Media Literacy in The Digital Age: Analyzing the Social Divide in Handling Misinformation.

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Media Literacy in a Digital Age: Analyzing the Social Divide in Misinformation Assessment

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ABSTRACT

According to the Varieties of Democracy report in 2021, Taiwan has been described as the top country where much misinformation spreads on social media. The majority of that misinformation is used to do politically polarized society. The society also raises the atmosphere in which people tend to believe the preference for political information on social media platforms. Under this circumstance, social media users were the first group to bear the brunt of the existence of political misinformation.

Media literacy by definition means the ability to apply critical thinking to the mass information the reader has absorbed on different platforms. The steps of media literacy include consuming the information, analyzing the information, evaluating the information, and recreating the information by having a particular understanding of the information. Whether people have the ability and acknowledgment of the existence of political misinformation, the knowledge of media literacy, and the differences between different age groups was the researcher's direction to conduct the research.

The research was conducted in both quantitative and qualitative methods. The design of the quantitative method is the questionnaire which collected 147 responses from people in different age groups and education levels. The qualitative method is the in-depth interview which invites five people from age 21 to age 35 with a different perspective toward the political misinformation on social media in Taiwan. The result shows people in different groups who encounter political misinformation have a certain level of reaction to it, the observation of respondents and interviewees shows that people have less awareness about political

misinformation except it is directly related to their interest and will in society, and they have various acknowledgments about the definition of political misinformation and media literacy on themselves.

Keywords: Media Literacy, Political Misinformation, Social Media

數位時代的媒體素養：分析社會大眾對假訊息的評定

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文藻外語大學 2024

摘要

根據 2021 年的《民主的多樣性》報告，台灣被描述為全球社交媒體上流傳大量虛假資訊的領先國家。在台灣，這些假訊息大部分被用來製造政治上的社會分化。而假訊息帶來的氛圍也使人們傾向於在社交平台上相信同溫層裡的資訊，進而失去客觀判斷的能力。在這種情況下，社交媒體使用者成為政治虛假資訊存在下的首批受害者。

媒體素養的定義指的是閱聽人能夠對不同平台上所吸收的大量資訊進行批判性思考的能力。媒體素養的步驟包括選擇、吸收、分析、評估資訊，以及透過對資訊的特定理解重新創造資訊。本研究主要方向包括人們是否具備辨識政治虛假資訊的能力和認知、媒體素養的知識，以及不同年齡群體之間的差異。

本研究使用了量化以及質化研究，在量化研究上，筆者收集了來自不同年齡層和教育程度的 147 份回應。在質化研究上則進行深度訪談，邀請了五位年齡介於 21 歲至 35 歲之間，對台灣社交媒體上的政治虛假資訊持有不同觀點的受訪者。研究結果顯示，不同群體的人在遇到政治虛假資訊時會有一定程度的反應，根據對問卷填寫者和面談受訪者的觀察，除非政治假訊息有直接觸及群眾在社會中的利益和意願的可能性，否則人們對政治假訊息有較低的意識感，並對政治虛假資訊和媒體素養的定義有不同的理解。

關鍵字：媒體素養，政治假訊息，社群媒體

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INTRODUCTION

Background

      To read the media content, the audience and reader need some specific abilities, and the abilities have a name to include them all: Media literacy. Media literacy, an ability to apply critical thinking when encountering new information, is essential worldwide. Media literacy is the framework concept that offers the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, regenerate, and participate in information. To understand the beginning of media literacy, we need to track back the history of media literacy and focus on media technology's development in the United Kingdom in the early 1930s. The British Film Institute (BFI) has pushed media education because of content development, such as the invention of television, the broadcast of the newspaper, and the prosperity of the entertainment industry… The new speed of the content spread has caused leading organizations, such as the BFI, to be concerned about people's knowledge and ability to absorb information. Whether people's ability to consume information will be influenced by those new changes, under these worries and curiosity, those leading organizations start to broadcast and emphasize the importance of media education. Next, we focus on the 1960s in the British; since the media development began, the diversity of culture has made the National Union of Teachers (NUT) discuss the relationship between personal responsibility and popular culture. Although the topic is about media programs' duty and cultural broadcast, the meaning of holding this discussion was to examine the media broadcast and its influence causing the negative culture. What is the so-called " good content" for the media to spread, and what is the " bad content" for the audience to be aware of ? The issues like this have started to be considered after the NUT's discussion among the whole society.[1]

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[1] TzuBin Lin, "The Developement Of UK Media Education and Its Role in the National Curriculum.," 《當代教育季刊》 Volume13, no. Issue3 (2004).

Besides British, Media education has also been applied in multiple countries. With media content development, different countries stand to avoid the negative influence of booming media information. From the United States to Australia, Canada, Japan, HongKong…those countries and states have put media education inside the educational system after the half of the 20th century. According to those governments' descriptions, media education has been called the "parallel school" because it was as essential as traditional education content. All those national media education policies were made against negative influences from the spread of misinformation. Until now, the purpose of media education has become to let people know to avoid the negative consequences of the media content and be able to criticize the information.[2]

Some countries have already conducted media education for a long time, while others have just started their trip to develop media literacy. Taiwan, a country that has been described as one of the top countries with lots of misinformation attacks from China, has faced the issue of developing media literacy. According to the Varieties of Democracy report, Taiwan got much misinformation from China in 2020.[3] During the presidential election of 2020, Chinese nationalists bought plenty of advertisements and misinformation reports on Taiwanese social media platforms. The purpose of spreading misinformation is to lead the result of the presidential election to achieve specific political preferences, reducing Taiwanese people's willingness to be independent and increasing their willingness to become unified with China. Ever since the presidential election, much political misinformation still exists on the Taiwanese daily internet. However, the Taiwanese educational system officially adopted media education in late 2019. Before media education was included in the national 12-year education system, only social support from Non-Governmental Organizations existed to emphasize the

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[2] 教育部, 媒體素養教育政策白皮書, (2002)..
[3]"Disinformation in Taiwan: International Versus Domestic Perpetrators," 2020, accessed january 20, 2020, https://v-dem.net/weekly_graph/disinformation-in-taiwan-international-versus.

importance of media literacy. The government only established a few media education goals, which needed a clear result to show whether the goal was achieved.

Politics in Taiwan has always been regarded as a tense issue that should not be mentioned between people because of the identity conflict inside Taiwanese people's minds. Taiwan has faced serious identity conflict since the civil war, which became political polarization after the white terror ended. As a result, people have polarized political preferences about whether Taiwan should be considered part of China or independent, and this internal conflict has been measured and targeted by the Chinese government and Chinese nationalists. "The current Taiwanese president is a lesbian who has faked the essay written in her master's academic, trying to pass homosexual marriage just to boost the selling of HIV medicine because her family has a related business" There is plenty of misinformation just like this one, trending on the internet during the presidential election in 2020. Similar misinformation exists before and after elections, causing political polarization to become much more severe since Taiwanese people have been divided by misinformation.[4]

According to the OOSGA company's report, approximately 90% of Taiwanese people use social media programs. The number of media platforms that Taiwanese people use in their lifespan was 6.5, and the average time for Taiwanese social media users to surf the platforms is 2.07 hours per day.[5] People in Taiwan consume lots of information from social media programs. They rely on social media to get in touch with social issues and politics, which means the possibility for people to consume misinformation and misinformation will correlate with their time on social media. However, besides media education, there is little chance for the government to forbid misinformation online. The National Communication Commission(NCC) of Taiwan even tried to establish a law called" media intermediate," which was made by using

[4] "Taiwan Media Literacy Education Initiatives' Launched with Google's US$1 Million Funding.," 2022, https://tfc-taiwan.org.tw/articles/7275.
[5] OOSGA, "Social Media in Taiwan - 2023 Stats & Platform Trends," (October 30, 2023). https://oosga.com/social-media/twn/. .

the Digital Service Act from the EU as the development foundation, stating that media companies shall be responsible for limiting the spread of misinformation on their media platforms; the government will define the sensor standard of misinformation.[6] Although that is the chance for the government to limit the misinformation and misinformation on the internet, with the little willingness from people to adopt this law, the government has paused the law from being applied. People have little willingness because they are worried that the sensor from the media platforms would cause the freedom of speech to disappear.

Will misinformation influence people's media literacy? Will people be able to seek out the truth from mass political news online? Many questions stand between misinformation and media literacy. To explore this correlation, people must conduct activities to apply media literacy in real life and on the internet, and this research is to find out the correlation between people's media literacy on social media platforms when they encounter misinformation.

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[6]"在選舉暫告段落的當下，讓我們再重看一次「數位中介服務法」," 2022, accessed December 8, https://www.thenewslens.com/article/177792.

Motivation

Media literacy is the ability to understand information while developing media content. As a Taiwanese, growing up with false information around me made me realize the importance for Taiwanese people to have media literacy acknowledgment in their lives. Compared to other countries, having enough knowledge to consume and critique the information is essential for Taiwanese citizens. The false information and the misleading message came across the strait just to make the future of Taiwan become part of its (China's) unit. People in Taiwan must understand that information can offer knowledge and change a country's future— the Taiwanese future. Therefore, Taiwanese people shall be able to recognize and critique information that spreads in their lives to decide to manage their future.

Research Purpose

This issue discusses the relationship between social media users' media literacy, and mass political misinformation. The exploration of this issue will focus on the impact of political misinformation on social media users' media literacy, which may include positive and negative influences. The fundamental research is to understand whether social media users' media literacy correlated to information will cause people to lose their ability to consume it and discuss the potential factor that lets social media users have that behavior when encountering political misinformation.

Research Questions

1. How do social media users distinguish between the responsibilities of social media platforms and individual users in terms of consuming and disseminating information?
2. How do social media users define media literacy and misinformation based on their experience?
3. Do social media user change their information-consuming behavior after encountering political misinformation?
4. How much does the social media user

Contribution

The contribution of this research is to offer the potential direction for people to adjust and apply media literacy correctly when encountering mass political information or misinformation. Taiwanese media literacy has an uncertain application regarding political topics, and the information is wrong when people do not apply media literacy correctly. The impact that masses of political information bring on the social media user's media literacy is still uncertain for the current media-using condition, which means that the research can offer a clear statement for people to think about the correlation when they consume the information.

Limits

It is hard to define whether a person has media literacy, and what shall be the standard for the researcher to tell it. The limitation of doing my research is how to set the objective standard to recognize the media literacy of social media users, and so is the misinformation definition. How to objectively stand the definition of misinformation to observe the correlation between social media literacy is still concerning. Besides the definition of misinformation and social media literacy, the third limitation is the social media platforms and their users. The limitation shows up when qualitative research is conducted. A Researcher. The purpose of qualitative and quantitative research is to understand people's perspectives and experiences toward political misinformation on social media platforms, but how to gather participant from different areas

means there exist a chance that the database will show extreme political preference if the citizens from choose area have certain political supports, which may cause the research to show the polarize database.

Delimits

To bracket the limitation, the research needs to do enough literature review to define media literacy and the differences when applied to social media platforms. The definition and the standard of media literacy can be conducted by reference to the similarities between different research's defined standards to achieve a certain level of being objective. When it comes to the definition of misinformation, it will include the news that can present the whole issue. To test the participants, the misinformation sample and the news sample will be selected from different political parties' supportive media programs, to avoid the researcher's political preference affecting the data collection. Avoiding extreme political preference will affect the data collection based on different participants' original locations. The sample will not be chosen by selected specific areas, however, the questionnaire will be sent and answered randomly and anonymously.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Political Fake News and Social Media

Fake news is the most common form of misinformation and disinformation on social media programs. Fake News, a message created based on the phenomenon, was aimed to mislead certain groups in society and divide them as a supporter of some issues. A piece of political fake news may have the following characteristics: The appearance of a fake news report can be professional, entertainable, and credible, which is usually published around the current social issue. Those features were made to make the audience or supporters believe the content is made by the professional and decrease their awareness about the reliance on the issue in the report.[7] Famous social media such as Facebook and Twitter(X), has already been large-scale platforms where Fake News creator insert the concept for spreading information.

However, political fake news didn't come from nowhere, One systematic function of social media is to make sure the content can reach the specific group as the information consumer, and the function is called "Algorithm". The algorithm, the systematic calculation starts from people's clicks and offers plenty of information similar to the first message the person has encountered on social media. The calculation will observe how long and how often a person stays on the content, and the word he/she searches on social media, to select the suitable information which fits the audience's interest to present in front of them. The algorithm not only offers interesting information, but also broadcasts new information that the calculation suggests will fit the information consumer, The calculation records the reaction from the social media users to assume what they want in a further way, and what could be the new information they are willing to get in touch.

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[7]Femi Olan et al., "Fake news on Social Media: the Impact on Society," *Information Systems Frontiers* (2022/01/19 2022), https://doi.org/10.1007/s10796-022-10242-z, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10796-022-10242-z.

When an algorithm applies to a person's social media account, it will offer content that makes sure that person likes and is willing to accept, and this concept that the calculation runs with, will eventually make users' consuming range stuck in their comfort zone, and that's the reason why political polarization and political fake news can be found on many social media user's posts. The algorithm selects the information, ensuring the information can be delivered to the target audience. However, they also make some of the information invisible based on how the audience reacts to those messages' topics. Before applying media literacy by audiences, themselves, the algorithm has already done similar steps to evaluate and analyze the information. The majority of the content people encounter on social media platforms can be seen as the selected "food" that the platforms tried to feed the users. By doing so, the algorithm can create the environment for users to sink in, such as the people they are going to meet on the internet. The posts they are going to encounter on the social platforms, the advertisement they may fund while reading the news…etc. Those are the features that algorithms have offered and which won't be acknowledged by the majority of the users that they are been applied. Political misinformation spread along the algorithm will root in a person's recommendation blank when the user clicks in and stays at the similar content for a while, the system will record it as the person likes to consume this kind of information and recommend more resources related to the misleading post. The notion of fake news and the algorithm's purpose to be established is to control audiences' thoughts toward some issue they will support as their interest.

Media Literacy

Media literacy is an essential factor for people to participate in social issues, they criticize and eventually regenerate their reaction toward the issue. The word "literacy" means the ability to conduct reading and writing, and the term "Media literacy" means the ability to select, analyze, evaluate, and regenerate information from different media platforms, the purpose for people to apply them is to make sure people can think about the purpose for the information to be established and have the understanding about necessity whether they need that information or not. Media literacy describes the abilities when consuming information but also presents the cultural attitude, personal fulfillment, and the attitude for people to seek in civic society. However according to Livingstone Sonia, there exists some concern about the competence that forms media literacy. Different media platforms offer diverse information, which can shape the value of their audience, and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is the mainstream of all media platforms nowadays.[8] Commonly, people can evaluate the information by consuming it as one side, which didn't have the chance for the audience to respond to the content the first time. However, ICT has provided the facility for people to absorb the message and regenerate immediately, which causes social media literacy to become hard to define the standard of whether a person has been "literate" or not. Media literacy according to her research, was a word that cannot be defined so easily as its function, it also indicates the way people apply it to the knowledge of society. Take Taiwan as a typical example, sexual harassment in one of the political parties have risen to the surface since the victim exploded this event on social network. There exist lots of rumor about some politician and celebrities ' sexual harassment which makes social media user spread out that uncertified

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[8] Sonia Livingstone, "Media literacy and the challenge of new information and communication technologies," *The Communication Review (2004)* 7 (2004), http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/1017/.

information through the whole internet. Taiwanese people in this situation need to apply their media literacy to consider the evidence, the purpose of the action, and why those rumors spread a lot. The law can give the victim a certain appropriate response, but society can use the ability of media to evaluate and regenerate, to decrease similar things happening, and help those who suffer from sexual harassment to voice out their past and future. ICT here is not only a tool to generate content for users to consume, but it also can be a platform for people to engage in society by consuming, evaluating, analyzing, and regenerating the content from social issues.

The Definition of Political Misinformation

When we talk about false information, we usually think of a context that has spread without evidence to prove its reality. To define the context that has no clue, the types can be divided into two types of false information: Misinformation and disinformation. The definition of misinformation is false information according to Sacha Altay's research in 2023 , means the information which have the potential purpose of deceiving the audience, False information can be defined as the belief based on erroneous information and a certain perspective that won't have the space for others to do the correction or adjustment.[9] However, disinformation is not just with the simple purpose the deception, disinformation means false information which will lead people to believe in the wrong direction of the issue and hide the truth from the audience. Misinformation can be seen as the basic tool for political parties to decrease opponents' support from their supporters. Take the Taiwanese issue as an example: The context on social media before the election was full of disinformation. Different political parties launched the Cyber-attack to decrease the support of the opponent during the campaign. When the Taiwanese faced the internet civil war, China across the strait also used Cyber-army to spread disinformation

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[9] Sacha Altay et al., "A survey of expert views on misinformation: Definitions, determinants, solutions, and future of the field.," *Harvard Kennedy School (HKS) Misinformation Review* 4, no. 4 (2023), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.37016/mr-2020-119.

which may lead certain political parties to lose their credence in Taiwan. Disinformation in Taiwan is not only information that has been misled by others, but it also is a tool to make people decrease their awareness of the media content. There is a country in the world that is usually considered as using disinformation to become the weapon toward the issue regarding it.

According to Scott W. Harlord, Nathan Beauchamp-Mustafaga, and Jefferey W. Hornung in 2021[10], China is a country that not only uses disinformation to conquer internal conflict but also has a cyber-army to use disinformation to mislead another country to twist the international condition to benefit able to it. The number one target from China is Taiwan, a place which according to a Chinese governmental statement, shall be counted as part of China and which shall not be independent of it. China has used social media and disinformation as its weapon to attack the media structure and media acknowledgment from Taiwan since internet development started. There are three goals for China to apply its Cyber-attack in Taiwan: 1) To target the possible chance to attack, 2) after there exists a chance to apply the disinformation (such as during the election campaigns), the resources of those disinformation will keep stating those context as they are based on the truth. 3) After the long-term application, the disinformation could shape the perspective of context consumers to achieve the goal of the disinformation. The disinformation from China on social media will try to approach the stable, predictable narrative, to let citizens lose their awareness about the information to influence their acknowledgments during the social events that happened. However, under this act, the Taiwan government didn't have a better action to limit the disinformation from China than to remain in the current condition. Taiwan's government once tried to establish a law that required social media companies to limit disinformation and misinformation, however, Taiwanese

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[10] Scott W. Harold, Nathan Beauchamp-Mustafaga, and Jeffrey W. Hornung, "Chinese Disinformation Efforts on Social Media," (2021). https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR4373z3.html. .

people rejected the establishment of this law in the official opinion poll. The standard and the definition about what are disinformation and misinformation were all set by the government, social media users were worried their freedom of speech would be limited once the government passed the law.[11]

Taiwanese Social Media Usage Habit

Taiwanese people have faced a serious issue that increases the potential risk for people to engage the social issues without rational consciousness ------- Political misinformation from the country across the sea surrounds people's daily lives and even becomes the belief of some social media users. The power and influence that misinformation brings to society are not simply because people believe in them, but also have the potential to change the tendency of future elections. According to the Taiwanese scales and commercial advice company-- OOSGA company's report, there are 90% of Taiwanese citizens use social media in their daily lives, and on the average number, each social media user in Taiwan in their lifespan will use 6.5 social media software. The average time those users spend on social media each day is 2.07 hours. These data usages have emphasized that Taiwanese people when engaging in social issues or political events, may be influenced by the content on social media based on the frequency and usage they have spent on those platforms. [12]

Taiwanese Political Environment

Taiwanese politics based on historical development has been divided into two trending preferences: there exists that so call pan-blue in the Taiwanese political environment means people who agree with Kuomintang (KMT) and support the ideology that Taiwan shall be part

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[11] 數位人權觀察家, "在選舉暫告段落的當下，讓我們再重看一次「數位中介服務法」."

[12] OOSGA, "Social Media in Taiwan - 2023 Stats & Platform Trends."

of China, on the other hand, people who agree with the ideology that Taiwan shall become an independent country has been called as pan-green, which has the supported party-Democratic Development Party (DPP). Ever since the end of applied martial law, the freedom of speech and freedom of being democratic has been released to society, two sides of the extreme political atmosphere have been increased and two of the major political parties have started to use political misinformation or rumors of politicians to attack each other, all the attack were just mean to lower opponent's credence so to win the election[13]. However, with the rise of the two major parties' battle, the media have responded to the appearance of pan-blue and pan-green media companies. Society has been shaped into two sides because of the media trending, which causes the Taiwanese media structure to have a long-term illness because of the misinformation explosion, which cannot be fixed completely in the short term.

The Cyber Attack from China

According to Adrian Rauchfleisch, Tzu-Hsuan Tseng, Jo-Ju Kao, and Yi-Ting Liu's paper in 2022, besides the misinformation that has existed for a long time, the other element that boosts misinformation to grow is the "Chinese Factor". With the tension increasing in the Cross-Strait relationship between Taiwan and China, the misinformation attack became severe and caused the polarized political environment to be separated even more. The "Chinese Factor", which means the influence or the message that China has given to Taiwanese daily life, has caused media to use inappropriate content or irrelevant message to feed their audience, the example here is that the description of the thing which cannot be proved and has no clue about the reality of the issue: "The reason Taiwanese Current President pass the Homosexual Marriage is that her family has the related business about HIV vaccine.". Some of the media

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[13] Cal Clark, Alexander C.Tan, and Karl Ho, "Political Polarization in Taiwan and the United States: A Research Puzzle," *Taiwan Institute for Governance and Communication Research (TIGCR) International Conference* (October 25 2019), https://ir.canterbury.ac.nz/handle/10092/17739.

programs even lost their dedication to information delivery, which shall be done through the evaluation and verification of the information before publishing it. The research data in the article state that the frequency of the vocabulary used in the content that media companies publish on social networks was not able to prove whether the content is based on fact or not.[14]

Those authors used The data collection method to do the content analysis about the trending media program and their published message. The misinformation they defined in their paper is the content that cannot be proven to be published based on the truth, and usually, the sources they conduct the news are based on Internet research or the message given by Internet users and influencers, no matter what are those people's professions. During the analysis, the authors found out that the majority of topic related to politics is gossip or rumor about the politician who is involved in a future election, and have the uncertain evidence to prove that information is real, Before the election, the topic which has been rising in the reports is related to China, which indicate the potential relations that the " China factor" is making the media structure became complex to solve its long term illness and may increase the power to intervene Taiwan's future election. The population that the "China factor" has influenced will decide the Taiwanese future, especially those who were born with internet development and have been called internet natives.

The Citizens of the Internet

Generation Z means the people who grew up with the development of the Internet, are more familiar with the Internet and social media than the previous generations, Compared to others, Gen-Z has the environment for them to consume information from the Internet and so to boost the ability to fit in the different media quickly. The Z represents "zoomers", the people

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[14] Adrian Rauchfleisch et al., "Taiwan's Public Discourse About Disinformation: The Role of Journalism, Academia, and Politics," *Journalism Practice* (2022), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2022.2110928.

who were born in the late 1995s till the 2010s. However, being born as part of the Gen-Z didn't mean they have the certain media literacy to face the mass information online. The Internet content has represented Gen-Z's life, culture, economic, personal value…etc. Does that mean they can justify and criticize the diverse information from social media platforms? According to Nikos Panagiotou, Chrysoula Lazou, and Anthoula Baliou's research in 2004 , Gen-Z is the largest generation who have been exposed to the Internet since they were born, has consumed online information as part of their daily routine, the context that the internet offers them the value of life, compared to other generations, Gen-Z has more global connections and more strong identity to fulfill the duty of society. Because they have been tied to the Internet, they have the potential risk of believing in online content without a second thought. The frequency with which Gen-Z used social media in their daily life was higher than other generations, In their research, the Gen-Z study population at least 50% used more than three social media in their life. The majority of the kids in their research believe social networks can bring a positive impact because they can offer a connection between them and their parents, and friends, only 27% of them believe social media brings a negative impact because the cyberbullying and rumors. All the research data have indicated that Gen-Z was the most likely to be influenced by the context that the Internet gave to them. Their research method used quantitative, descriptive, and exploratory methods, In the quantitative research part, they used a questionnaire to collect the responses to select the most representative sample.[15] The sample selected may be considered unbalanced based on the potential chance of the researcher's existing bias, but it still represents the character and habits of Generation Z people. The method can be better by conducting qualitative research, it can offer more databases by observing the actions and experiences Gen-Z respondents may have.

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[15] Nikos Pangiotou, Chrysoula Lazou, and Anthoula Baliou., "Generation Z: Media Consumption and MIL," (11.October 2022), https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/2700828.

How Misinformation Influences Users' Media Literacy

Not exactly all social media users will be convinced by what content has demonstrated on social media, but the majority of victims of misinformation and other cybercrime are adults, rather than new generations. It has been indicated that the generation who didn't grow up with the internet has a great chance of being scammed by the content from social media because they have less acknowledged to disbelief the general content. The misinformation believer regards the information as a form of accurate reliability by their intuition. A piece of information that is repeated several times causes the consumer's intuition to believe the message inside that information is based on the truth, the repetition causes familiarity and fluency of the information to increase, making people less acknowledge what they've consumed.[16] The intuition believer under the situation usually applies only two abilities of media literacy, they only conduct the section of consume and regenerate, which has skipped the evaluation and analysis and eventually, consume the information without having a deliberate to understand its purpose.

Expecting intuition, and emotion also makes people have less consideration about what information they have encountered. Emotion could drive a person's feelings about whether the information is acceptable and suitable for consumption, which may cause people to have a less rational acknowledgment of the content of the message. The emotion, which information consumers think is the control option they could handle, has a part to be manipulated by the misinformation.[17] The misinformation was made to relate to the emotion that the target audience has, the content is to make sure they will agree with the ideology and concept by their intuition and feeling at the very first sight of the reading, rather than to concrete the impression

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[16] Ullrich K. H. Ecker et al., "The psychological drivers of misinformation belief and its resistance to correction," *Nat Rev Psychol* 1 (2022), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1038/s44159-021-00006-y.

[17] Martel Cameron, Pennycook Gordon, and Rand David G., "Reliance on emotion promotes belief in fake news," *Cognitive Research: Principles and Implications* 5, no. 1 (2020/10/07 2020), https://doi.org/10.1186/s41235-020-00252-3, https://doi.org/10.1186/s41235-020-00252-3.

that content has brought to the audience so to make sure those audiences will support the similar message in the future and which, eventually, shape their perception to become the supporter and believer.

Misinformation was designed to believe the information consumer won't apply the whole system and knowledge of media literacy. The structure of misinformation was built on people's knowledge about the issue. Under the exposure of similar information, the information consumer will tend to believe what they have known about the information was correct, and the misinformation concrete this by stating contents with some conspiracy which haven't been proven from the issue, then shows that this is the truth which people can support with.

How Group Influence Individual's Media Literacy.

A generation is a unit which been bound by the time they are born and the issues they have encountered in society. A generation usually based on the time they were born, will give themselves the identity and characteristics by the historical events and issues they have been through. A generation has a similar feature of characteristics based on the growing environment, the majority of the units will be affected by each other, and eventually generate a certain identity. The whole process has been called as Cohort Effect.

The sources of the information will determine how the cohort effect boosts and eventually affects the media literacy of the target group. People tend to believe the sources of information are related to their interests also maintain attraction. With other people who have similar interests, the information consumer will consider accepting the message that comes from groups that can represent their will and ideology and also, familiar beliefs as the consumer, then concrete the cohort effect.

Consumers give themselves a certain identity by consuming information that can prove their ideology. This has made them consider themselves as the "correct" one when encountering serious issues, and they will refuse to accept the identity given by others. In other

words, they refuse to have the possibility of being corrected by others, which makes them form an echo chamber when applying media literacy. The cohort effect here is to give individuals an acknowledgment that the group is larger than the personal identity. Once a group has been put as the priority choice in the identity, the individual will find it hard to conduct any action without considering what is good for the group. The correction from outside of the comfort zone was seen as challenging the group and their central concept, which may cause the rejection from the group to become fights.

The definition of each element that the unit gives to groups always repeats similar characteristics, which directly relate to their behavior on social media. The direction of people's behavior can be defined in two ways, both based on the generation characteristics they have defined themselves. One is According to Delli Carpini's research in 2017, young adults during the early 21st century have less bond with peers when talking about politics, and have less willingness to fulfill the duty of citizens, they regard themselves as a separate unit within the organization called society, unlike other generations, they have a clear identity as "individual". These young adults understand how politics works; however, they are not considered to apply their right to participate in politics. It can be seen that young adults are less willing to follow the political issue on social media. They will also avoid giving a clear statement about what party they are supporting and try their best to not sink in any color to be as neutral as possible.

The Backfire Effect and Confirmation Bias

When the correction from others has influenced one's belief and self-identity, it will cause a backfire effect. The backfire effect usually happens when the target object has believed in the misinformation for a long time, and then won't accept any adjustment and correction

from the others, even if the information they have believed so far has been proven with evidence as the incorrect content.[18]

The backfire effect means when the information consumer strongly rejects to receive different opinions from what they insist is correct information, and even concrete their mind to keep support and believe the misinformation. Usually, the information consumers won't acknowledge that they have a stand in a certain perspective to view the issue; they think they are rational and logical when talking about specific topics. Under the situation, the backfire effect has shown that people may be conducting the knowledge of media literacy in the wrong direction, which was not as same as what the secular has recognized, they didn't believe in the message that was built on the nonsense, but they choose to find the logical-like sentences which came from the information with no evidence prove to be the truth. The backfire effect here also shows that the information consumer has conducted a confirmation bias during the selection of information, they choose the information to consume under unequal consideration about the reliability of the content. On the emotional development, when encountering new information, people tend to have less doubt about the context that seems to fit their consciousness, in other words, it is easier for audiences to accept the content that seems fluent and rational based on their acknowledgment, in their mind, the information was " correct" and base on the "facts".

The Confirmation Bias and the Backfire effect were all built on people's willingness to accept information and their interest in information selection. The basic idea of Confirmation bias has been described as the initial belief that the consumer has at the very first sight of the information, which may affect the direction to analyze the information they encounter on the

[18] Briony Swire-Thompson, Joseph DeGutis, and Lazer David, "Searching for the Backfire Effect: Measurement and Design Considerations," *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition* 9, no. 3 (2020/09/01/ 2020), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jarmac.2020.06.006, https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2211368120300516.

media, and could form their way to explain the message content.[19] The confirmation will not easily be proven as a false direction of information consumption, it has been stated by researchers that the forming of confirmation bias has the hypotheses to strengthen it. The information consumers tend to have different hypotheses about the issue and the confirmation bias was the result that they applied those assumptions into the action when determining the information to absorb. The reason why people have confirmation bias is because of the overconfidence they have, when people grow up with their personal experience, the fed information, the culture, and individual value, they build their belief in a certain way which concrete their confidence.
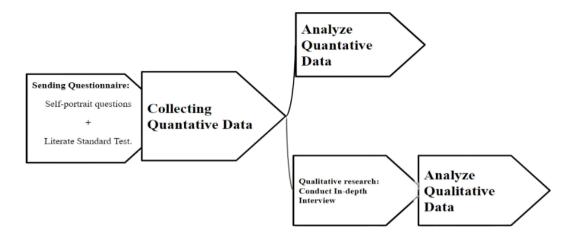
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[19] Klayma and Joshua, "Varieties of Confirmation Bias," in *Psychology of Learning and Motivation*, ed. Jerome Busemeyer, Reid Hastie, and Douglas L Medin (Academic Press, 1995).

METHODOLOGY

Research Method

The Method I will use to collect data will be both quantitative and qualitative.

Figure 1-1 Research Method

The Quantitative Method I used to be to design the online survey, which focused on the response that comes from different ages 'social media users. The survey is divided into two parts: the questions are designed to observe and analyze respondents' perspectives toward political misinformation, and the second is designed to observe people's media literacy application in their daily lives. The main directions of the questionnaire part were: (1. The political party people have support, (2. What is the respondents' reaction toward the political misinformation; (3. Respondents' habits while using social media platforms. The standard followed the direction that the Taiwan Fact Check Center media literacy test has, based on the trust of this organization to have long-term cooperation with Google to develop literacy education in Taiwan. The value of those designs of questions and the direction of the organization has been more persuasive by using it as the foundation for my observation. The expected result is to seek different people with different literature standards toward political misinformation, especially the response that shows the specific high or low literature standard toward the research issue.

The qualitative method was conducted after the collection of quantitative data was finished. The sample has been selected from the respondents who have answered the questionnaire, the in-depth interview hosted around 5-10 times, and the participants have been selected as two pan-blue members, two pan-green members, and the one-two people who have a neutral political attitude. The in-depth interview was conducted to observe their reaction toward the political misinformation and their perspective on misinformation and Taiwan politics.

Quantitative and qualitative data collection expects that the quantitative method shall have enough data to show the impact that political misinformation brought on Generation Z's social media users, which has influenced their ability to apply media literacy. The quantitative method shall have enough statements to indicate that the political misinformation negatively or positively impacted the social media users and that the users have the experience and perspective toward influence.

Research Process

Reading the research has found, that media literacy has been defined as the action and knowledge about information selection, consumption, evaluation, analysis, and regeneration, which can be the main elements to determine the question designed and the possibility of data collection.

Quantitative research

The quantitative data collection – online survey, has been designed in the following direction:

1. **The Media Literacy Application:**

   This part of the questionnaire has been divided into seven questions, The first six questions observe respondents' habits when encountering normal information, the seventh one meant to observe whether respondents will keep the same habit when encountering "political" information, and the purpose for doing these designs is to understand whether the respondent will change the application of media literacy when talked about the politics on social media.

2. **The Perspective and Acknowledgment of Political Misinformation:**

   In this part, the questions were designed to understand people's perspectives about political issues on social media and how they define political misinformation. The purpose of observing these responses is to find out the potential twist point that may affect their behavior regarding media literacy application when encountering politics and increase the possibility of observing the confirmation bias.

3. **The Social Media Usage:**

   The questions were designed to observe the respondents' habit on social media usage, which can offer the potential element to understand what shape their perspective toward political misinformation on social media.

The research population focuses on the social media users without the localization limits, the age group has extended from the internet citizens to the " people who used social media" to comprehend the different reactions from people in different group age.

Qualitative research

The questions that were put into the qualitative research were a total of eight questions. The questions were designed around the concept of observing how respondents will react and define political misinformation on social media. In the in-depth interview, the expectation of the data collection is the attitude that respondent have can show whether the political misinformation affects their media literacy application. The knowledge and the perception each interviewee has may influence how they view political misinformation, which also can be observed in their potential confirmation bias about information consumption.

Here are the restatement and the explanation of the research questions:

1. Can you please explain, in your opinion, what are the characteristics of political misinformation (if possible, please provide examples)?

The question is made to understand how people acknowledge and define political misinformation, and whether they can recognize the misinformation in their daily life.

2. On social media, what are the common sources of political information that you often come across (e.g., news, influencers, specific programs, etc.)? Could you please explain why you use these sources to gather information?

The question is made to observe whether the respondents can conduct the first step of media literacy application: information selection also tries to understand their perspective about the sources of information they have chosen.

3. Have you ever become skeptical of real news due to political misinformation? Based on your experience, have you ever been misled about certain issues because of political misinformation?

The question is designed to observe whether the respondent can conduct the application of media literacy: consumption and evaluation.

4. Do you believe that political misinformation on social media makes it harder for people to distinguish the authenticity of news? Do you assess the source and content before and after reading online articles?

The question is made to observe respondents' opinions by asking them to stand in the third person's sight to view the question, and then to observe after they have their opinion about the question, whether they will analyze the information they have encountered.

5. When reading political news or information on social media, do you try to obtain information about the same event or topic from multiple sources? How do you determine the credibility of news and reliable sources?

The question is designed to understand whether the interviewee will try to consume information from different resources.

6. Have you ever tried using fact-checking tools to verify the accuracy of political messages (e.g., Taiwan Fact Check Center)? If not, could you please explain why?

The question was designed to understand whether people who use social media will use fact-check tools to evaluate the information they encounter.

7. How do you define media literacy in a person? Could you explain your standards for what constitutes media literacy in your opinion?

By observing the interviewee's definition of who has enough media literacy knowledge, we can understand what's their acknowledgment of media literacy.

8. Do you think that individuals with lower levels of media literacy are more likely to believe political misinformation?

This question was made to understand their perspective toward people(society)'s media literacy knowledge application. By having their opinion, the in-depth interview can understand what they have seen and regard the political misinformation.

DATA ANALYSIS

Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis

During the quantitative data collection, the questionnaire was designed to document people's information consumption habits and acknowledge media literacy. The assumption is people will change their habits when encounter information related to politics in Taiwan, and their application of media literacy will change based on their social media usage routine. The assumption also includes that people in different age groups will have different perspectives toward the application of media literacy and have different ideas about who must conduct information censor on social media. The description of data analysis has been divided into three categories: The application habit of media literacy, The social media usage habit, and The acknowledgment and definition of political misinformation. Each category will involve demographic data as the indicator to observe different study population group's phenomena. The top three respondent groups people interested in the related topic were female, aged between 18 to 24, and the group with bachelor's degrees. The majority of people consider themselves social media users, they have the responsibility for the accuracy of the information they have encountered. The resources of these data came from three directions: the researcher's social relations, the random post on social media, and the further connection from the researcher's social relations. The original expectation for respondents were social media users with students, with bachelor's degrees and aged between 18 and 24, however, the results have shown that people whose occupation was educator, have at least a bachelor's degree, aged 40 years old are as the second large group to respond the questionnaire.

How Do Respondents Define Political Misinformation?

During the data collection, the Respondents in various categorized groups have different recognition of what political misinformation shall be, and the majority of people recognize political misinformation as displayed in chart 1. The Valid number of respondents is 146 units, which has taken 99.3% of the respondents to have a clear definition of what political misinformation is. The Invalid number here is the respondent who has selected all the options of the selection part, which also includes the option "I do not understand what political misinformation is". The selection has caused the conflict result due to the reason that the respondent also selected a clear definition of what political misinformation in their mind could be, so the response has been counted as invalid.

Quantitative analysis 1: The Number and Percentage of Respondents in Definition of Political Misinformation

The Definition Of Political Misinformation	Observations					
	Valid		Invalid		Total	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
	146	99.3%	1	0.7%	147	100.0%

During the data collection, this question was designed as multiple choice, which can show how respondents defined political misinformation.

1. Among the total number of 146 (99.3%) valid responses, there are 90 (61.6%) respondents agree the spread of unfavorable content about specific political parties, figures, and issues can be counted as political misinformation.

2. Among the total number of 146(99.3%) valid responses, there are 121(82.9%) respondents agree the Dissemination of misleading messages targeting specific political parties, figures, and issues can be counted as political misinformation.

3. Among the total number of 146(99.3%) valid responses, there are 100(68.5%) respondents who agree the Dissemination of exaggerated targets the specific political parties, figures, and issues can be counted as political misinformation.

4. Among the total number of 146(99.3%) valid responses, there are 106(72.6%) respondents who agree the Dissemination of unverified information targeted the specific political parties, figures, and issues can be counted as political misinformation.

5. Among the total number of 146(99.3%) valid responses, there are 9(6.2%) respondents have chosen the option I'm not familiar with terms related to political misinformation.

The most chosen option for misinformation is the "dissemination of misleading message", expect this one, people have less recognition about the option " Spread of unfavorable statements or messages as misinformation".

The definition of political misinformation according to what the respondent has recognized shall be the information that can be obvious to be observed as "misinformation", the application of media literacy here has shown that people during the selection of consumed information will try to evaluate the information that has the misleading purpose. The definition of misinformation according to the previous research, has a misleading intention inside no matter whether the information is with or without the intention to spread on social media.

Quantitative analysis 1-1: The Number Separation and Percentage of Respondents In Definition of Political Misinformation

The definition:	Respond		The Observed Percentage
(About Specific political parties, figures, issues)	Number	Percentage	
Spread of unfavorable statements or messages as misinformation	90	21.1%	61.6%
Dissemination of misleading messages as misinformation	121	28.4%	82.9%

Dissemination of exaggerated as misinformation	100	23.5%	68.5%
Dissemination of unverified information	106	24.9%	72.6%
I am not familiar with terms related to 'Political Misinformation.'	9	2.1%	6.2%
Total Number:	426	100.0%	291.8%

The Factors Inside the Published Information

During the Data Collection, the actions people took when consuming the information can be taken into different categories, which can show how the average respondent applies the knowledge of media literacy to reality.

As the following chart (Quantitative analysis 2), there is various factor for respondents to check when encounter message or article on social media, and here is the result analysis:

1. Accuracy and Reliability: There are 66 (44.9%) respondents have their answer as always, 46(31.3%) of them have chosen usually, 26(17.7%) respondents choose sometimes, 7(4.8%) of them choose seldom and 2(1.4%) of them have shown they never check the accuracy and reliability of the information.

2. The Background of Media Resources: There are 31(21.1%) of the respondents in this question answered they always check the background of the information, 48(32.7%) of them choose usually, 48(32.7%) of them chose sometimes, and 14(9.5%) of respondents choose they seldom check this element, 6(4.1%) of them choose they never did the checking in the factor.

3. The Potential Bias: There are 45(30.6%) of the respondents have agreed they always will check this factor when encountering new information, 60(40.8%) have chosen the option of Usually, 33(22.4%) of the respondents have shown they will do the checking sometimes, and 6(4.1%) people have chosen seldom, 3(2.0%) of the respondent have never check this factor in the information.

4. Using Fact Check Tool: When asking whether people have experience using Fact Check Tool, 15(10.2%) of them will always use it, 32(21.8%) of respondents usually will be used it, 53(36.1%) of the respondents sometimes will be used and 40(27.2%) seldom will use the tool, 7(4.8%) of them have never used the fact-checking tool.

5. Timing of Information Published: when asking whether people have checked the published time of the information, 22(15.0%) of them always will do so, 52(35.4%) of them will do it usually, 60(40.8%) of them will do it sometimes, and 12(8.2%) of respondents seldom will check this factor, 1(0.7%) respondent shows they never check this factor.

The collected data show that respondents have a certain awareness about the potential bias inside the information and whether it can be reliable and accurate. however, respondents paid less attention to the background of the media program, and the timing of published information, and they also have less experience in using the Factcheck tool on the internet to understand the validity and invalid of the information. The Five questions were designed to gather the data to observe whether people can evaluate the information, and the data have shown that people will consider checking the factor along with the issue itself, but expect the content, they pay less attention to time and program which published the information.

Quantitative analysis 2: The Frequency of Respondents to check the factor of information.

	Accuracy and Reliability		The Background of the Media		Potential Bias		Using Factcheck tool		Timing of published	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Never	2	1.4%	6	4.1%	3	2.0%	7	4.8%	1	0.7%
Seldom	7	4.8%	14	9.5%	6	4.1%	40	27.2%	12	8.2%
Sometime	26	17.7%	48	32.7%	33	22.4%	53	36.1%	60	40.8%
Usually	46	31.3%	48	32.7%	60	40.8%	32	21.8%	52	35.4%
Always	66	44.9%	31	21.1%	45	30.6%	15	10.2%	22	15.0%
Total	147	100.0%	147	100.0%	147	100.0%	147	100.0%	147	100.0%

The Responsibility for analyzing and proving the information

Respondents in different age groups have various thoughts about who shall fulfill the duty to testify and analyze the information, which can tell respondents have various recognition about the application of media literacy.

In the question "In your opinion, whether people shall have the responsibility to check the accuracy of the information on social media?", respondents in various age groups have shown diverse thoughts. In the chart, it can be observed that the age group that most people respond to this question is the age group between 18 to 24 years old, the second large group is over 40 years old, the third group is 25 to 30 years old, the fourth is between 36 and 40 years old, the minor group is 31 to 35 years old.

The respondents in the 18 ~ 24 years old, also the generation who grew up with the existence of the internet and social media, have the most population (67/75) and the percentage to agree that people should check the accuracy and validity of the information. This age group also can be identified as the citizens of the Internet, using social media and the Internet to consume information in their daily routine, which has increased their awareness about the factuality of the information on the Internet.

The second which also has most respondents (28/32) in the group agreeing that individuals should have the reasonability to check the accuracy of encountered information on social media, are the respondents over 40 years old. The group has displayed that after being through the development of the internet and technology, in other words, been through the era when the development of simple content from the media program and the newspaper became the information explosion on the internet ---- especially social media. The respondent has certain belief and the habit of conducting information evaluation when encountering new knowledge or issue while surfing the internet, the characteristic of these respondents in Taiwan is they have little doubt about the information when it can represent their thought, however,

expect that information, the majority of the "other" information will seem as the untrustful content which has little chance to earn those respondent's belief.

Quantitative analysis 3: The responsibility of Checking the accuracy of information on social media.

In your opinion, whether people have the responsibility to check the accuracy of encountered information on social media?

Age Groups:	No	Yes	Total:
Over 40 years old	4(2.7%)	28(19.0%)	32(21.8%)
36 ~ 40 years old	2(1.4%)	6(4.1%)	8(5.4%)
31 ~ 35 years old	0(0%)	4(2.7%)	4(2.7%)
25 ~ 30 years old	1(0.6%)	18(12.2%)	19(12.9%)
18 ~ 24 years old	8(5.4%)	67(45.6%)	75(51.0%)
Under 18 years old	3(2.0%)	6(4.1%)	9(6.1%)
Total:	18(12.2%)	129(87.8%)	147(100%)

Different Social Group's Definitions of the Role of the Application of Information

Accuracy Check

The various social groups according to the result of data collection, have shown that people of different ages and genders' perspectives toward the issue " who shall conduct duty of checking the accuracy of information". In the research, people have the ability to digest the information with their value and personal experience, however, respondents have different recognition about who shall have the duty to prove the accuracy and the reliability of information on social media.

The Individual Shall Take Responsibility for Checking the Accuracy of Information on

the Social Media

Under this question, the respondent needs to consider whether the social media users shall Have the responsibility to check the accuracy of information, and to conduct media literacy in the fulfillment way. The answers from the data collection have been divided into three social groups: different genders, various ages, and different educational degrees.

To count respondents in general, it can be observed that of the 147 respondents, 18 people have the objection that "an individual shall have the responsibility to check the accuracy of the information on social media". And 129 people agree that social media users should have the duty to clarify the accuracy of the information they have encountered on social media.

Gender:

The quantitative research has divided respondents into two genders, Female and Male, To compare the differences and the acceptance of these two social groups react to the questions. During the data collection, the Female social group took the largest scale of respondents (70.7%) and male respondents only took less than 30% among the whole sample collection(29.3%).

1. In the female social group, the majority of the female respondents agree that people shall have the responsibility to check the accuracy, the number of their agreement is 94 (63.9%),

there are less than 10% of the female respondents believe there is no responsibility for the individual to conduct the accuracy checking process for the information.

2. In the Male social group, the majority of the male respondents agree that people shall have the responsibility to check the accuracy, there are 35(23.8%) of the respondents chose the option that represented agreement inside the questionnaire, however, there still less than 6%(5.4%) of the male respondents believe individual doesn't have the responsibility to confirm the accuracy of information on the social media.

The data have shown that the questionnaire has collected unequal gender samples, female samples are more than the male respondents. The potential reason for this result could be the following factors:

1. The resources for the questionnaire data were come from the researcher's social network, the majority of the social relations were females.

2. The topic has reminded that female users about their experience toward social network.

Besides these potential reasons, the gender also emphasizes the willingness between female and male respondents to do the questionnaire with topic "political misinformation" are having different level.

Age:

During the data collection, the questionnaire divided the age group into six categories, from above 40 years old to under 18 years old. Most of the respondents are between the ages 18 ~ and 24 years old, the so-called Generation Z, which was born with the existence of the internet and the development of social media. The second large respondent group was located at above 40 years old.

The following lists the percentage and the number represented how much of respondents and their opinions toward this question:

1. Among people above 40 years old, there were 28 people (19.0%) of respondents believe individuals shall have the responsibility to check the accuracy of the information they have encountered on social media, however, there are 4 people(2.7%) believe individuals have no responsibility for the accuracy of information.

2. Among the respondents whose age is around 36 to 40 years old, there are 6 people (4.1%) who agree people should have the responsibility to check the information's accuracy, but there are 2(1.4%) people who disagree with the question's statement.

3. In the age group 31 to 35 years old, all of the respondents from this group 4(2.7%) people have agreed individuals shall have the responsibility for checking the accuracy of information they have encountered on social media.

4. In the age group which located 25 to 30 years old, there were 18 people agree that social media users shall have the responsibility to confirm the accuracy of the information they have encountered on social media, but there have 1 person (0.7%) disagree with this statement.

5. Among the age group 18 to 24 years old, there are 67(45.6%) respondents agree that individuals shall have the duty to check the accuracy of the information they have encountered on social media, but they still have 8 (5.4%) respondents have disagreed with the statement.

6. The respondents whose age is lower than 18, there have 6 (4.1%) agree that people shall have the responsibility for checking the accuracy of information, and 3(2.0%) of them disagree with this statement.

The data have shown that respondents in general agree that individuals shall have the responsibility for the accuracy of information on social media. However, the disagreement from the age between 18 to 24 is the highest number among all age groups. The respondents under this group have been defined as Generation Z, the feature of Generation Z is related to

the internet development and the extension of social media. Generation z has built a great reliance on the content on social media, they tend to have an impression of the issue from the content on social media. The environment with the information explosion and the mass social network development caused Generation Z to have a conflict in their application of media literacy knowledge. Generation Z has the characteristics that they will doubt the information but on the other hand, they also rely on the impression from the information to create their perspective toward the issue that has been reported. The disagreement from the age group 18 to 24 could be the reason that they believe the accuracy of information shall be the duty of the published organization or the platform that allows the published content they have encountered.

Educational Degree

During the data collection, the questionnaire divided respondents' educational degree into 6 categories, the educational degree was defined as the highest educational degree respondents have. From the Doctoral Degree to Junior High Degree, the data have shown that respondents have been distributed into 6 categories, but the highest number was located in the Bachelor's degree and the second largest number was located in Master's Degree.

1. There was 1(0.7%) respondent who had a Doctoral Degree, and the respondent have agreed that people shall have the responsibility for the accuracy of information they have encountered on social media.

2. There were 34(23.1%) respondents who have a Master Degree. Of the 34 people, were28(19.0%) people agree that people should take the responsibility to check the accuracy of the information they have encountered on social media, however, there still have 6(4.1%)people disagree with the statement, they believe individuals shouldn't have the responsibility to check the accuracy.

3. There were 84(57.1%) respondents who have Bachelor's degrees, and 77(52.4%) people from this group agreed that people shall be responsible for the accuracy of information they have encountered on social media. However, there still 7(4.8%) people still disagree with what the question states.

4. There were 13(8.8%) respondents have Junior college degree, and 12(8.2%) of the respondents from this group agreed that individuals shall have the responsibility for checking the accuracy of the information they have encountered on social media.1(0.7%) of respondents from this group disagreed with this, they believe individuals shouldn't have the responsibility for the accuracy of the information on social media.

5. There were 13(8.8%) of the respondents have a Senior/Vocational high school degree, and 10(6.8%) of these respondents have shown their agreement about people shall be responsible for the information accuracy they have encountered on social media, and 3(2.0%) of them disagree with this statement.

6. Among all respondents, there were 2(1.4%) people have a Junior high school degree, 1(0.7%) of them have agreed that people should be responsible for checking the accuracy of the information they have encountered on social media, and the other 1(0.7%) disagree with this statement.

The highest response number from different educational degrees was Bachelor's degree, which has a large scale of experience with using social media. Most of the respondents with this educational degree have a high percentage overlapping characteristics with Generation Z, bachelor's degree students have used social media as their daily communication tool, and compared to Generation Z, people with bachelor's degrees are not just the information consumers, but they also could be the resources of the published information. As the potential information producer, most of the respondent with bachelor degree are agree that people shall have the responsibility to confirm the accuracy of information, no matter they are the content consumer or the producer.

Quantitative analysis 4, Whether people shall have the responsibility to check the accuracy of information on social media

Do you think people should have the responsibility to confirm the accuracy of information they have encountered on social media?		No	Yes	Total
Gender:	Female	10 (6.8%)	94(63.9%)	104(70.7%)
	Male	8(5.4%)	35(23.8%)	43(29.3%)

		18(12.2%)	129(87.8%)	147(100.0%)
	Total	**18(12.2%)**	**129(87.8%)**	**147(100.0%)**
Age:	Above 40 years old	4(2.7%)	28(19.0%)	32(21.8%)
	36~40 years old	2(1.4%)	6(4.1%)	8(5.4%)
	31~35 years old	0(0.0%)	4(2.7%)	4(2.7%)
	25~30 years old	1(0.7%)	18(12.2%)	19(12.9%)
	18~24 years old	8(5.4%)	67(45.6%)	75(51.0%)
	Lower than 18 years old	3(2.0%)	6(4.1%)	9(6.1%)
	Total	**18(12.2%)**	**129(87.8%)**	**147(100.0%)**
Educational Degree	Doctoral Degree	0(0.0%)	1(0.7%)	1(0.7%)
	Master's Degree	6(4.1%)	28(19.0%)	34(23.1%)
	Bachelor's degree	7(4.8%)	77(52.4%)	84(57.1%)
	Junior college	1(0.7%)	12(8.2%)	13(8.8%)
	Senior/Vocational high school	3(2.0%)	10(6.8%)	13(8.8%)
	Junior high school	1(0.7%)	1(0.7%)	2(1.4%)
	Total	18(12.2%)	129(87.8)	147(100.0%)

Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis

During the qualitative research, there are various characteristics and perspectives can be found in the in-depth interview. The research samples, according to the limitation of sample collection and the respondent's willingness to be studied, have become different from the plane, the final selection that was conducted on four people: Interviewees 1, 2, 4, and 5 who have no political preference and were located at age 18-24, their occupation were all students. The third one is the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) supporter whose age is in the age group of 31-35, Interviewee 3 is a teacher with the occupation of an elementary school teacher. The purpose of these research samples were to understand people's perspective and observation while using social media, and their reaction toward the misinformation on social media. The observation collected from the interviewee couldn't represent all of the social media users but can support the data collection from quantitative data collection. The following content will be coded into different categories based on the reaction and the perspective that has been observed from those interviewees.

Qualitative Analysis 1 Interviewee Information

Interviewee Number	Occupation	Age Group	Political preference	Attitude during the interview
Interviewee 1	Student	18-24	None	Passive
Interviewee 2	Student	18-24	None	Neutral
Interviewee 3	Elementary school teacher	31-35	DPP	Initiative
Interviewee 4	Student	18-24	None	Neutral
Interviewee 5	Student	18-24	None	Neutral

The Chosen with Confirmation Bias

The attitude of interviewee can be divided into three categories based on their responses to interview questions. In different categories, we can notice that respondents tend to not take action when encountering political misinformation, no matter what their attitude toward the issue. They also didn't show their willingness to follow and understand the issue in detail, except it is related to their will and interest. One of the preconditions for five interview samples to apply their media literacy is to understand what may affect their interests and what could damage their rights, without these preconditions, interviewees tend to have no action toward political misinformation and issues. The application of media literacy here seems to be chosen by the respondents, they won't apply the knowledge to every content they have encountered, but only when the information is related to themselves.

The ability to choose the information to consume is necessary, however, it also could cause a confirmation bias. The response from Interviewee 3 can represent this question when asking them about question 8, they offer a special perspective on the application of media literacy:

"Before the application of media literacy, I believe people will select the information based on what they have support for. Media literacy is just an option to be considered when encountering information. Some people will pretend the news that can concrete their political stance is correct, even though they know the news was incorrect compared to the fact."

The confirmation bias has controlled the ability of media literacy application in the information selection part. According to the In-depth interview, no matter how interviewee defines themselves as having and doesn't have literate knowledge, they lose their objective. When consuming the information, the selected content of information supports their interest in the issue or supports the position they have stood for. The phenomenon here is people tend to believe they are objective and are willing to accept the information which may damage their

position, no matter in a different area. However, the confirmation bias didn't only exist in the individual's habit of consuming the information, sometimes, the confirmation bias was made from the group reflection. The demand of seeking recognition from people who have similar perspectives will eventually form the political Homophile in the echo chamber. The ability to judge and doubt the potentially misleading content in the information will be gone when people insist on their position as the top priority.

The Attitude Toward the Issue with and Without Politics

During the data collection, the study sample changed their actions related to whether the issue was about politics or not. When Interviewee 1 was asked about a question which has directly related to politics, they refused to give a specific answer. However, with the same question, Interviewee 4 has a strong opinion about those issues, they even have clear opinions about the political environment in Taiwan. Interviewees 2, 4, and 5 were all willing to check the information on the issue, but they didn't show a willingness to talk about the topic that discusses the political parties. Three of the interviewees chose to see the issue first, then is t optional to observe which political parties are involved in.

The attitude interviewees have shown during the in-depth interview can be used to describe the reflection about issues, and the application of media literacy. If we put the precondition about how the cohort effect and personal experience influence their pre-assumption of the issue, we can see that the topic related to "politics" has changed their attitude. The growing value and personal experience were the tipping point for the interviewee to choose the attitude to see the issue. But when the conversation talks about the issue, the interviewee's attention is drawn by the existence of potential political elements.

Qualitative analysis 2: Attitude about misinformation on social media

Attitude:	Initiative:	1. Willing to follow the political issue, especially when encountering one related to their interest.
		2. Willing to evaluate and compare the information by viewing comments, and the news from different resources, to have an objective perspective toward the issue.
		3. Willing to give their definition about what is political misinformation.
		4. Have strong opinions toward the cross-strait relationship and the potential of cyber-attack from China.
	Neutral:	1. Won't take the further step to understand the details of the issue, in general, seek the overview of the issue and event.
		2. Have a neutral attitude to view the political issue, and will doubt the news they have encountered on social media.
		3. When encountering fake news, except if it is related to their interest, respondents won't take further action toward the fake news.
	Passive:	1. Aren't willing to talk about politics, have serious awareness to show their perspective about political issues.
		2. Have little willingness to follow the current political news or the issues related to politics on social media.
		3. The thought that thinking about political issues in Taiwan is frustrating.
		4. Hesitate to state what is political misinformation based on their experience on social media.

The Reaction Toward Political Misinformation

When observing interviewees' behavior toward political misinformation, they have shown different types of reactions, which can be an indication to find out their perspective toward political misinformation on social media. The behavior interviewees have can be divided into three categories (initiative, Neutral, and Passive), each category describes how the interviewee's responses represent their feelings and perspectives.

The Initiative Reaction

Those initiative reactions can be observed from the Interviewee's tone and gestures when talking about the political misinformation and also can be seen from their statement about how they react to that misinformation. During the In-depth interview, interviewees 2 and 3 showed they were willing to read the article or post about the social issues that have political content inside. Interviewee 3 and Interviewee 4 mentioned that they won't evaluate the information directly by themselves, but they will acknowledge the information by viewing the comments area under the article or posts. Interviewees 3 and 4 all agree that they will rely on what the comments say to consider whether the information is correct or wrong. In this condition, we can observe that Interviewees have the action that they rely on other social media users' comments to understand and evaluate the information, which means they won't directly apply the knowledge of media literacy, but do the application along with other's perspectives on the issue.

The initiative action also includes the phenomenon that Interviewees are interested in and willing to define how people have literacy. Interviewees 1 to 4 have similar definitions of how a person with media literacy shall be: Who will evaluate the information with an objective and neutral attitude? Who will try to understand the issue by viewing a great number of news resources? Who will doubt the information with not fully trust the article have said. The action for them to define a person who has media literacy can tell that they have noticed what element

within the knowledge of media literacy, they have a certain understanding about how media literacy application will be like. However, when asking them about their perspective, on whether people who have little media literacy knowledge will easy to believe in political misinformation on social media, Interviewee 5 gave a different opinion:

"I think the definition of low media literacy can't be equal to people who will believe or be influenced by political misinformation. Because people may not believe or be influenced by political misinformation regardless of whether they have media literacy knowledge, maybe they were just disappointed with Taiwan's politics so they chose to not consume the information. When a person who chooses not to read and watch the information, and has no comment about everything, can we still call them as having little knowledge of media literacy?"

According to what the interviewees have said, they believe whether people have media literacy or not, they do not seem as easy to be influenced by political misinformation on social media. To ask people to give their opinions about potential factors that are influenced by political misinformation, the designed question, was meant to be made as the indicator to remind interviewees' experience and perspective about what action a person with or without the knowledge of media literacy could have. The statement from Interviewee 5 was a clear sign that before the application of media literacy, people may have been about the actions that put them into frustrating information, which included reading and following the political issue in Taiwan. People may not acknowledge whether they have enough media literacy knowledge to handle the misinformation on social media, but the choice of media literacy application has shown that they avoid consuming things that may cause conflict.

The Neutral Reaction

A neutral Reaction can be seen when the interviewer and interviewee discuss the misinformation on social media. The neutral reaction can be told as having an objective

response to the questions, being willing to talk about the issue with politics, but having less comment about how different political parties took the place when the issue happened, will try to understand the meaning of question before having the answer…etc. During the In-depth interview, Interviewees 2,4, and 5 stated that they are less following the current issue except the issue is related to their interest. The interviewees chose to apply the step of evaluation and analysis with only the thing that attracted them, unlike the time overviewing the content from different articles, the Interviewee gave less attention to mass social issues in the society, they tended to clarify the information that can have a direct reflection to their action and interests.

Interviewees also mention that they have less specific stands for the political parties, they have less reaction toward political misinformation because they have no interest in engaging and consuming the content that was made by the political conflict in Taiwan. Interviewee 2 has mentioned their perspective about how they view the political misinformation:

"I don't have a specific political preference, as long as the political party is not related to the communist party across the strait, I think they are all the same to me."

"In my perspective, political misinformation will affect what people think about the news and issue. But I didn't find out that the people around me had this kind of misunderstanding of the issue and news. I think that the overview from social media and some research data from the internet all indicated that people have this kind of influence by fake news reports. Research has shown the percentage of Taiwanese people being influenced by political fake news is high, so I think it will make people lose their ability to judge when consume information on social media.

From what Interviewee 2 stated, they have less worry that people surrounding them will be affected by political misinformation, however, they do believe political misinformation will change how a person views social issues. For Interviewee 2, the political power inside the social

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issue is less important compared to the issue itself, political misinformation is information that does not influence their daily life. Interviewee 2's actions have shown that the application of media literacy can be individualized when selecting and consuming the information.

The Passive Reaction:

The passive reaction interviewees have included having no action toward the misinformation. When asking them about how they view misinformation, they can have a clear statement, but they also mention that it is not an option for them to have further reactions toward the political misinformation they have encountered on social media, they also hesitate to talk about their thought toward political misinformation on social media. The passive reaction also includes that the interviewee has no interest in consuming information related to the current social issue on the internet. The passive behavior for interviewees to conduct while consuming the information have indicated that people are not willing to face some issue, not even talk about for them to apply the media literacy knowledge.

Qualitative analysis 3: Reaction when talking about certain issues.

Reaction: (Political misinformation)	Initiative:	1. Have a thrilled response when talking about political information on social media. 2. Showed their willingness when asking them how they defined a person as literate by having lots of responses. 3. State they used social media comments to evaluate the information. 4. Will compare the information with other articles to make sure the correction of the information.
	Neutral:	1. When talking about the politics in Taiwan, they used neutral toon and checked the questions again to make sure the meaning of the question was what they knew. 2. They will give short responses to each question, when the further question asks about politics, they can describe their perspective but with less comment about the issue. 3. Asking their perspective and action after encountering the political fake news, hesitated to answer after hearing the related question. 4. Willing to follow the current issue, but only related to their interests.
	Passive:	1. Interviewees tend to have no action to evaluate the information, they reject to view the misinformation but have no further reaction toward the misinformation. Refuse to give whole-sentence replies when asking questions that involve political elements. 2. Hesitate to reply to all the questions and mention they are not following the current social issue.

3. Use the frustrated tune when giving their experience about the Taiwanese Political environment.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, social media users did have awareness about what they have to see on the platforms, however, they pay less attention to the issue which is not directly related to them, only when the issue has touched their willingness or interests. During the interview, interviewee 3 stated that they believe media literacy is rooted in an individual's political preference, how much a person believes in a political party, and how much they will have the confirmation bias and backfire effect while consuming the information on social media.

In the qualitative data analysis, we also know that before the application of media literacy, we need to consider whether people have a willingness to consume the information. How much a person has related knowledge about media literacy cannot be equal to what they are willing to consume the information with an objective perspective. People may choose to reject any consumption of information on social media, no matter how much knowledge they have about media literacy.

In the qualitative research, it can be observed that interviewees have displayed a phenomenon: people will change their behavior with what the issue has been mentioned in the information they have encountered on social media, and their media literacy also will be changed due to their confirmation bias and the prejudice about the issue's value to them. During the in-depth interview, we learned that most of the interviewees pay less attention and willingness to speak about political misinformation, even though they know the existence of misinformation is going wild on social media, The majority of the interviewees avoid talking about the details of the content from those political misinformation.

The result of quantitative data analysis has indicated that people may have a direct ideology about what content they want to pursue, but they have less acknowledgment of being influenced by political misinformation on social media themselves. The data from quantitative data collection has shown that the group female, bachelor degree, and Generation Z had the

highest number of respondents to respond with the question that asks "whether people shall have the responsibility for the accuracy of the information they have encountered on social media", inside these social groups, there was a high percentage of these respondents agree that people shall take the responsibility about the accuracy of the information on the social media. Respondents who have long-term experience and characteristics that are familiar with the development of the internet and social media are more aware of the accuracy of information on social media.

To sum up, the research has found that political misinformation did influence people's mind and their behavior toward the application of media literacy knowledge, the possible reason for the research could be:

1. Even if they have enough knowledge to apply media literacy, they choose to avoid any serious information on social media.

2. They avoid commenting on and discussing Taiwanese political issues due to the political polarization they have observed in society, no matter whether it is related to misinformation or it is statements from different political parties.

3. The interviewee and the respondent recognized the political misinformation as information with "obvious misleading factors", "Over exaggerated information" and the "information which are not been verified".

4. Respondents have less percentage to using fact check centers when they consume information on social media, they also pay less attention to the background of the published resources.

5. The social group ---- female, age group between 18~24 (also called generation Z), and people with a bachelor's degree are the group familiar with social media, they see checking information accuracy on social media as their responsibility, however, the data also show they have less

attention about using the related tool to check the accuracy and care about where the information comes from.

In the end, people in different social groups' media literacy did have a certain influence by the existence of political misinformation. Their behavior will change according to their interest, and willingness about the consumption of social information. Although they will conduct the evaluation and analyze the information they have encountered on social media, they will avoid the existence of political misinformation. People have applied their media literacy to specific target issues, they are not willing to spend their attention on information that is not related to them and may cause disputes. Based on the research and the data collection, we can tell that people have conflict behavior to apply the knowledge of media literacy, and Taiwanese politics become the topic that people are aware to analyze on social media no matter if they have consciousness about this phenomenon or not. In the future, it has a great opportunity for people to increase this awareness due to the rising tension of political polarization in Taiwanese society.

APPENDIX

政治訊息是否會影響社群媒體使用者的媒體素養

親愛的先生/小姐:

　您好!

　台灣現正處於多媒體時代，層出不窮的政治訊息更是充斥著我們的媒體環境，其中最受影響的便是社群媒體。社群媒體對台灣人民來說已經是生活中無法分離的一部份，根據 OOSGA 公司資料統計，台灣人平均每日使用社群媒體 2-3 小時，並且平均一人就會使用 4-6 個社群平台。因此，建立此問卷的目的，是為了解台灣人民的**媒體素養**是否會因為**社群媒體**長期存在的**政治訊息**而**受影響**。

　本問卷設計目的為進行大學畢業專題論文研究，此問卷只會進行學術研究使用，您的個人資料不會作其他使用並且絕不對外公開，懇請您在百忙之中撥空用最真實的感受填寫此問卷。

　如有任何問題或建議，歡迎使用下方提供的信箱進行交流!

　在此非常感謝您願意抽空填寫此問卷，

　在此敬祝您事事順利，心想事成。

<div align="right">

文藻外語大學 國際事務系 4 年 A 班

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</div>

壹, 個人資料調查:

性別：	□ 男性 □ 女性 □ 非二元/其他
年齡：	□ 低於 18 歲 □ 18~24 歲 □ 25~30 歲 □ 31~35 歲 □ 36~40 歲 □ 大於 40 歲
教育程度:	□ 國小 □ 國中 □ 高中/高商 □ 五專以及二專 □ 學士學位 □ 碩士學位 □ 博士學位

職業:	□學生 □自由業 □服務業 □製造業 □軍公教 □待業中 □其他:___
出身地理位置:	□台灣南部 □台灣北部 □台灣中部 □台灣東部 □離島地區 □外國
政治傾向:	□國民黨 □民進黨 □民眾黨 □親民黨 □基進黨 □時代力量 □無特定支持政黨
每日使用社交平台的時間:	□低於 1 小時 □ 1 - 2 小時 □ 3 - 4 小時 □ 4 小時以上

貳,媒體素養確認:

1. 您會在閱讀新聞以及文章前,檢視該發布媒體的背景和可信度嗎?

   □ 總是會 □ 經常會 □ 有的時候會 □ 鮮少會 □ 從不

2. 您在閱讀訊息時,會試著辨別內容裡可能存在的偏見或立場嗎?

   □ 總是會 □ 經常會 □ 有的時候會 □ 鮮少會 □ 從不

3. 您會運用事實查核工具或網站來驗證某個資訊的真實性嗎?

   □ 總是會 □ 經常會 □ 有的時候會 □ 鮮少會 □ 從不

4. 您有多常評估所接收的資訊發表時間以確認時效性?

   □ 總是會 □ 經常會 □ 有的時候會 □ 鮮少會 □ 從不

5. 您有多常主動尋找多個資訊來驗證所接收到的訊息準確性?

   □ 總是會 □ 經常會 □ 有的時候會 □ 鮮少會 □ 從不

6. 在分享或轉發資訊之前,您會先考慮該資訊的可靠性和正確性嗎?

   □ 總是會 □ 經常會 □ 有的時候會 □ 鮮少會 □ 從不

7. 當您在社群平台上遇到關於 〝 政治 〞 的活動宣傳、廣告、貼文以及新聞文章時,是否會保持一樣的查核態度?

   □ 是 □ 否 □ 不確定

叁,政治訊息認知

1. 依據下列選項，請選出您認為符合政治假訊息的定義:

   ☐ 針對特定政治人物、政黨、議題散播不利的陳述或訊息

   ☐ 針對特定政治人物、政黨、議題散播誤導性的訊息。

   ☐ 針對特定政治人物、政黨、議題散播誇大性的訊息。

   ☐ 針對特定政治人物、政黨、議題散播未經事實查證的訊息。

   ☐ 我對「政治假訊息」類的詞語不熟悉

2. 對您而言，瞭解政治新聞的重要性為？

   ☐ 非常重要 ☐ 重要 ☐ 普通重要 ☐ 不是那麼重要 ☐ 完全不重要

3. 您認為頻繁關注政治新聞是否有助於形成理智客觀的政治觀點？

   ☐ 是 ☐ 否 ☐ 其他

4. 您是否在社交媒體上有固定收看的政治新聞節目或來源？

   ☐ 是 ☐ 否

5. 您是否認為，您在社交媒體上接收到的政治訊息沒有偏見且客觀？

   ☐ 是 ☐ 否

6. 您是否願意，在社交媒體上接收與您政治主見不相符的政治訊息?

   ☐ 是 ☐ 否

7. 您是否願意，在社交平台上主動追蹤不同媒體帳號來閱聽政治訊息?

   ☐ 是 ☐ 否

肆,社交媒體使用習慣

1. 您是否曾為了改善心理狀況而暫停使用社交媒體？

   ☐ 是 ☐ 否

2. 您是否認為，個人應負責驗證他們在網上遇到的信息的準確性？

   ☐ 是 ☐ 否

3. 您是否認為，社交平台以及媒體公司應當要在發布資訊前審核其內容以確保該訊息屬實?

    ☐ 是 ☐ 否

4. 您是否認為，政府有責任監管社交媒體平台上的訊息，以確保其準確性？

    ☐ 是 ☐ 否

5. 您是否曾經舉報過社交媒體平台上的虛假或誤導性信息？

    ☐ 是 ☐ 否

6. 您最常使用的社交平台為?

    ☐ Facebook ☐ Twitter ☐ Instagram ☐ Line ☐ TikTok ☐YouTube ☐ Discord

7. 承上題，請問您多久使用一次此平台瀏覽政治新聞和資訊？

    ☐每天多次 ☐每天一次 ☐一週幾次 ☐一週一次 ☐很少 ☐從不

8. 請問您在此平台接受到的政治訊息主要來源為何？
(此題選項"贊助廣告"定義為廣告商付費給社群平台，並取得廣告欄位)

    ☐親友個別轉傳分享 ☐社團或群組分享資訊 ☐演算法推薦 ☐相關贊助廣告

    ☐追蹤相關粉絲專業 ☐自行搜尋 ☐其他_____

(問卷題目到此結束，非常感激您的撥空填寫。在此敬祝您有美好的一天!)

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