQ: What is the level of credibility attributed to local newspapers and primetime television news programs by Quezon City residents?

To answer this question, the study set the following research objectives:

1. To measure the respondents' level of exposure to news in local broadsheets and primetime television news programs;
2. To determine the respondents' assessment of individual local broadsheets and TV news programs in terms of the different dimensions of credibility;
3. To compare and contrast local broadsheets and TV news programs vis-à-vis the different dimensions of credibility; and
4. To determine if age and educational attainment influence people's perceived credibility of news media.

Review of Related Literature

Kiousis (in Bucy, 2003) defined media credibility as “perceptions of a news channel's believability, as distinct from individual sources, media organizations, or the content of the news itself” (248). Gaziano and McGrath (1986 in Abdulla et al., 2002) identified 12 dimensions of news credibility of both newspaper and television. These are fairness, unbiased reporting, completeness, accuracy, respect for privacy, concern for people's interests, concern for the community, separation of fact and

opinion, trustworthiness, concern for public interest, factuality, and level of training of the news program staff. Some researchers (Gaziano & McGrath, 1986 in Abdulla et al., 2002; Ibelema & Powell, 2001) found that the audience's evaluation of a medium's credibility depends on what topics are covered in the news (e.g., local news, economy, entertainment news, political news, and religious news). Likewise, how well journalists practice their profession affects the audience's assessment of media credibility (Gaziano & McGrath, 1986 in Abdulla et al., 2002).

Television and television credibility

A 2000 survey of the SWS revealed that 59% of Filipinos watch television daily (Hofileña, 2004), which indicates TV's importance as an information source. According to Hofileña (2004), the "supremacy of TV does not end with its pervasiveness or reach" but also extends to the fact that it is enjoying "phenomenal credibility" (27). This is supported by a 2004 pre-election Pulse Asia poll which found that 67% of the respondents considered television as the most credible source of information and news about the candidates and the campaign (Hofileña, 2004).

According to Westley and Severin (1964), the visual nature of television is one of the main reasons why it enjoys higher credibility than newspapers. People believe more what they "see" (on TV) than what they read (in newspapers). Also, "newspaper news is offered more or less anonymously whereas TV news is carried into their homes by trusted newsmen" (326).

However, "the structural bias of television as an industry which excludes so many voices, so many views, faces and ideas" (Rushton, 1994: 21) puts into question the reliability of television as a news source. Further, there are observations that TV news is now considered a "moneymaking endeavor" because instead of thinking about news with "social and political significance", news networks tend to divert their attention to the more exciting

and catchy reports for the sake of ratings which means profit (The Decline of TV News Credibility, 2006).

The newspaper and newspaper credibility

Meyer (1988 in Abdulla et al., 2002) formulated an index for newspaper believability comprised of five dimensions, namely, fairness, bias, completeness, accuracy, and trustworthiness. He also argued that a newspapers' credibility and believability may have the same dimensions. Abdulla and his colleagues (2002) found that of all components of credibility, newspaper readers gave high marks to the medium for being current, up-to-date and timely while they rated newspapers poorly in terms of bias and completeness.

In another study, Westley and Severin (1964) found that people with high socioeconomic status tend to ascribe higher credibility to newspapers than to television news. Moreover, their findings showed that "urbanism was associated with higher credibility for the newspaper" (330).

However, according to Urban (in Meyer & Zhang, 2002), the public's confidence in newspapers is waning because they could see factual errors, spelling and grammatical mistakes in these publications. Further, Fico and Cote (1999) said that the public perceives newspapers to be biased, and that this perception "results from a consumer's encounter with information that is discrepant with previously held beliefs" (2).

Other factors affecting audience assessment of media credibility

Aside from news values that the audience most commonly use to evaluate media credibility, there are also other factors which may have great impact on credibility assessment. One is political ideology. In the US, for example, Doherty (2005) pointed out that there has always been a tendency to view the press as biased for the Republicans. A second possible factor which may affect

credibility ratings is media use. Researchers found that individuals deem a medium to be more credible when they use that medium more often than the others (Bucy, 2003; Johnson & Kaye, 1998; Johnson & Kaye, 2000; Westley & Severin, 1964 in Major & Atwood, 1997). Finally, perceived credibility is also associated with news focus, wherein news consumers turn to different news sources depending on the kind of information they need (Bogart, 1989 in Fischhoff, 1996). In other words, news consumers do not have a single universal source of news that provides their informational requirements.

Study Framework

This study is anchored on Maletzke's model of mass communication process, which identifies the factors that affect a receiver's perception of credibility of the source, message or medium (Griffin, 2000). The source of information is principally identified as the communicator. Meanwhile, the message is basically determined by its selection from a pool of varied information and the way it is structured for public consumption. Various aspects of the mass communication process such as the presentation of a message's content, channel through which the message is relayed and the nature of the medium (i.e., visual or audio-visual) determine, to a certain extent, how much credibility is ascribed to the message. Likewise, the audience members' background characteristics, such as their demographic and socio-economic profile, are deemed to influence their perception of the credibility of the source, message or channel.

Figure 1 shows the operational framework of this study. The source/communicator is identified in this context as the broadcaster/journalist who delivers the message, which is the news. The media specified herein are television and newspaper. In particular, they refer to primetime TV news programs and the news sections of newspapers. The receivers are randomly selected residents from four baranggays (villages) of Quezon

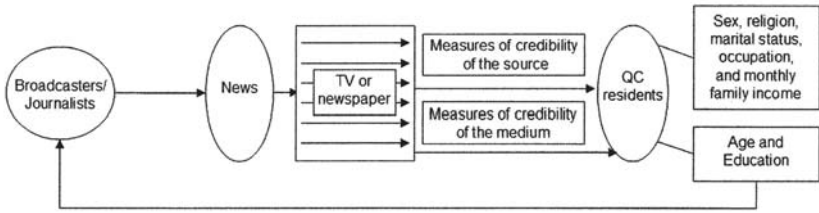


Figure 1. Operational Framework for Source, Message and Medium Credibility

City. Sex, religion, marital status, occupation, and monthly family income were taken into account. Age and educational attainment were used to differentiate credibility ratios.

Methodology

It is this study's goal to quantitatively describe the respondents' perceived credibility of the local television and print media, as sources of news, thus the selection of survey as the research method for data gathering. This is a cross-sectional study, completed in the period of one semester.

Variables measured in the study were the indicators of media credibility, the respondents' socio-demographic profile, and their familiarity with newspapers and TV news programs.

Two different sets of indicators were used to assess credibility. The first set of indicators that was used to assess the credibility of broadsheets and TV news programs *individually* was collated from literature review (see Johnson & Kaye, 2000; Johnson & Kaye, 1998; Kioussis, 2001; Meyer & Zhang, 2002). These measures include: accuracy, balance, clarity in presentation of data, completeness of story, being easily understood, expertise/experience, fairness, honesty, intelligent interpretation of news, layout/format, morality, being opinionated, reliability, sensationalism and trustworthiness. These indicators were common in the literature which

specifically dealt with either newspaper or television news credibility. The second set of credibility indicators was from Gaziano & McGrath (1986 in Abdulla et al., 2002), whose study focused on credibility factors that affect both television news programs and broadsheets. Their measures of credibility include accuracy, balance, believability, concern for community's well-being, factuality, profit-orientedness, relevance, reliability, separation of fact from opinion, trustworthiness and being updated.

To measure the respondents' familiarity with newspapers and primetime TV news programs, they were asked about their a) frequency of reading and/or watching (always, occasionally, rarely, never) and b) duration of reading and/or watching ("browsing only" to "more than an hour") each newspaper and/or primetime TV news program. Only those respondents who said that they "always" or "occasionally" read a particular newspaper or watched a particular news program were asked to rate the credibility of said newspaper/program.

For the sample communities, four areas in Quezon City were purposively selected by the researchers. The areas covered were N.S. Amoranto, SSS Village, Sikatuna Village, and Baranggay Bagong Pag-asa. These areas were chosen according to the researchers' perceived differences in the residents' socio-economic status based on the general appearance of the houses in the community. Socio-economic status (SES) was an important component that this study aimed to look into in terms of news media consumption and credibility.

Thirty homes in the longest streets in each of the four sample communities were chosen as part of the sample using the systematic random sampling scheme. The randomness of the selection of sample households was ensured by following a "keep left" or "keep right" method on either side of the streets. Replacement households were selected for unsuccessful interviews (outright refusal, terminated interview). The Kish grid was used in selecting the eligible respondent in each

household. In total, there were 120 households included in the sample. However, only 112 were considered valid. Eight interviews were spoiled because they showed response set and because there were several unanswered items in the questionnaire.

Results

Respondents' profile

Male and female respondents comprised 46% and 54% of the sample, respectively. The youngest respondent was 18 years old, while the oldest respondent was 93 years old. The greatest number (48%) of respondents were middle-aged (36-59 years old), 37% were young (18-35 years old), and only 14% were old (60 years old or older). The mean age of the sample was 43 years. Respondents who have had college education comprised the biggest proportion (69%) of the sample, followed by those who finished high school (20%).

With respect to the respondents' monthly family income, those from the low income bracket (less than P10, 000) accounted for 13% of the sample. On the other hand, 21% of the respondents were those from the high income bracket (P40,000-P49,999) while 41% came from the middle income bracket (P10, 000-P39,999).

Exposure to news in local broadsheets and primetime news programs

Majority (54%) of the respondents said that they read newspapers. Of the 10 broadsheets listed, the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* ranked first among the respondents in terms of readership, followed by the *Philippine Star*. The other newspapers in the list were not as much patronized as the two aforementioned papers were.

Table 1. Exposure to News in Local Broadsheets and Primetime News Programs (In %)

	Always	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Readership of Broadsheets (n = 61)				
Philippine Daily Inquirer	60.7	19.7	9.8	9.8
Philippine Star	31.1	21.3	13.1	34.4
Manila Bulletin	21.3	37.7	18.0	23.0
Manila Standard Today	9.8	11.5	16.4	62.3
Manila Times	6.6	8.2	21.3	63.9
Daily Tribune	3.3	11.5	16.4	68.9
Malaya	3.3	16.4	19.7	60.7
Manila Chronicle	0.0	11.5	9.8	78.7
Business Mirror	0.0	11.5	9.2	70.5
Business Week	0.0	6.6	13.1	80.3
Viewership of Primetime TV News Programs (n=100)				
TV Patrol (ABSCBN)	62.0	17.0	8.0	13.0
24 Oras (GMA-7)	45.0	21.0	9.0	25.0
Teledyaryo (NBN-4)	7.0	14.0	16.0	63.0
The World Tonight (ANC)	6.0	8.0	13.0	73.0
Sentro (ABC-5)	4.0	13.0	20.0	63.0
RPN News (RPN-9)	4.0	9.0	19.0	68.0
News on Q (QTV)	4.0	10.0	10.0	76.0
News Central (Studio 23)	2.0	12.0	8.0	77.0
Viewership of Morning TV Programs (n=100)				
Unang Hirit (GMA-7)	19.0	12.0	19.0	50.0
Magandang Umaga Pilipinas (ABS-CBN)	16.0	10.0	20.0	54.0
Breakfast (Studio 23)	5.0	3.0	9.0	83.0

Most (89%) of the respondents said that they watch primetime TV news programs. The researchers enumerated 11 local TV news programs in the primetime slots. Three of these programs were morning programs with news segments, namely *Magandang Umaga Pilipinas* (ABS-CBN), *Unang Hirit's* *Unang Balita* (GMA-7), and *Breakfast* (Studio 23). Of these three morning programs, *Unang Hirit* garnered the highest viewership among the respondents.

Meanwhile, eight of the programs enumerated were evening news programs: *TV Patrol* (ABS-CBN), *24 Oras* (GMA-7), *Sentro* (ABC-5), *News Central* (Studio 23), *Teledyaryo* (NBN 4), *RPN 9 News*, *The World Tonight* (ANC), and *News on Q* (QTV). Results showed that *TV Patrol* was the evening news

program most frequently watched by the respondents, followed by *24 Oras*. *News Central* (Studio23), *News on Q* (QTV), and *The World Tonight* (ANC) were the least watched by the respondents (see Table 1).

Credibility ratings of individual broadsheet newspapers and primetime news programs

To measure the respondents' assessment of the credibility of each broadsheet newspaper and primetime TV news program that they are familiar with, they were asked to rate each paper/program *vis-à-vis* 15 indicators of credibility (see Table 2) using a five-point Likert scale that measured their degree of agreement or disagreement that a particular newspaper/program qualified for a particular indicator. The overall credibility rating of each broadsheet/program was then determined by finding the mean score of each in the 15 indicators. In the rating scheme adopted, 1 represented the highest score (which meant that the media product in question strongly manifested the credibility indicator) and 5 represented the lowest score.

Because respondents could only assess a particular media source if they met a certain level of exposure to it, the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* was assessed by 48 respondents, *Manila Bulletin* by 27 respondents and *Philippine Star* by 24. As indicated by the composite scores, the *Philippine Star* (mean score=2.28) was perceived to be the most credible of the broadsheets, followed by the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (2.31) and the *Manila Bulletin* (2.79). The difference between the credibility ratings between the *Star* and the *Inquirer* was not statistically significant, but their respective ratings were statistically higher than that of the *Manila Bulletin*.

More specifically, the *Philippine Star* was rated highest in nine of the 15 criteria: fairness, balance, completeness, accuracy, morality, honesty, reliability, and the pleasantness with which it presents the news. The respondents also rated it most

Table 2. Credibility Ratings of Individual Broadsheet Newspapers and Primetime News Programs

Indicators	Broadsheets						News Programs					
	Philippine Daily Inquirer (n=48)		Manila Bulletin (n=27)		Philippine Star (n=24)		TV Patrol World (n=75)		24 Oras (n=89)			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Fairness	2.04	0.81	2.65	1.32	1.96	0.62	2.20	0.75	1.88	0.59		
Balance	2.60	0.84	3.40	0.96	2.57	0.84	2.64	0.92	2.37	0.88		
Trustworthiness	1.89	0.60	2.77	0.95	2.04	0.64	2.11	0.67	1.93	0.67		
Completeness	2.19	0.87	2.85	1.41	2.04	0.64	2.60	0.85	2.32	0.73		
Accuracy	2.68	1.00	2.85	0.99	2.63	0.77	2.59	0.99	2.26	0.74		
Well-trained staff	1.91	0.69	2.59	1.08	2.09	0.73	1.95	0.70	1.88	0.72		
Does not sensationalize	2.89	1.03	3.30	1.03	2.57	0.90	2.91	1.00	2.80	1.03		
Moral	2.17	0.95	2.26	0.81	2.00	0.66	2.07	0.91	2.00	0.82		
Honesty	2.26	0.85	2.85	1.06	2.22	0.52	2.14	0.74	2.02	0.69		
Reliability	2.23	0.97	2.70	1.07	2.04	0.37	2.36	0.90	2.20	0.92		
Pleasant presentation	2.06	0.70	2.59	1.42	2.00	0.59	1.92	0.59	1.90	0.71		
Intelligent interpretation	2.31	0.99	2.85	1.03	2.38	0.97	2.53	1.00	2.58	1.07		
Not opinionated	3.19	1.00	3.59	1.05	3.26	1.14	3.46	0.97	3.51	0.98		
Coherent presentation	2.33	0.81	2.59	1.01	2.42	1.06	2.41	0.95	2.27	0.89		
Understandability	1.88	0.67	2.00	0.68	2.00	0.60	1.87	0.79	1.73	0.69		
Composite score	2.31	0.46	2.79	0.71	2.28	0.41	2.38	0.38	2.24	0.37		
Philippine Daily Inquirer and the Philippine Star	$t(23) = 0.45, p = 0.66$ (two-tailed)											
The Philippine Star and Manila Bulletin	$t(23) = 2.38, p = 0.03$ (two-tailed)											
The Philippine Daily Inquirer and Manila Bulletin	$t(26) = -3.22, p < 0.01$ (two-tailed)											
TV Patrol and 24 Oras	$t(58) = 2.07, p = 0.04$ (two-tailed)											

highly in terms of not sensationalizing the news. The *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, meanwhile, was rated highest in the six remaining criteria: trustworthiness, the training of its staff, its intelligent interpretation of the news, and the coherent and understandable way that it presents the news. It was also noted for not being opinionated.

On the other hand, of the 100 respondents who rated the credibility of two primetime news programs, 75 rated *TV Patrol* while 59 rated *24 Oras*. These were the top two TV news programs most familiar to and most frequently watched by respondents, thus allowing for better assessment of the credibility of these programs.

As the composite scores indicate, *24 Oras* (2.24) was rated more credible than *TV Patrol* (2.38) by the respondents—and the difference in their ratings was statistically significant. Indeed, *24 Oras* was rated more highly than *TV Patrol* in all but two of the 15 criteria.

Credibility of broadsheets and TV news programs in general

To determine the credibility of broadsheets and TV news programs, the respondents were asked to rate the two media *vis-à-vis* 11 indicators (see Table 3) using a five-point scale where 1 represented the highest score (which meant that the medium in question strongly manifested the credibility indicator) and 5 represented the lowest score.

In eight of the 11 criteria, TV news programs were rated higher than broadsheets, including accuracy, balance, believability, relevance, trustworthiness, and timeliness. They were also noted for having less concern for profits and greater concern for the community compared to broadsheets. Meanwhile, broadsheets were only rated higher than TV programs in three criteria: reliability, factuality, and ability to separate fact from opinion.

Table 3. Comparison of the Credibility Ratings of Broadsheets and Primetime TV News Programs (n=112)

Indicators	Broadsheets		Primetime TV News Program	
	Accuracy	2.33	1.04	2.07
Balance	2.45	1.03	2.32	0.83
Believability	2.40	0.91	2.28	0.80
Relevance	2.12	0.76	2.01	0.68
Reliability	2.07	0.66	2.12	0.72
Factual	2.32	0.89	2.47	0.98
Less concern for profits	3.37	1.23	3.17	1.25
Concern for the community	2.32	0.83	2.00	0.73
Trustworthiness	2.50	0.91	2.19	0.93
Separates facts from opinion	2.43	0.81	2.47	0.99
Timeliness	2.17	0.85	1.91	0.94
Composite score	2.37	0.46	2.30	0.49
<i>Paired samples t-test</i>	$t(47) = 0.99, p = 0.33$ (two-tailed)			

Table 4. Factors affecting people's perceived credibility of news media (within news media)

Assessment	Age			Educational Attainment	
	Young (18-35)	Middle-aged (36-59)	Old (60 and older)	Elementary/ High school/ Vocational	College/ Postgraduate
Print	(n=23)	(n=29)	(n=8)	(n=7)	(n=53)
Mean	2.49	2.38	2.23	2.47	2.40
SD	0.53	0.42	0.27	0.30	0.47
ANOVA/T-test	$F(2, 57) = 1.090, p = 0.34$			$t(58) = 0.71, p = 0.71$	
TV	(n=34)	(n=49)	(n=16)	(n=25)	(n=74)
Mean	2.32	2.31	2.05	2.22	2.29
SD	0.40	0.52	0.28	0.34	0.49
ANOVA/T-test	$F(2, 96) = 2.31, p = 0.10$			$t(97) = 0.50, p = 0.50$	

Table 5. Factors affecting people's perceived credibility of news media (between media forms)

	Age						Educational Attainment			
	Young (n=16)		Middle (n=24)		Old (n=8)		Elementary/ High School/ Vocational (n=6)		College/ Postgraduate (n=42)	
	Print	TV	Print	TV	Print	TV	Print	TV	Print	TV
Mean	2.43	2.31	2.38	2.38	2.23	2.03	2.41	2.21	2.36	2.31
SD	0.56	0.50	0.43	0.51	0.27	0.37	0.28	0.21	0.48	0.52
t-test	$t(15) = 0.93, p = 0.37$		$t(23) = 0.03, p = 0.97$		$t(7) = 2.56, p = 0.04$		$t(5) = 2.89, p = 0.03$		$t(41) = 0.66, p = 0.51$	

*two-tailed

As the composite scores indicate, TV news programs (2.30) were rated more credible than broadsheets (2.37) in general, though the difference in their computed mean ratings was not statistically significant.

*Credibility of broadsheets and TV news programs
across respondent groupings according to age
and educational attainment*

Statistical tests indicated no significant differences in the perceived credibility of either print or TV across age or educational groupings (see Table 4). Moreover, within relatively younger groups and among respondents with higher levels of education, there was no significant difference in the perceived credibility of the press across media forms (see Table 5).

Differences in perceived credibility of broadsheets and TV news programs were only observed among old respondents and those with less education. Both perceived TV to be more credible than the print media, perhaps because they are more exposed to TV news than broadsheets. Media users tend to trust the medium they are more exposed to, or are more reliant on (Bucy, 2003; Johnson & Kaye, 2000; Johnson & Kaye, 1998; Westley & Severin, 1964 in Major & Atwood, 1997).

Discussion, Implications and Recommendations

The Philippine press is often described as being among the liveliest in Asia because of, among others, the number of media establishments operating in the country. However, this study's findings about media readership and viewership suggest that very few of these media outfits actually command significant audience following. Of the 10 broadsheets enumerated in the study, only three (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, *Philippine Star*, and *Manila Bulletin*) were read by at least a third of the respondents. Further, only the first two were read by at least half of the respondents. Similarly, of the many local primetime news programs being broadcast, only two (*TV Patrol* and *24 Oras*) were watched by approximately half of the respondents. Thus, while Philippine media has much to offer in terms of news sources, respondents only choose to get their news from a very select few entities.

To a certain extent, one might connect these findings to the composition of this study's sample: while it has a fairly good representation of people *vis-à-vis* most demographic variables, the distribution according to educational attainment shows that college educated respondents predominate. Thus, it is possible that the media choices of this study's sample more reflective of the preferences of better educated Filipinos, and not the population as a whole. Yet, on the other hand, if one goes by the results of the media ratings surveys, the findings of this study are well-aligned with the findings for the national samples used in said surveys. This, then, opens up a set of questions that future research could address, such as: why are people's print and TV news sources mainly confined to the abovementioned papers and programs? What audience- and media-related factors shaped these choices? What are the consequences of this situation for the audience and the media? What could the other media outfits do to be more competitive? How can people be encouraged to seek out other news sources?

It is noteworthy that the abovementioned three broadsheets and two TV news programs all had the highest score in understandability, suggesting that a key consideration for their popularity, and consequently for their credibility, is the accessibility of information that they provide to the audience. Also interesting is the fact that while the five media sources were positively assessed on most of the indicators of credibility, they were seen to be quite opinionated and sensationalistic in their presentation of the news. They also did not rate very well in terms of balance and accuracy. Journalistic standards deem objectivity as an important value that news media must abide by. If this study's respondents were to be used as basis, then the five media sources seem to need to work on this news value. More importantly, the findings of this study suggest that despite being seen as less than objective, the five media sources, overall, are still seen as credible news sources. Could this mean that

audiences have come to understand that there is no such thing as absolute objectivity in the media, that each media source would have its own take on an issue, and that it is up to the reader to separate fact from opinion and “truth” from half-truths? Again, further research could explore shifting standards of objectivity in media from the perspective of practitioners and audiences. In particular, these studies could examine how specifically these shifting standards, if they do exist, impact on people’s assessment of media credibility.

In general, both broadsheets and TV news programs were assessed by the respondents as almost equally credible. This finding runs counter to what several previous studies have found, about TV being perceived to be more credible than newspapers. One possible explanation lies in Philippine media personalities’ practice of “crossing over” from one medium to another – newspaper columnists hosting their own TV or radio programs, and vice-versa. Moreover, it is also not unusual for TV and radio news programs to use newspaper stories as material for their programs, and vice-versa. Because they share common personalities and stories, it is not surprising that the audience would regard newspapers and TV programs to have the same level of credibility. This is yet another topic that other researchers could look into in the future.

As these study’s bivariate analyses revealed, however, older and less educated respondents perceived television to be more credible than newspapers, compared to the younger and more educated respondents, respectively. In both instances, one might argue that accessibility underlies the choices of the older and less educated respondents. TV is more accessible to the older respondents, in that they usually stay at home more than their younger counterparts, and might have greater exposure with television. Meanwhile, TV is more accessible to the less educated respondents in that its audio-visual nature makes it easier for them to comprehend the news.

Finally, the findings of this study have shown on which aspects of credibility Philippine newspapers and television news programs, or at least the five media sources mentioned earlier, do well and on which aspects they need to improve on. Philippine media agencies might find this study's findings useful for mapping the direction they would take so that they could enhance their credibility and be of better service to the public.

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