

AN EVALUATION ON THE EFFECTS OF SENSATIONALIZED SOCIAL MEDIA REPORTING IN CITY OF SAN JOSE DEL MONTE BULACAN

ABSTRACT

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This study explored the social and informational impacts of sensationalized reporting on social media in the City of San Jose del Monte. As digital journalism and user-generated content continue to expand, sensationalism—characterized by exaggeration, emotional appeal, and attention-grabbing headlines—has become increasingly common. The research assessed how such reporting shapes public perception and contributes to the spread of misinformation, ultimately influencing how citizens understand and react to current events (Dagnes, 2021). This study used a descriptive quantitative research design through the use of surveys to determine the extent to which sensationalized social media reporting affects public perception and information accuracy. This method was deemed appropriate for measuring relationships between key variables in the study. Prior to data collection, the researchers secured permission from the Dean's Office to administer survey questionnaires. The participants included 5 PNP Cybercrime experts, 10 netizens who reported being affected by sensationalized reporting, and 35 general netizens from the City of San Jose del Monte, Bulacan. The researchers personally approached the participants, including individuals at Police Community Precinct (PCP) 2, to request their voluntary participation in the survey. After completing the data collection, the researchers analyzed the responses to assess the impact of sensationalized social media reporting. The results indicated that the majority of respondents were male, aged between 20 and 25 years old, and single. The data revealed that sensationalized reporting in the City of San Jose del Monte, Bulacan significantly affects public perception, particularly in terms of prejudiced public opinion, dissemination of inaccurate information, judicial and public pressure, compromised rights to a fair trial, irreversible reputational damage, and the experience of social stigma and trauma. Respondents strongly agreed that sensationalized content poses serious risks, including the spread of misinformation, erosion of public trust, increased polarization, manipulation of public opinion, emotional distress, reinforcement of harmful stereotypes, degradation of journalistic integrity, rise of clickbait culture, legal and ethical concerns, and reduced attention spans. In light of these findings, the researchers recommend promoting media literacy campaigns and establishing a reporting and verification system to combat the spread of misinformation on social media platforms. Academics and researchers should engage responsibly with media platforms. When their work is misrepresented by journalists or social media influencers, they are encouraged to address the inaccuracies professionally—either through direct communication or by issuing a public clarification. This approach helps maintain the accuracy of information and upholds the credibility of academic research.

RECOMMENDED CITATION

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