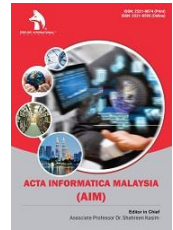


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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

## ONLINE NEWS STORIES ON THE 2022 PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

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## ABSTRACT

News being factual and trustworthy is one of the most reliable information. Facts must be interpreted carefully to influence or inform readers rightly and not be victimized by false information. With the presence of COVID 19 pandemic, online news has extended the reach of news making it accessible to many users. Certainly, online news becomes an important news source for many people specifically those who are not fully engaged in watching television. However, with this greater reach comes greater responsibility to report fair and truthful information since it penetrates in the marketplace of ideas. This study used qualitative approach through content analysis to analyze the online news stories. It analyzed news stories posted by the top three online news websites of GMA News.com, ABS-CBNnews.com and inquirer.net for three months. Findings show that GMA News, ABS-CBN News Online and inquirer, net news stories are presidential candidates programs and platforms, campaign activities, accomplishments of presidential candidates, poll survey results and trending interviews of candidates. It also discovered that posting news stories not only inform target audience but also educate, spread awareness, and invite formation of opinion. It also divulged that these three sources deliver credible information and practice fair reportage. An action plan is proposed to help voters be oriented and knowledgeable on newsworthiness and news credibility.

## KEYWORDS

online news, truthful information, presidential candidates

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Communication is a process that attempts to create shared understanding. It requires different skills in interpersonal and interpersonal processing, listening, speaking, questioning, analyzing and evaluating. These skills are developed as one gets matured and undergoes different experiences. These communicative experiences are one of the factors that give people confidence to collaborate and cooperate. On the other hand, media which are known to be the most powerful means of communication pave way also for collaboration. Empirical evidence shows its power of presenting information on important events in the country.

Its extensive power of representing the primary and only source of information of many important events and topics is very evident. Media has the power to define which events are important and how media consumers should understand these events. This manner of information dissemination is commonly divided into broadcast and print. Certainly, online news becomes an important news source for many people during the COVID 19 pandemic, specifically those who are not fully engaged in watching television programs or listening to radio stations. However, with this greater reach comes greater responsibility to report fair and truthful information since it penetrates in the marketplace of ideas.

According to survey, Philippines ranks 5 among the countries with the highest online media market value. This means that Filipinos turn to digital sources not only for entertainment but also for other purposes like purchase factor, online work, news update and others. In terms of news, a survey was done by Reuters Institution and Oxford University to learn where Filipinos commonly rely in searching for news during this COVID 19 pandemic situation. It appears that there are four sources of news for

Filipinos and these are television, print, online news sites including social media and social media. In the country, ABS-CBN News, GMA News Online and inquirer.net are the top three online news sites which are used by many Filipinos in making themselves aware and updated of recent happenings. All of these three news sources have also their social media platform accounts which ranges from seven (7) million to twenty (22) million. These are followed with the belief on its news trustworthiness.

Social media platforms like Facebook and others, news can be easily shared where truthfulness of information and credibility of its source is no longer a question. Thus, misinformation and disinformation is really a great possibility. Last August 2021, a survey was conducted by Ateneo Policy Center in Manila which diagnose the presence and depth of fake news vulnerability particularly among the young (aged 18-29). This was participated by 25 vote-rich cities and in the country's capital. According to their findings, the ability to spot fake news is below the pass rate which is 75%. This result is a strong calling to address the unawareness of some Filipinos particularly the young ones in the context of news credibility. Good information is really vital for effective function specifically if information is to affect not only one but hundreds of millions. Online platform gives a lot of opportunities but a truth decay should be abolished. Instead of focusing only on fake news, one must learn and make aware of truthful information, balanced or fair reportage, credibility of the source and legitimacy of the sites.

The rampant use of online platforms challenged greatly the traditional media which served the same purpose. It is in this light that these online news sites designed programs for the satisfaction of their target audience making their services within the reach of any type of audience. These online news sites discuss various type of events which are deemed

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significant for mass audiences. One issue which is becoming more noticeable is the airing of different activities of 2022 Presidential candidates. It can be said that the campaign period is not yet to start but e-campaign is starting due to the coverage of some channels and online news sites. Considering the number of online account holders and the number of hours each of them spent in social media accounts, it is no wonder that news can be easily learned and shared, thus online news sites are demanded to report fair, balance and truthful information.

It is in this context that this research is proposed to be conducted. Ultimately, this study aims to help enlighten the voters on how to receive information and news online which are geared to make them aware and help them make sound decision for their choice of presidential candidates.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

News is the information about recent events, people, processes or happenings around the world. It is reported by means of newspaper, radio, television, websites and other forms of media. Looking at the history, news is simply spread through gossiping and that will then be used as news delivered to other people who are innocent of the information (Stewart, 2008). It appeared as writings or stories in a printed paper readily for consumption. With the presence of different technologies, news appeared in different formats, far from before and too good from what people have now. It is then concluded that news becomes a part of a person's life and daily activities. This successfully reached people through radio, television and other forms of mass media.

Moreover, broadcast media is a new form of delivering information through radio and television, including local radio and television stations, radio and television network, and cable television's system. It is the easiest and convenient way to transmit information from one receiver to another or even to millions of people which greatly challenges television today. Most news stories aired on television are repacked now today on other social media platforms like Youtube, Facebook, Twitter and the like. These news stories are given of endless life as they can be viewed and shared multiple times (Katherine, 2009). One noticeable thing also is the emergence of advertising campaign which take its advantage of reaching great number of audiences.

Further, online news as an updated publication in an online platform is composed of news articles and other contents relative to present happenings through the digital version of a print or newspaper. Columbus Dispatch in Ohio was the first newspaper to go online with a trial edition. CNN, The Chicago Tribune, Raleigh, NC, News and Observer are some of the news industry pioneers which made the launching of websites. This launching was done after the experimentation by 1989. Their online presence was interesting for household subscribers and preferred more online news (Tassel et al., 2020). In the Philippines, ABS-CBN News, GMA News Online and [inquirer.net](http://inquirer.net) are the top three online news sites which are used by many Filipinos in making themselves aware and updated of recent happenings. These three news sources' social media platform accounts range from seven (7) million to twenty (22) million. Online subscribers followed these channels with the belief on its news trustworthiness. Online newspaper is incomparable to traditional medium for it can conceal some information, something that traditional media is not. The online newspaper is in its modernity flashing their headlines and commonly their lead paragraphs on their front page.

Likewise, media content has been known for its hybrid strategy or the use of combine traditional and new media to reach the target audience more effectively. Content categories can never take away substance from style. Content is commonly associated to how objectively the content of media simply reflects reality but it is expected to be distorted but still communicates in reality. Accuracy is often argued by professionals as they attested that they are just presenting the real happenings of the society. According to many, objectivity or fairness starts from self-regulation and fair reportage which is greatly affected by who give the information and who buy the information (Prezemyslaw and Srzelecki, 2022). Media portrays reality that sometimes occurred far different from the real world. News content does not directly tell political power. This considers the known relationship and separation of press and state. Thus, crafting of content is different in all types of sources or media. It also divulges significant possibilities as to how news sources weave political concerned issues. Issues like election is commonly regarded like sports where a race is traced. This kind of writing strategy is known to attract readers and engage them in attending the whole story. This context is evidently seen in local and national settings where campaign issues and information are disseminated like a sports where tracking is greatly needed (Raymond, 2015). Generally speaking, similar approach of news content and same sources consider the crafting of news stories by single institution.

Inverted pyramid is a common structure of news article. Salient points in inverted pyramid format is written or introduced first. Information in this kind of structure is always regarded to the source as they are the information blower. Source of information is something advantageous in inverted pyramid for it tells its origin like from an interview, related documents or from somebody who is reliable and trustworthy enough to give the details. Evident also is the utilization of direct quotes and good paraphrasing which can be used in disseminating the information without distorting its real message.

It is observable that in this time, internet is a core element of modern political campaigns. Considering the high levels of interest in the presidential election 2022, it is not surprising that more people sought out information about that race than about any other type of election or campaign. Yet while nearly seven in ten (69%) online political users went online for information about the race for President, other types of races drew political junkies online as well (Richard and Sora Park, 2017). Online political users express a greater interest in all aspects of the 2022 election as a significantly greater percentage of online political users went online to get information about each of the different candidates. Certainly, the 2022 election is poised to be one of the most challenging elections for poll monitors. Rules to regulate election campaigning through online are definitely set. COMELEC sets rules for ad spaces online like video sharing sites, blogs and other social media platforms.

On the other hand, content analysis is any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specific characteristics of messages. News analysis can be done by looking at its topic, diversity of sources, balance, and technical aspects. Topic is the subject of the news that it talks or writes about. Audience consideration is a must in choosing a topic. It is an essential step towards delivering effective news. A topic must interest the audience in order for them to be engaged in the news. Writing news online is certainly one of the best and easiest ways to reach the audience today. Thinking fast and thinking different are also considerations in reporting and crafting news. It is best to think first whether through audio, video, clickable graphics, text, links or a combination of some. On the other hand, diversity of sources must be in timeliness, relevance, correctness and truthfulness (Adnan, 2019). It is a combination of ordinary people and professional sources reporting unproven facts. Journalists are known to be trained to write content that will hook readers from the first sentence and make them want to read on.

However, websites prove the most challenging as sometimes they do not give much information about authors or creators. Balance is also partly covered by diversity of sources. It shows different viewpoints of the persons involved in the said news. Comprehensiveness is connected with diversity of topics and arguments. Nowadays, media will be free to editorialize for and against the particular candidates without having to provide equal time. They are free to attack and vilify conservatives with impunity, without fear that those they have lied about might demand a right respond. Furthermore, balanced reposting is generally considered good journalism, and balance does have virtues. The public should be able to get information on all sides of an issue, but that does not mean that all sides of the issue deserve equal weight. By example, science works by carefully examining the evidence supporting different hypotheses and building on those that have the most support. Journalism and policies that falsely grant all viewpoints the same scientific legitimacy effectively undo one of the main aims of science, "to weigh the evidence". Lastly, technical aspects are also considered (Glorilyn and Teresita, 2018). Looking at the physical environment of online news, sound bites must be technically correct. The speaker should have a clear voice while in picture and text must be technically correct also. In terms of print, the link headline, lead and text should be clear also. It is advantageous for it has no costs, multitasking is available, more new choices, in-depth and background information, and 24/7 updates.

## 3. METHODS

This study used descriptive method of research employing discourse analysis in gathering data. Sources of data of this study were the three online news websites which are ABS-CBN News, GMA NEWS ONLINE and INQUIRER.NET. A total of 36 news stories which were posted by top three online news sites during the months of December 2021, January 2022 and February 2022 were analyzed by the study. ABS-CBN News which has 22, 756,769 online followers, GMA NEWS ONLINE which has 19 million online followers, and INQUIRER.NET which has 7,403,378 million online followers were the subjects of the study. Online news about presidential candidacy posted during the months of December 2021, January 2022 and February 2022 were the only focus of the study. These were analyzed according to content, structure, and purpose. The secondary sources of data were taken from electronic sources, theses, journals, and dissertations.

News content analysis was made to discover concepts or themes and their relationship with certain words used in the delivery of information. Structure analysis determined the treatment used by online news sites about the significance of information or its newsworthiness. It looked also on the tone present on each news online sites construct and news delivery. It uncovered also the possible personal opinion. Purpose analysis revealed the purpose served by media messages or online news in spreading information and presenting facts.

#### 4. THE DATA ANALYSIS

Table for content analysis provides information on the different contents used by three online news sites.

Table 1 presents the matrix which shows that the content of the top three online news sites are commonly presidential candidates programs and platforms, campaign activities of the candidates, accomplishments of presidential candidates during their time of service, social issues face by the country, charges against presidential candidate, endorsement of presidential candidates by different groups, poll survey results, power of social media, trending stories and presidential candidates insights brought out through interview. It also reveals that information extended is credible as online news sites disseminate right, accurate, balanced and reliable information.

Presidential candidates' programs and platforms are commonly found in

GMA News. This tackles candidates' platforms during December-February period. News covers and disseminates the plans of presidential candidates when won in the incoming election. The news extends positive attitude like transparency and accountability. It also tackles solution for political issues and equality among powerful and powerless. Many of the online news content are optimistic in nature. On the other hand, campaign activities of the candidates are mostly disseminated by GMA News and ABS-CBN News Online. ABS-CBN News Online extends more news, while inquirer.net for the same period does not cover any news about the activities of presidential candidates. The visitation of presidential candidates in different places to court its people are the most commonly covered news of the said two (2) online news sites. Some underlying messages like being prioritized is also discerned in the story. GMA News Online extended the story highlighting the idea of good governance and combating the danger of fake news, while ABS-CBN News Online spread the practice of moral values like respect. It posts accurate information through the presence of source name and verbatim statement.

Online news sites disseminate information where common themes can be observed. It is worthy to mention that social issues are mostly posted by these news sites. A social issue common to the three online news sites is war on drugs or extra judicial killing, while other issues are about fake news and wise voting. Emphasis on information is also observed to be repeated in the news stories of three online news sites. The content of top three online news sites are mostly excellent.

**Table 1: Content Analysis for Online News**

| Online News Websites | Content                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                      | (December 2021 posts)                                                                                                                                                   | (January 2022 posts)                                                                                                             | (February 2022 posts)                                                                                                                                                       |
| GMA News Online      | BBM's request for dismissal of the disqualification case                                                                                                                | Senator Panfilo Lacson can still handle the stress of governing the nation                                                       | tracking liable companies for misleading the public                                                                                                                         |
|                      | 1000 sacks of rice turned over by Vice President Leni Robredo to Iloilo                                                                                                 | interview conducted by Jessica Soho                                                                                              | regularization of workers                                                                                                                                                   |
|                      | encouragement to the youth to exercise their right to vote critically                                                                                                   | possible recovery of Marcoses ill-gotten wealth                                                                                  | calling of Vice President Leni Robredo to fight against fake news                                                                                                           |
|                      | abolition of Extra Judicial Killings promised by Senator Manny Pacquiao                                                                                                 | bank secrecy waiver as one of the plans of Senator Manny Pacquiao                                                                | build, build, build program of President Duterte                                                                                                                            |
| ABS-CBN News         | news talks about the answer of Commissioner Kho Jr. regarding the deadline of disqualification petitions against presidential candidate Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. | news tells the characteristics that Senator Larson has as the most qualified                                                     | news tackles the reason of Mayor Isko Moreno's of not bringing Doc Willie Ong in Mindanao visit                                                                             |
|                      | news disseminates information regarding Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio as the most preferred contenders in May 2022 election.                       | news shares to strong disagreement of a candidate in one of the most controversial social issues                                 | news explains the effect of fake news tries to explain the expensive internet service fees                                                                                  |
|                      | news evolves on giving information regarding the visit of Mayor Isko Domagoso in Iloilo City                                                                            | news evolves on giving information regarding the visit of Mayor Isko Domagoso in Iloilo City                                     | news talks about the confirmation of Senator Pacquiao in the in fora attendance                                                                                             |
|                      | news is about the campaign of Senator Manny Pacquiao in Payatas, Quezon City                                                                                            | news is about the campaign of Senator Pacquiao                                                                                   | This news pertain to the statement of presidential candidate Vice President Leni Robredo to exert all effort for regularization of all Job Order workers in the government. |
| inquirer.net         | tackles the reminder of Mayor Isko Domagoso to private companies                                                                                                        | covers the stories of Isko Moreno with almost 1 million views                                                                    | pertains to the conviction of VP Robredo on the number of supporters she has at Iloilo City                                                                                 |
|                      | centered on the tandem of Ferdinand Marcos and Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio                                                                                     | disseminates about the reason of Marcos Jr., on his non-attendance to interview                                                  | extends information about the confidence and commitment of Senator Manny Pacquiao                                                                                           |
|                      | -covered how Cebu's political magnate expressed his support to Lacson-Sot to tandem                                                                                     | covers the endorsement of 1Sambayanan                                                                                            | story extends the campaign activity of presidential candidates Marcos-Sara tandem.                                                                                          |
|                      | -disseminates information about the visit of VP Leni Robredo                                                                                                            | communicates to the public the submitted resolution of Comelec for the disqualification case of Ferdinand "Bong-bong" Marcos Jr. | shows the support earned by Vice President Leni Robredo                                                                                                                     |

**Table 2: Structure Analysis of Online News**

| Online News Websites   | Structure                                 |                                               |                            |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
|                        | (December 2021 posts)                     | (January 2022 posts)                          | (February 2022 posts)      |
| <b>GMA News Online</b> | inverted pyramid structure                | inverted pyramid structure                    | inverted pyramid structure |
| <b>ABS-CBN News</b>    | inverted pyramid structure                | narrative style<br>inverted pyramid structure | inverted pyramid structure |
| <b>inquirer.net</b>    | glass style<br>inverted pyramid structure | inverted pyramid structure                    | inverted pyramid structure |

Table 2 in essence shows that GMA News, and Inquirer.net use inverted pyramid as the structure of news, while ABS-CBN News Online utilize inverted pyramid and hourglass structure. News stories where inverted pyramid and hourglass are used cover charges against presidential candidates, campaign activities, social issues, presidential campaign programs and platforms, poll survey results, endorsement of candidates, trending stories, power of social media and insights of presidential candidates during interview. These structures help the online news sites disseminate the different happenings in the country especially the campaign activities and presidential candidates' programs and platforms.

News posted by them are realities which readers or the public should learn for them to be aware and updated on information deemed important in making decisions like voting exercise. It can be said that this news is carefully chosen and investigated by news writers as they regard this as most significant information to learn. It is no wonder also that this information is disseminated through the use of social media applications which the public are generally hooked today. These can definitely influence their presidential candidate's preference as the top three online

news sites stories maybe a good topic for opinion formation. This social media plays a very significant role in keeping readers aware, informed and updated especially those who do not have time to watch free air time programs like news program in television.

The top three online news sites are similar in their purpose in disseminating information. The aim of giving information or making people learn a worthy news is their priority goal while spreading awareness next to this. The news they have posted navigated a high choice story that are worthy to be known by the public. News today about presidential candidates are interesting matters very significant for the public to be learned and probably will not be avoided by readers. Online news sites have different purposes in posting news stories like to inform, to educate, to spread awareness, and to invite formation of opinion. Further, news of elections typically focuses on the horse race aspects of the campaigns, partly to attract audience attention but also to avoid accusations of bias, to which issue-oriented coverage is prone. This tendency is true of both print media and local television, where a national sample of stories effectively turned politics into a sport.

**Table 3: Purpose Analysis**

| Online News Websites   | Purpose                                                                               |                                                                                       |                                  |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
|                        | (December 2021 posts)                                                                 | (January 2022 posts)                                                                  | (February 2022 posts)            |
| <b>GMA News Online</b> | to inform<br>to educate<br>to guide<br>to spread awareness<br>to help form an opinion | to inform<br>to educate<br>to guide<br>to spread awareness<br>to help form an opinion | to inform                        |
| <b>ABS-CBN News</b>    | to inform<br>to spread awareness                                                      | to inform<br>to educate<br>to spread awareness                                        | to inform<br>to spread awareness |
| <b>inquirer.net</b>    | to inform                                                                             | to inform<br>to educate<br>to spread awareness<br>to help form an opinion             | to inform<br>to spread awareness |

## 5. CONCLUSION

Results of the study proves that the top three online news sources deliver different contents. All of these online news sources utilize inverted pyramid structure, aim to inform, educate, spread awareness, and help form an opinion. It also proves the truthfulness of its assumption that online sources are credible through its manner of delivery and the use of different kinds of contents, structure and purpose.

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