



From social media to mainstream media: Rethinking news verification in the age of artificial intelligence

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ABSTRACT

Background: In Indonesia, social media platforms such as YouTube, WhatsApp, and TikTok have become dominant news sources, surpassing traditional mainstream media. However, this shift has triggered a crisis of verification, further complicated by the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-generated content, including deepfakes and AI-based news production, which blurs the boundary between fact and fabrication. **Methods:** This study employed a qualitative approach through library research and reflective theoretical analysis, supported by documentary observations of current phenomena involving viral social media content entering mainstream media channels. Analysis was conducted thematically, critically, and contextually, synthesizing previous scholarly findings with contemporary digital media practices. **Findings:** The results indicate that the flow of information from social media to mainstream media has dismantled traditional gatekeeping roles, replacing them with a decentralized and algorithm-driven ecosystem. AI technologies, while enhancing efficiency, introduce epistemological challenges by generating credible but potentially inaccurate content without ethical responsibility. Furthermore, the study highlights that traditional verification mechanisms are inadequate against the speed and complexity of digital information flows. Effective information verification today requires collaborative, technology-assisted, and participatory strategies, integrating innovations such as AI-supported fact-checking tools and blockchain verification. Simultaneously, media literacy must evolve to include algorithmic awareness and critical interpretation skills. **Conclusion:** The crisis of information verification is not merely technical but communicative, involving shifts in authority, credibility, and ethical responsibility in the digital era. Addressing this crisis demands a systemic overhaul of verification practices through multiparty collaboration and ethical frameworks for AI communication. **Novelty/Originality of this article:** It offers a novel synthesis between AI-mediated communication theories and real-world media practices, proposing a redefinition of public communication that incorporates non-human actors like AI as influential communicators within digital ecosystems.

KEYWORDS: artificial intelligence; communication ethics; information verification; social media.

1. Introduction

Significant changes in the global communications landscape have occurred along with the rapid development of information and communication technologies, especially in the last two decades. Social media is now the primary medium of distribution of information and news, replacing the dominance of the mainstream media. Data shows that more than 167 million Indonesians are active internet users, and about 139 million of them are active social media users, with an average usage duration of 3 hours and 10 minutes per day

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(Anwar et al., 2023; Piatra & Drábik, 2024). Not only as a means of social interaction, but social media has also become the main space for news consumption. Digital News Report from the Reuters Institute (Achiam et al., 2023; Newman et al., 2023) noted that 71% of Indonesian respondents access news from social media, with platforms such as YouTube, WhatsApp, and TikTok dominating.

However, the rampant flow of information through social media is not always accompanied by an adequate verification mechanism. The information circulating often does not go through a rigorous editorial process, making it vulnerable to the spread of fake news and disinformation. This is even more complex with the presence of artificial intelligence (AI) technology that can produce text, images, and videos that resemble professional journalistic products. Technologies such as deepfakes, AI-generated news, and prompt-based content creation have created content that is difficult to distinguish between fact and fabrication, creating confusion in the process of verifying information.

This crisis is exacerbated by social media algorithms that form filter bubbles and echo chambers, where users are only exposed to information that matches their preferences and beliefs. This not only weakens the critical power of society but also complicates cross-verification due to low exposure to alternative information. At the same time, people experience information fatigue, which leads to a decrease in the ability and willingness to filter out correct information from wrong (Koh et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2016; Miseviciene et al., 2020).

What the public at large has not realized is that this verification crisis is not just a technical problem, but a deep problem in the communication process. In the study of communication science, truth is not only about the content of the message, but also about who conveys it, in what context, and through what channels the message is communicated. The role of algorithms as the new gatekeeper in digital communication has mediated the way the public understands reality, without them realizing it. Similarly, the use of AI to produce news content creates new ambiguities regarding communicator authority, communication ethics, and responsibility for the meaning generated in public spaces.

Previous studies have raised a few important aspects of this phenomenon. Tandoc Jr et al. (2018) examined how social media enables the spread of fake news without verification. Marwick & Lewis (2017) highlighting how digital algorithms reinforce disinformation. Diakopoulos (2019) discussed the role of AI in journalism and its limitations in understanding context. However, most of these studies still focus on journalistic, technical, or regulatory dimensions, and have not adequately addressed the epistemological crisis and the shift in communication relations between social media and mainstream media.

The purpose of writing this article is to critically analyse the dynamics of news verification in the context of the development of digital communication and artificial intelligence. The specific objectives of this article include (1) analysing the shift in information sources and flows from social media to mainstream media, as well as its implications for information authority in society. (2) Identify the crisis of validity and trust in information and the collapse of professional media authority in the era of decentralized communication. (3) Examine the role and impact of artificial intelligence technology in the production and reproduction of public information, including the challenge of verifying AI-based content. (4) Compare traditional news verification mechanisms with contemporary challenges presented by the digital information ecosystem. (5) Formulate a strategy for restructuring the information verification system based on a collaborative approach, the latest verification technology, and digital communication literacy. And don't forget to highlight the ethical dimension and communication responsibility in the use of AI by the media and other information actors.

2. Methods

This article was compiled using a qualitative approach that aims to explore and explain in depth the contemporary communication phenomenon related to information verification in the era of social media and artificial intelligence. This paper does not aim to measure the

quantitative relationships between variables, but rather to analyse the meaning, dynamics, and implications of complex and contextual communication.

This article uses a literature analysis approach (library research) and theoretical reflective studies, combined with the monitoring of contemporary phenomena in digital communication practices. The writing is carried out by systematically compiling arguments based on the results of previous research from reputable international journals and actual phenomena obtained from observations of viral cases on social media and mainstream media policies. This design was chosen because it is suitable for answering analytical and exploratory questions, as formulated in the purpose of the writing.

Information collection is carried out through three main sources, namely literature studies. Information was gathered from references to scientific journal articles from publishers such as Routledge, SAGE, Elsevier, Oxford University Press, and Springer. The criteria for selecting sources are relevance to the topic (social media, news verification, AI, communication ethics), last 5–10 years for trends and technologies, and the credibility of the journal. Second, the analysis of actual phenomena. The author also conducts documentary observations on relevant case examples, such as the virality of content from TikTok and Instagram that is raised to the mainstream media, the use of ChatGPT, and other AI platforms in information creation, media and public responses to deepfake and AI hoax issues. Third, a review of verification policies and practices. This article also refers to policy documents, guidelines to describe standards and challenges in digital information verification.

The information that has been collected is analyzed through several stages. First, thematic categorization is carried out by describing the purpose of the writing into six main themes of discussion. Each of these themes is then examined using relevant theories and previous studies as supporting references. Second, the process continues with critical analysis and contextualization, in which each phenomenon is explored not only in a descriptive manner but also through a reflective approach. This involves considering how the meaning of communication is constructed, who is involved in delivering it, and what sociocultural as well as epistemological impacts may arise. Finally, the stage of synthesis and drawing of conclusions is conducted to integrate the findings and provide a comprehensive understanding of the issues discussed.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Shifting sources and information flows: From social media to mainstream media

A major transformation in information distribution has occurred since the emergence of social media as the main platform for news consumption. Social media is now not only a place to share information, but also an initial source of news that is recited by the mainstream media. This phenomenon reflects a shift in the structure of information authority, from professional media institutions to individual users, otherwise known as user-generated content.

In the theory of agenda building, McCombs (McCombs, 1977, 2002) explained that the media is no longer the only actor shaping the public agenda. On the contrary, the media now often responds to the social dynamics that develop on social media. Viral content on TikTok, Twitter (X), or Instagram can be the foundation for mainstream media to structure their news narratives. This marks a reversal of roles: the mainstream media is no longer the sole gatekeeper, but rather the interpreter of information circulating on digital platforms (Meraz & Papacharissi, 2013).

The media logic approach of Altheide & Snow (Altheide, 2015) is also relevant to analyse this phenomenon. In the digital communication environment, the logic of social media—which emphasizes speed, virality, and emotional engagement—has influenced the way mainstream media packages news. Many media outlets are now caught up in clickbait and trending topic strategies to maintain relevance, which makes it easier for content from

social media to "take the stage" into official news, without always going through a thorough verification process (Hermida, 2012).

Consequently, the process of legitimacy of information becomes increasingly complex. On the one hand, social media allows for the democratization of the flow of information, where everyone can become a producer of messages. But on the other hand, the credibility and accuracy of information are often compromised because not all UGCs have the same journalistic standards. The process of moving information from social media to mainstream media does not always guarantee validity, but rather often adds new biases and framing (Bruns, 2021).

From the point of view of Mediation Theory (Silverstone, 2005), this information transfer also shows the existence of a new power relationship in the production of meaning. Mainstream media not only quote but also mediate and reinterpret social media content with their own narrative framework. This is where it is important to pay attention to who gives meaning, in what context, and for whose benefit the message is constructed.

An empirical example can be seen from a few viral cases in Indonesia, such as TikTok uploads about "teachers who were fired for TikTok in the classroom" or "social prank content" which was then widely reported by national online media without in-depth investigation. This pattern shows that the mainstream media is no longer an originator, but an amplifier of information that emerges from the digital space of citizens.

Therefore, it is necessary to review the function of the media as a guarantor of information authority. When the flow of information flows from the bottom up, the role of the media is no longer as an initial filter, but as a reinforcement of the narrative that has already been circulated. This poses a major challenge to journalistic accountability, validity, and ethics in a decentralized information ecosystem.

3.2 The crisis of information validity and authority in the digital age

In the era of digital communication, information authority is no longer exclusively in professional media institutions. The existence of social media has created an open, participatory, and decentralized information ecosystem, which simultaneously also triggers a crisis of authority and validity of information.

In the classical communication paradigm, the mainstream media functions as a gatekeeper who determines what information is worthy of being disseminated to the public. However, the Gatekeeping theory developed by Lewin (Bell et al., 2019) and expanded by Shoemaker & Vos (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009), It is now undergoing deconstruction. Social media allows anyone to produce, disseminate, and claim authority over information without a professional verification process. Thus, the previously centralized communication authority is now dispersed (Bruns, 2021), giving rise to what is called networked gatekeeping or even gate watching.

This phenomenon creates ambiguity in determining the validity of information. In conditions of information overload, users tend to rely on social heuristics—such as the number of likes, comments, or who is sharing information—as an indicator of truth, rather than a credible fact or source (Metzger et al., 2010). As a result, the validity of information is increasingly associated with popularity, rather than with accuracy or authoritative sources.

This crisis is exacerbated by the phenomenon of declining trust in the mainstream media. Edelman Trust Barometer Study (Edelman, 2025; Edwards, 2024) shows that only 50% of the global community trusts the media as an institution, and the figure is lower in countries with high political polarization, including Indonesia. This distrust is largely fuelled by the perception that the media has a specific agenda, is biased, or is not independent, as well as because the media often fails to distinguish between opinion, news, and digital propaganda (Fletcher & Nielsen, 2018).

On the other hand, social media creates the illusion of direct engagement, reinforcing the legitimacy of information circulating without filters. When users feel "taking part" in the communication process, they tend to trust the information circulating in their social

networks, regardless of its factual validity. This is in line with the Uses and Gratifications approach, where the user's motivation to verify the truth becomes low if the information meets their emotional needs or social identity (Katz et al., 1973).

Epistemic authority theories (Kruglanski, 2013) also provides a foundation for understanding how the crisis of information authority emerged. When there is no established structure to determine who is authorized to convey the truth, society begins to form new authorities based on affiliation, community beliefs, or even emotional affinity—rather than on credentials or competencies.

Thus, what is happening today is not only the rise of disinformation, but the collapse of social infrastructure to affirm the truth. Information authorities are undergoing a shift from professional institutions to individuals or groups that have social influence, rather than substantive knowledge. In this context, we are witnessing the emergence of "grassroots epistemology," which is often incompatible with the principles of truth-based, responsible, and ethical communication.

This crisis signifies that the main challenge in contemporary communication is not just how information is verified, but who is trusted and why they are trusted. Therefore, a new approach is needed in rebuilding trust in information, through restoring credibility, media literacy education, and strengthening ethical communication in the digital era.

3.3 The role and impact of AI in information production and reproduction

The presence of artificial intelligence (AI) in the digital communication landscape is not only changing the way information is produced, but also redefining the structure, actors, and responsibilities in the communication process itself. AI has now become a new message producer capable of generating content in the form of text, sound, images, and even video in a way that resembles human production, but done automatically, quickly, and at scale.

From a communication perspective, the presence of AI in information production poses an epistemological challenge. Who is the communicator? What is the intention of communication? Who is responsible for the meaning of the message? These questions become important when seemingly credible information is generated by machine-learning models without awareness, affection, or social responsibility.

Generative AI such as ChatGPT and others have been used to create narratives, visualizations, and even simulations of public figures. Research by Diakopoulos (Diakopoulos, 2019) said that AI offers efficiency and scalability in news creation (automated journalism), but has limitations in capturing social nuances, cultural contexts, and ethical complexities. In practice, AI could produce content that is convincing but false, or what is referred to as "AI hallucination"—information that appears to be true but is not based on facts (Maleki et al., 2024).

The communication impact of this phenomenon is enormous. First, AI encourages the acceleration of the dissemination of false information because it can create text and visuals that are difficult to verify visually. Chesney and Citron's study of deepfakes shows that this technology has the potential to erode public trust in visual evidence, which has long been considered the most powerful form of information validation (Chesney & Citron, 2019).

Second, AI gives rise to new communication actors who have no moral intentions or social responsibility. This led to a disruption in transactional communication theory, which emphasized the importance of feedback, social context, and interpersonal responsibility in message exchange (Barnlund, 2008; Wrench et al., 2022). When a message is generated by a system that has no intention, then the entire communication dynamic becomes asymmetrical and potentially manipulative.

Third, the use of AI in information production accelerates the transformation of communication from a social process to a technological process. According to Verbeek's technological mediation theory, technology is not only a tool, but a mediative entity that shapes perceptions, interpretations, and social relations. In this context, AI is not neutral, but rather an actor that actively influences how information is received and trusted (Heikkerö, 2015; Verbeek, 2006, 2009, 2011).

Concrete examples can be found in AI-generated influencers such as Lil Miquela, a digital figure who has millions of followers and produces content like a human. In journalism, several international media have used automated writing tools for financial reports, weather, and match results. However, cases such as the publication of erroneous articles by AI (without human checking) show that the credibility of information is now at stake in a system that is not yet fully transparent and accountable (Ali & Hassoun, 2019).

As a result, it is increasingly difficult for people to distinguish between authentic and fabricated content, as visual and narrative representations become increasingly subtle and convincing. This brings us to a new verification crisis that cannot be handled with the old methods. Media literacy, context-reading skills, and the ability to trace the origin of messages are more important than ever.

3.4 Traditional verification mechanisms vs. new challenges

Information verification is a key foundation in responsible journalism and public communication. Traditionally, the verification process is carried out through clear stages: source identification, cross-checking, validation through official documents, direct interviews, and editorial supervision. In conventional mass communication approaches, this model is rooted in the principle of gatekeeping, in which the media acts as a custodian of information to guarantee accuracy, objectivity, and social responsibility (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009).

However, in the era of digital communication, this model is under great pressure. The decentralization of information production—where anyone can become a content producer through social media—removes the media's monopoly over the verification process. Information is now spread without editorial oversight, while speed and virality are top priorities for message distribution. In this context, the gatekeeping function is weakened, and replaced by a new mechanism called distributed verification, which is a verification process that is carried out openly by the community or users themselves (Hermida, 2012).

The distribution of this verification process is not always effective. Most users do not have the skills or motivation to verify information systematically. A study by Metzger and Flanagin (Metzger et al., 2010) indicated that users tend to rely on heuristic cues (number of likes, comments, or viral status) rather than substantially verifying digital content. This is where an epistemological challenge arises: what "looks right" is considered "truth," even if it is factually wrong.

Furthermore, digital platform algorithms are not designed to verify the truth, but rather to optimize engagement. As explained by Marwick & Lewis (Marwick & Lewis, 2017), algorithms amplify information that triggers high emotions and engagement, regardless of whether the information is valid or not. This exacerbates the verification crisis because high-viral content has a greater chance of being trusted and disseminated, regardless of its accuracy.

On the other hand, the mainstream media is now in a dilemma. To compete in the digital space, they are often forced to follow the logic of social media, such as creating sensational headlines or quoting directly from social media without thorough validation. This practice triggers what is called secondary gatekeeping failure, which is the failure of the media to filter information that comes from sources that are not credible, but have gone viral (Tandoc Jr et al., 2018).

Challenges also arise from the presence of AI-generated content, which is very difficult to verify using conventional methods. Deepfakes, for example, blur the line between fact and visual manipulation. Manual-based verification tools are not fast enough and are not always able to capture the manipulative nuances of digital engineering results. This drives the need for the adoption of new verification technologies, such as blockchain-based tracking, AI-assisted fact-checking, and visual forensics (Bakir & McStay, 2018).

In this context, verification should be understood not only as a technical process, but as a participatory and collaborative communication process. Digital literacy and public participation are important keys in building a community-based ecosystem of verification,

not just institutions. In addition, it is important to develop a new code of ethics in the digital information ecosystem, so that the verification process does not lose its integrity and social function.

3.5 Efforts to reorganize the news verification system

Faced with a flood of digital information filled with manipulative content, fake news, and information generated by artificial intelligence, the reorganization of news verification systems is no longer just a technical necessity, but an imperative of public communication in the era of information disruption. In Indonesia itself, there is no regulation that regulates the use of AI. What exists is a ministerial-level regulation in the form of a circular, especially the Ministerial Circular Letter No. 9 of 2023 concerning Artificial Intelligence Ethics. The verification of information or news should be reframed as a participatory, cross-actor, and technology-based social process, among others.

One of the fast-growing structuring paths is through the adoption of automated verification technology. Various organizations have developed AI-assisted fact-checking tools such as claimreview, full fact AI, and google fact check tools. The system is designed to identify dubious claims and match them with a database of verified facts. A study by Graves (Graves, 2018) said that "automated fact-checking" allows for the detection of claims in seconds, but still faces challenges in recognizing irony, cultural context, and implicit meaning.

In addition, blockchain-based verification has also begun to be developed to trace the origin of information. This concept is based on the principles of traceability and transparency, so that any change in digital content is recorded and verifiable (Liu et al., 2021; Picha Edwardsson & Al-Saqaf, 2024; Voinea, 2019). This technology promises the potential to build "digital records" that are tamper-resistant and open to the public.

The reorganization of verification also requires a collaborative approach involving mainstream media, digital platforms, technology developers, the academic community, and civil society (Nurlatifah, 2021; Nurlatifah & Irwansyah, 2019). As proposed in the UNESCO report by Wardle & Derakhshan (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017), disinformation management and information validation cannot be left to one actor alone. A collaborative model is needed that places the public as part of collaborative verification, with the support of media and technology institutions. An example of this kind of collaboration can be seen in the *CrossCheck* project, a collaborative initiative between the media, NGOs, and academics that seeks to tackle hoaxes during elections through collective fact-checking. This collaborative form not only expands the reach of verification but also builds social trust in the results because the process involves many parties.

Technology will not be able to stand on its own without the support of public digital literacy. From a communication perspective, digital literacy is not just the technical ability to use digital devices, but also includes the ability to interpret messages, recognize biases, identify source authorities, and understand the framework of information production (Livingstone, 2004). Therefore, digital literacy education must be a pillar in the verification ecosystem, especially among the younger generation and the public.

This literacy also includes the aspect of algorithmic literacy, which is the understanding that the flow of information received by users is mediated by algorithmic logic that tends to be biased (Noble, 2018). Without awareness of this logic, users are easily trapped in bubble filters and echo chambers, which magnify the effect of disinformation.

The structuring of verification systems also requires a new ethical framework in communication, especially to deal with the challenges of AI-generated or assisted content (Astuti, 2023; Putri & Qurniawati, 2024). In this context, media institutions need to develop a code of ethics that spans the practices of using AI in journalism: for example, on the transparency of AI use, the need for labelling for AI-generated content, as well as accountability protocols in the event of misinformation. Public communication ethics needs to be extended not only to humans, but also to digital systems that act as actors in the information ecosystem.

3.6 *The ethical implications and responsibility of communication in the age of AI*

The era of artificial intelligence has brought drastic changes in communication practices (Hidayanto et al., 2024; Ramadhina et al., 2023). If previously the communication process was interpersonal, institutional, or media-driven, now we are entering a new phase where non-human systems—namely algorithms and AI models—are also actors that generate, disseminate, and even frame information. These changes require ethical reflection and a rearrangement of communication responsibilities, so that information production remains in line with the principles of truth, justice, and social accountability.

In the classical communication model, the existence of communicators is clear: human beings are subjects who have intentionality, moral values, and social responsibility. But in the context of AI-generated communication, this line has become blurred. If a fake news is generated by AI, then who should be responsible? What is a system developer? User? Editor? Or a digital platform?

According to the theory of communication responsibility (Christmas et al., 2020), every public message should be viewed from three dimensions: who is sending, how the delivery process works, and the social impact. In AI-based communication, these three aspects often cannot be explained completely, leading to a vacuum of responsibility—a void of accountability for the effects of communication.

Mainstream media that use AI technology in content creation, news creation, or interaction with the public also face ethical dilemmas. Some important questions arise such as whether content created by AI needs to be labelled as "AI-generated", to what extent can the media rely on AI to write news without human involvement, how to deal with the bias brought by AI models that learn from non-neutral data? This is where a new code of ethics is needed in digital public communication that incorporates the principles of technological transparency, algorithmic fairness, and digital content accountability. Organizations such as The Partnership on AI and UNESCO's AI Ethics Guidelines have been pushing for these principles, but they have not been widely adopted concretely by media institutions and journalists in developing countries.

In addition, the use of AI in spreading deepfakes, false narratives, and public figure simulations risks normalizing disinformation practices. The more often the public is exposed to ethically ambiguous content, the more likely it is that there will be a decrease in sensitivity to truth and empathy for the social impact of false information. This can create ethical fatigue, i.e. fatigue in distinguishing right from wrong, which ultimately weakens the foundations of social responsibility-based public communication.

In closing, it is important to emphasize that digital communication ethics needs to be an integral part of communication education, both at the academic and professional levels. In Habermas' perspective (1984), Healthy communication can only occur if it is based on the principles of discourse ethics—namely openness, honesty, and responsibility in exchanging messages. This principle must be maintained, even when communication is mediated by artificial intelligence systems.

3.7 *Academic and practical implications*

3.7.1 *Academic implications*

This article makes an important contribution to enriching the study of contemporary communication, particularly in three main aspects. First, it redefines public communication processes in the AI era by expanding the understanding of communication to include non-human actors such as algorithms and AI systems. In this perspective, communication is no longer limited to the relationship between human communicators and audiences but also involves intelligent systems that actively participate in producing and disseminating messages. This opens up opportunities for the emergence of "AI-mediated communication studies" as a new subfield within communication science. Second, the article highlights the crisis of information authority as not merely a journalistic issue but fundamentally a

communicative one. Information authority is often analyzed in the context of media and journalism, yet this article argues that it also involves broader questions of public communication—particularly the dynamics of trust, symbolic representation, and the positioning of information sources. By doing so, it enriches academic discourse through the integration of epistemological and sociological approaches in media and communication studies. Third, the article emphasizes communication literacy as a crucial pillar of social verification. It underscores the need for digital literacy and critical communication, advocating for educational curricula that go beyond technical skills in content production to include interpretive, analytical, and ethical competencies for navigating complex information ecosystems. This provides a direct contribution to the advancement of higher education, especially in the development of critical media literacy-based learning.

3.7.2 Practical implications

This article also presents several practical recommendations that can be adopted by various parties. For mainstream media, it suggests the development of transparency policies in the use of AI in newsrooms, including labelling AI-generated content, enhancing editorial capacity to verify information across platforms—particularly content derived from social media and deep learning technologies—and fostering collaboration with fact-checking institutions, citizen journalist communities, and technology developers to create a real-time collaborative verification system. For digital technology developers, including platforms and startups, the article recommends designing algorithms that prioritize not only engagement but also the quality and validity of content, integrating automatic verification and early-warning features against disinformation, and working with academic and ethical institutions to establish standards of responsibility in communication technology.

Governments and regulators are urged to draft regulations guided by the precautionary principle to govern the use of AI in producing and disseminating public information, promoting a structured national digital literacy program in schools and communities to strengthen public resilience against problematic content, and providing support and incentives for independent fact-checking initiatives as well as public education platforms on digital information. Finally, for society and individuals, the article encourages cultivating a culture of critical scepticism toward viral information and developing the habit of fact-checking before sharing, utilizing credible verification tools and sources such as FactCheck, TurnBackHoax, or Full Fact, and actively participating in digital literacy communities as a way to contribute to a healthier information ecosystem.

Tabel 1. Summary of results and discussion

Subsection	Main Focus	Key Findings	Theoretical/Practical Implications
Shifting Sources and Information Flows	Transition from social media to mainstream media	Viral content from platforms like TikTok and Instagram is often adopted by mainstream media without thorough verification. Authority shifts from institutions to user-generated content.	Challenges traditional gatekeeping; requires rethinking legitimacy and accountability in news production.
Crisis of Information Validity and Authority	Erosion of media authority in digital age	Trust in mainstream media declining; popularity replaces factual accuracy; emergence of “grassroots epistemology.”	Need to rebuild trust through literacy and ethical communication frameworks.
3.3 Role and Impact of AI	AI in news production and reproduction	AI generates credible but potentially false content (“AI hallucinations”); deepfakes undermine trust in visual evidence.	Raises epistemological and ethical challenges; requires new verification methods

Traditional vs. New Verification Mechanisms	Comparison of verification practices	Classical gatekeeping replaced by distributed verification; users rely on heuristics, algorithms amplify emotional content.	and accountability frameworks. Verification must be participatory, collaborative, and tech-assisted (AI fact-checking, blockchain, visual forensics).
Reorganizing the Verification System	Strategies for restructuring	Adoption of automated fact-checking, blockchain; multi-stakeholder collaboration (media, academia, platforms, civil society); strengthen digital and algorithmic literacy.	Encourages systemic and collaborative verification ecosystem.
Ethical Implications in AI Era	Ethics and accountability	Blurred responsibility for AI-generated content; risks of normalizing disinformation and eroding empathy.	Calls for AI ethics code, transparency, accountability, and integration of digital ethics into education.

4. Conclusions

The digital era has fundamentally shifted the structure of information production and distribution. Social media, which was originally a space for personal expression, has now taken over most of the mainstream media's function in disseminating public information. The shift of information flow from social media to mainstream media shows a shift in the authority and legitimacy of information, where viral content is often recited by media institutions without an adequate verification process. In this context, the mainstream media is no longer the sole gatekeeper, but rather part of an open and competitive information ecosystem.

This condition has given birth to a crisis of validity and authority of information. The authority of professional media began to collapse, replaced by the power of public opinion and digital algorithms. Popular information is easier to believe than factual, while it is increasingly difficult for people to distinguish between facts and opinions, especially when the information is presented in a very convincing format. AI exacerbates this situation by producing content that resembles humans, but without social intent and ethical responsibility.

Amid these challenges, traditional verification mechanisms are no longer adequate. The speed and volume of digital information far surpass the capabilities of manual verification systems. At the same time, the public faces information fatigue, so it tends to make decisions based on emotional preferences rather than factual rationality. Thus, information verification now requires a new approach—one that is not only technical, but also communicative and participatory.

The rearrangement of the news verification system is a necessity. The solution does not lie in one actor alone, but in a multi-stakeholder coalition: professional media, digital platforms, technology developers, academics, and civil society. Technologies such as AI-assisted fact-checking and blockchain offer potential but must be combined with critical digital literacy and new communication ethics. This literacy should include an understanding of algorithmic logic, systemic bias, as well as the ability to evaluate source authority contextually.

Finally, the reorganization of the news verification system is not only about protecting factual truths, but also about maintaining a healthy, ethical, and inclusive public space. In the context of communication, this means restoring public trust in the process of fair, open, and responsible information exchange—both human-mediated and machine-mediated. This article emphasizes that the future of quality communication depends on our ability to

rebuild an information ecosystem that upholds the values of truth, collaboration, and social responsibility.

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Author Contribution

A.R. (corresponding author) contributed to the study in the following roles: conceptualization, including the formulation of the research title and overall research design. He is also responsible to distribute the task during the research. Then he is also responsible to develop research method, by planning and implementing the research procedures in line with the study objectives; and investigation, through data collection and analysis based on the proposed method. Furthermore, the author was responsible for writing – original draft, which involved preparing the full manuscript, and writing – review & editing, by revising the article according to reviewers' and editors' feedback. As the Corresponding Author, he also managed the process of article submission, communication with the journal's editorial team, and finalization of the publication.

I.S.S., is responsible for literature review by assisting the first author in tracing and examining relevant prior studies through scholarly journals. She was also involved in formal analysis by providing support during the data analysis process. In the manuscript preparation stage, the second author took part in Writing – review & editing, which included checking spelling, refining less relevant sentences, reviewing English translations, and editing the manuscript to ensure overall quality and consistency.

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