



## **Analyzing the News Media Trust at Different Levels and Its Relationship with Civic Engagement**

**Dina Ali**

American University in Cairo, Egypt

### **Abstract**

"People want trusted news," Faulconbirdge said. Trust has long been deemed a critical element that influences audiences' relationship with the news media. Particularly after the percentage of online users is rapidly expanding around the world during the COVID-19 outbreak and its continuous existence. The new technologies and social media have the power to polarize, manipulate, and entrench public opinion and response. Where trust has eroded, conspiracy theories flourish, the media's authority has waned, and emotions have taken precedence over facts. With high-choice media ecosystems in today's world, news media trust and its relationship with civic engagement have taken on new significance. The most recent study investigated news media trust in developed countries. The novelty of this research is recognizing and highlighting the news media trust at different levels of analysis in the Egyptian context and understanding the rationale for that trust (why). This study holds a new perspective in presenting a developed conceptual model that integrates new media trust at different levels of analysis a proposed framework (2020) and adopts a four-factor model (2019) into one model. A developed model has tested the news media trust in general

Therefore, this study provides a focused review of four objectives (a) illustrate the influence of the moderating variables on the relationship between trust propensity and news media trust at different levels of analysis, (b) the two approaches to the relationship that the audiences' trust propensity takes: the relationship between the propensity to trust and the news media trust at different levels of analysis, as well as the propensity to trust relationship with the civic engagement, (c) testing the correlations between the news media trust at different levels of analysis, (d), demonstrate the relationship between the news media trust at different levels of analysis and the civic engagement. This study adopts the subjective quality assessment and media dependency theory to achieve these objectives. A mixed-method approach was applied (quantitative and qualitative), providing more concrete and comprehensive results). In-depth interviews with professionals and audiences were carried out to examine the sequence of the developed model and what is practically implemented by the news organizations. Findings show that news trust is established when the audience has a level of awareness. People have a lot of trust in countries where the media has the freedom, and a credible news organization covers the news.



# Global Conference on Media, Communication, and Film

February 21 \_ 23, 2024

Birmingham, UK

Then, an online survey was conducted to elaborate more on the four objectives of the study. Using the convenience sample a non-probability sampling, 441 responses were collected. Results from the online questionnaire illustrate that audiences' propensity to trust and the framework of the news trust at different levels of analysis are significant statistically and positively correlated to civic engagement. The findings also highlighted that the most trustworthy is the Western news and then national news. While national news was selected from most participants, most of them had a low level of education. No difference showed between the gender. The experiment's results supported the questionnaire's findings by explaining why the Western media is a primary and trustworthy source associated with effective engagement.

Eminently, this study is one of the few studies that tackle the news trust in the Egyptian context. Even though this study combined a recently proposed framework with an adopted model into a developed model, the results were statistically significant."

**Keywords:** News, Media, Trust, COVID-19, Online Users, Conspiracy Theories, Civic Engagement High-Choice Media Ecosystems, Conceptual Model Mixed-Method Approach, Trust Propensity, Western News, National News, Media Freedom, Credible News, Organizations Awareness