

SATISFACTION WITH AND PERCEPTIONS OF NEWS MEDIA PERFORMANCE WITH
ALIENATION FROM GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS CORPORATIONS: AN OHIO
CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Srinivas Melkote, Advisor

News media's role as important sources of information, influence and political socialization and their impact in increasing political participation, awareness about policy issues and reducing knowledge gaps between different education groups have been shown by scholars from all over the world. Concurrently, news media have also been seen by researchers as inducers of alienation, cynicism and apathy among the people against the government, big business/financial corporations and the media themselves. In the United States, decline of media trust has been a trend since the 1970's, and the recent unhealthy relationship between the Trump Administration and the media has been the dominant picture. Media trust is important because it is not just the impact of the news media, but perceptions towards it have been shown to be linked with other areas of political and social feelings and standpoints and fosters activity towards or against certain issues. Hence, more knowledge about people's satisfaction with and perception towards the media and how they impact their impressions of different aspects within the social and political realms need to be studied. The objective of this research was to understand people's satisfaction with and perceptions of news media performance and their relationship with alienation from government and big business corporations.

This study conducted a secondary analysis of data to investigate people's perceptions of and satisfaction with different news media, and then their level of alienation from the government and business/financial corporations. It then analyzed if perception and satisfaction levels towards certain news media predicted levels of alienation from government and alienation from big

corporations. It used survey data gathered from 760 participants in 2016 (n=400) and 2017 (n=360), before and after the U.S. presidential election. The data were collected from college students in a Midwestern university using quota sampling method. Perceptions of television news media, alienation from government and alienation from business/financial corporations were measured in separate indices. The analysis revealed that increased satisfaction towards national television news showed decreased alienation towards both government and business/financial corporations. Similarly, positive perception towards television news media was found to contribute towards decreasing alienation. Such findings while agreeing with several research done in this field is also a reality check in this current political climate where the news media have been claimed to have spread cynicism and distrust towards many public and private institutions including the media themselves.

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Md. Shamsul Hoque and Ummul Hina, for their unconditional support, love, patience and belief in me; and to my brother Tamzidul Hoque and my sister-in-law Sumaiya shomaji Jyoti, for their endless love, support, and encouragement. I would also like to thank my roommates Shahrea Mahbub and Ahmad Mahmood, my close ones back home, especially Mahamuda Sulatana and Md. Aminul Islam and my colleagues here for their constant support and motivation during hard times. I could not have done this without all of you.

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that the news media's coverage of the 2016 U.S. Presidential election was far-reaching and comprehensive. Nine out of ten American adults reported in a survey conducted in January 2016 that they had received election news in the past week according to the Pew Research Center (Gottfried, Barthel, Shearer & Mitchell, 2016a). The same report showed eleven different news sources were providing constant updates with the cable news source triumphant in their outreach, which reached up to 91% of the audience. But people were divided in their daily intake of news, as Mr. Donald Trump's supporters preferred Fox News, while Mrs. Hillary Clinton's supporters went with CNN (Gottfried, Barthel, Shearer & Mitchell, 2016b). Despite their large influence, people have not been able to show their full confidence towards the media. A study in 2016 showed only 22% had a lot of confidence in the information given by local news organizations, and only 18% had the same response for the national news (Mitchell, Gottfried, Barthel, & Shearer, 2016). People were even divided on what the media's role actually is, which is to play the watchdog role on politicians or distract them from doing their job ((Barthel, Shearer, & Mitchell, 2017a).

This declining media trust has been a trend since the 1970s and the recent criticism against the media hasn't helped (Mourão, Thorson, Chen & Tham, 2018). The role of media and people's trust with media are important for a functioning democracy, because the press is vital to ensure informed and rational discussion and political participation by the people (Habermas, 1991). This also brings up questions within the realm of trust: are people satisfied with the current media and what are their perceptions of media? How do their perceptions impact their impressions of different aspects within the social and political realm?

Before engaging in that debate, a discussion on the performance of news media and their overarching effects on people and society is necessary. News media's role as important sources of information, influence and political socialization is not new, and has received constant analysis since the landmark study by Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet (1948). Studies have shown it to be a significant source of political information, knowledge, and inducer of political participation not just in the United States, but in other parts of the world as well (De Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2006; Gao & Brewer, 2008; Kim, 2008). Media have also been shown to have increased political socialization and reduced knowledge gaps between different education groups in a society (Eveland & Scheufele, 2000; Garramone and Atkin, 1986). News media have also helped people form opinions and make them aware of where political candidates stood on policy issues (Kim, Scheufele & Shanahan, 2005). Adoni's 1979 study found television, newspaper, and radio were more likely to be perceived by their readers, viewers, or listeners as helpful media to develop both their national and civic values.

It is not just the elections when news media play an important role; they have also been shown to serve as important information channels on major public issues (Zhao & Chaffee, 1995). Other studies suggest news media influences political participation. For example, McLeod, Scheufele, & Moy (1999) showed a strong role of newspaper readership and a modest indirect impact of television viewership in institutionalized political participation. An interesting finding by Martin (2008) showed that negative news coverage was a stimulator of political participation and increased awareness of problems and peoples' interest in politics. A recent study in Europe on first-time voters found that, even though offline news media did not affect them, online news media had a significant impact, and positively affected first-time voter turnout

(Moeller, Kühne, & De Vreese, 2018). Lee & Chen (2004) showed that media reliance in general contribute to political participation.

Meanwhile, there are concerns among various scholars and commentators over the influence of the news media. Using the General Social Survey (GSS), Gronke & Cook (2007) showed that confidence in the press among the public has been declining in the United States for a while and has dropped precipitously in the 1990's and 2000's. Knobloch (2011) found support that dominant media and organizational structures alienate public from participation and limit their capacity for democratic empowerment. Not just the general public, but strong one-sided perceptions of media coverage have been shown to create alienation among the minority (Tsfati, 2007). Lee (2005) found that political trust is positively associated with the importance of in-depth media such as National Public Radio (NPR) and national newspapers as well as with the importance of the Internet. Media distrust might lead to greater partisan voting as people who do not trust the media will disregard political campaign news and rely on their partisan predispositions as cues (Ladd, 2010). Another study showed that expressions of incivility regarding political exchange leads to lack of trust in government, congress and politicians (Mutz & Reeves, 2005). Moy & Scheufele (2000) attempted to find if and how media use is related to various dimensions of trust. Contrary to other studies, they concluded that political trust is not associated with media use, rather social trust is; where newspaper reading and television entertainment is positively associated with social trust, while watching television news with decreased social trust.

Saito (2008) found a strong relationship between exposure to commercial television news programs and political inefficacy, and that exclusive reliance on television for political information is connected to political cynicism. Pinkleton & Austin (2001) found that the

disaffection with media positively relate to “citizens’ cynicism toward political system” and “alienation from the government” (p. 332). Another study by Pinkleton & Austin (2002) found that there is a positive relationship between negativism toward media and cynicism toward the government. It also found that cynicism toward government and negativism toward media negatively predict political efficacy.

President Trump’s concern over the news media is not new, as he has constantly condemned the media over its validity in various issues, most recently criticizing the press as “fake, fake, disgusting news” (Gabbatt, 2018). A large portion of the general public believe that there is an unhealthy relationship between the press and the current U.S. president, and such tensions hinder access of quality political news to the general people (Barthel, Shearer, & Mitchell, 2017b). One study concluded that the hostility of the White House towards the press has a greater impact on media trust than media partisanship (Mourão, Thorson, Chen & Tham, 2018).

It is obvious that the impact of various media extends in both positive and negative ways. In some cases, various research findings contradict each other. It is not just the impact of the news media, but perceptions towards it that have been shown to be linked with other areas of political and social feelings and standpoints and foster activity towards or against certain issues (Barnidge & Rojas, 2014; Feldman et. al., 2017). For this reason, it is of paramount importance that we spend more time and effort towards understanding media’s normative and practical roles and impacts. The following study covers a very important yet specific aspect of this vast discourse.

This study will conduct a secondary analysis of data collected earlier using a structured survey questionnaire to investigate peoples’ perceptions of and satisfaction with news media, and

their level of alienation from the government and business/financial corporations. It will analyze if perceptions of and satisfaction with news media predict levels of alienation from government and big business/financial corporations. In this study, the dimensions of alienation include powerlessness (over the environment), meaninglessness (of life's alternatives), normlessness (of individual and societal conduct), isolation (from cultural and social institutions), cynicism and disaffection toward major institutions in our society such as the government, big business/financial corporations, and the mass media (Seeman, 1959; Pinkleton & Austin 2002; Southwell, 2008).

Objectives of the Study

Research Questions. The following research questions are proposed leading up to an interest in examining people's alienation from government, and from business/financial corporations and examining the role and effects of news media in terms of satisfaction with and perceptions of news media:

RQ 1: What is the level of satisfaction with news media among college students?

RQ2: What are the perceptions of news media among college students?

RQ3: Among college students, what is the level of alienation from the government?

RQ4: Among college students, what is the level of alienation from business/financial corporations?

RQ 5: Do higher levels of satisfaction with news media (i.e. daily paper newspaper, national network television news, and local network television news) performance predict lower or higher levels of alienation from government?

RQ6: Do higher levels of satisfaction with news media (i.e. daily paper newspaper, national network television news, and local network television news) performance predict lower or higher levels of alienation from business/financial corporations?

RQ7: Do positive perceptions of news media performance predict lower or higher levels of alienation from government?

RQ8: Do positive perceptions of news media performance predict lower or higher levels of alienation from business/financial corporations?

Review of Literature

News media as important sources of information, influence and political socialization have been rigorously studied and documented in the literature since the landmark study by Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet (1948). The mass media and specifically the news media have played an important role in the democratic process (Chaffee & Kanihan, 1997). Berkowitz & Pritchard (1989) while evaluating the role of communication in political cognition, saw news media (i.e.: television, radio, newspapers, magazines), interpersonal communication (i.e., conversations with family, friends, colleagues) and political campaigns (i.e., ads, campaign literature, conversations with candidates) as “communication resources.” Various news media such as print, television and internet have been shown to be impactful and important sources of information and influence such as learning about issue positions of candidates and party platforms, interest in election campaigns and intention to vote in both presidential and off-year elections (Berkowitz & Pritchard, 1989; Drew & Weaver, 2006). They also have been associated with political socialization, participation, and as predictors of political knowledge, especially among the uninitiated (Martinelli & Chaffee, 1995; Gao & Brewer, 2008).

Among earlier studies, Garramone and Atkin (1986) examined television, radio, news magazine, and newspaper to understand impact of news media on political knowledge of the youth. The study found that television news predicted both fundamental knowledge and knowledge on current events, while broadcast television predicted current events knowledge and was more effective than print media in terms of political knowledge. Weaver (1994) found that television-distributed talk shows and town hall meetings are associated with greater voter interest and involvement in a political campaign. International studies have also found news media to be related to political information and action. Studying the news coverage of Denmark and the Netherlands, De Vreese & Boomgaarden (2006) also looked at the relationship between media use and political knowledge and participation. Using panel surveys and content analysis, they saw that public television and newspapers with high levels of political content increased knowledge of participants and inclination to vote. News with less political content had zero or some positive effects. It showed the 'virtuous' effects of news content on political knowledge and participation. Kim (2008) examined the impact of different forms of news media and its influence in increasing or reducing the gap in political knowledge between different socioeconomic classes in South Korea. The study was based on telephone interviews of 378 respondents, which asked their level of education, newspaper readership, television viewing, and internet use habits for political information, and their issue and civic knowledge. The study found that newspaper readership was positively related to political information, but newspaper readership also increased gaps between social classes as people with more education were more likely to read newspaper. It also found that news viewing on television was largely unrelated to political knowledge as it did not contribute anything substantial to their knowledge. Internet use also did not show much influence and did not seem like a contender for primary political

information source against newspapers at least in the near future. The findings of this study has similar results as studies done in other places, such as the study by Eveland & Scheufele (2000) in the United States showed that newspaper readership and television viewership had the ability to reduce gaps in knowledge between higher and lower education groups if both economic classes had exposure to newspaper and television news.

While many studies show evidence of news media increasing political knowledge, it also has been shown to increase knowledge in other important areas as well. For example, new media also increase issue opinions, knowledge of candidates, and issue voting. Kim, Scheufele & Shanahan (2005) gathered information about peoples' demographics, interest in the election, political knowledge, and their attention to news before and after the 2000 election. He found that greater attention to election news coverage allowed people to hold specific opinions on campaign issues. Shanahan also showed more candidate information and knowledge among voters who paid greater attention to news media. Television news has also been shown to serve important information on major public issues as well (Zhao & Chaffee, 1995).

Not just popular news media, but the impact of citizen journalism on political knowledge and participation was assessed by Kaufhold, Valenzuela & De Zúñiga (2010). Taking political knowledge, offline political participation and online political participation as dependent variables they analyzed what role professional and citizen journalism play in these areas. While citizen journalism was positively associated with online and offline political participation, it was negatively associated with knowledge. Meanwhile professional journalism was positively related to knowledge and offline participation. It also showed the impact of user-generated journalism on positive online political activity of citizens.

Many studies done to find associations between news media and political cognition usually tend to be cross-sectional studies. However, Dimitrova, Shehata, Strömbäck & Nord (2014) used representative panel surveys to see effects of digital media on political knowledge and participation and if different forms of digital media affect people differently in Sweden. The results showed weak impact towards learning and some digital media's positive impact on political participation, with the social media being significant drivers of offline participation.

Lee & Wei (2004) showed that among the youth, internet-based news is becoming more popular than offline sources, especially newspaper use. They analyzed newspaper readership's association with political participation and political knowledge using simple linear regression and found that while decreasing newspaper use is associated with decreasing political participation, no relationship was found with decreasing political knowledge. Lee & Wei did another similar study in 2008 using the American National Election Studies (NES) data from 1958-2004, where they looked at newspaper use, political knowledge and political participation changes with respect to age, race, sex and income. Similar to their 2004 study, they found that there is a trend of decreasing newspaper readership among 17-24-year-olds, and it is related to decline in political participation. The study, however, did not also find any association with decrease in political knowledge. More recently, Moeller, Kühne, & De Vreese (2018) looked at how news media exposure impacts electoral participation of first-time voters in the Netherlands. The study gathered data on the content on the media related to election, and then surveyed the youth on their political participation, media exposure, civic duty and information efficacy. The results showed no significant effect on participation was found due to exposure to offline media, but relevant news in online media did positively affect voter turnout in the Netherlands. Meanwhile, a study among people in Belgium saw that certain online activities, including

following the news, blogging, and forwarding political emails, were significantly associated with offline political participation (Quintelier & Vissers, 2008). One study showed that newspaper readership has a strong role and television viewership has a modest role in institutionalized political participation (McLeod, Scheufele, & Moy, 1999). Even negative news coverage of politically relevant social issues has been shown to increase political participation through citizen awareness of collective problems and interest in politics (Martin, 2008).

The overwhelming majority of research finds a relationship between news media use and neutral or positive changes in political knowledge, participation, mobilization, efficacy etc. There are a few studies that have failed to demonstrate a tangible impact of digital media on participation. For example, Zhang, Johnson, Seltzer & Bichard (2010) found that reliance of social networking sites had no effect on political participation although it was significantly related to civic participation. Despite significant results, the responses of questions related to social media use were different than many other studies as 76.4% of the responses said that they do not rely on social networking sites at all. The median age of the participants being 52 years, it could be argued that social media is obviously less popular among older citizens and the sample may not represent all ages. Groshek and Dimitrova (2011) found no significant impact of social media use on vote intention in the 2008 U.S. presidential election.

While positive effects of news media in political and social life have been observed in different kinds of studies in the United States and abroad, plenty of research have also pointed out the negative concerns that surround news media, especially related to negative feelings like cynicism, apathy or alienation from large public and private institutions. Older studies criticize the superficial quality of news media, especially television, in covering significant issues (McClure & Patterson, 1974; Cappella & Jamieson, 1997). Media distrust may also lead people

to disregard election news and follow their predisposition to partisan ideas (Ladd, 2010).

Yamamoto & Kushin (2014) looked into how online media influenced political disaffection among young adults during the 2008 presidential election campaign. A survey among college students examined the effects of social media attention, online expressions, and traditional internet sources on political cynicism, apathy, and skepticism. Results indicated that the attention to social media for political campaign information is positively associated with cynicism and apathy, and negatively associated with skepticism, while online expression is positively related to skepticism. Pinkleton & Austin (2001) looked into media's role into alienation from government which has similarities to this current study in terms of methods; while their regression model indicated education, past behavior and efficacy positively predicted political involvement, importance of news media predicted cynicism toward government and political system and efficacy. Another Pinkleton & Austin (2002) study found newspaper and magazines negatively related to individuals' cynicism toward the government, while television news was negatively related to negativism toward political campaigns. Positive relationship between cynicism toward the government and negativism toward media was also found, both of which negatively predicted political efficacy. Mutz & Reeves (2005) used an experimental design to show if incivility in political discourse has adverse effects on people's public opinion about politicians. The results showed that political discourse that is uncivil has detrimental effects on political trust. Bowen, Stamm & Clark (2000) looked into television reliance and political malaise and concluded that "the 'videomalaise' effect would be limited to voters low on political involvement and those reliant on political advertising" (p. 12). Lee (2005) found that importance of conservative sources is positively associated with political efficacy and political alienation is negatively connected with the importance of in-depth media.

The recent political climate has also affected feelings towards the media. Polarization among the voters grew during the 2016 U.S. Presidential election (Smith & Hanley, 2018). One study found support for Trump as the strongest predictor of news distrust (Mourão, Thorson, Chen & Tham, 2018). It also found that the hostility of the White House towards the press has a greater impact on media trust than media partisanship. Allcott & Gentzkow (2017) posited that the marked decline of media trust among Republican supporters may have increased the demand for nontraditional sources and increased the propensity of spread of fake news.

In studies outside the United States, exposure to commercial television news programs have been shown to have association with political inefficacy, while dependence on television for political information has been associated with political cynicism in Japan (Saito, 2008). In a study conducted among young voters in Europe, Elenbaas & de Vreese (2008) showed that media exposure to strategically framed campaign coverage was related to political cynicism. Tsfati (2007) showed that strong one-sided perceptions of media coverage were creating social alienation over the effects of ideological, social, and demographic variables among the Arab minority living in Israel. Interestingly, the data showed significant effects of Arab media in inducing this hostility rather than Israeli media.

Adams, Highhouse & Zickar (2010) looked at citizens' alienation from business and financial corporations. They put forth a theory regarding distrust towards corporations and how this distrust forms. The researchers employed a "corporate distrust scale" and discovered that corporate distrust correlates positively with organization-specific cynicism and liberal political leanings. Djerf-Pierre, Shehata & Strömbäck (2016) explored the relationship between media use and political distrust and how it has evolved over time. Results of this study indicated that a

positive relationship between media use and political trust exists, but that relationship has weakened over time.

Criticism of the news media that they foster the public's distrust toward or alienation from important institutions and processes in society is inconsistent; several other research studies indicate the contrary (see McLeod, Glynn & McDonald, 1983; McLeod & McDonald, 1985; Drew & Weaver, 2006). Even the Saito (2008) study cited earlier showed that *videomalaise* was not observed among NHK news viewers. Leshner & McKean (1997) found no evidence that television use leads to political cynicism, as "using television for news had no measurable effect on respondents' level of cynicism toward politicians" (p. 80). Moy & Scheufele (2000) also associated media use with political trust rather than social trust. In an older study, Zimmer (1983) looked into the relationship between exposure to local press and television and alienation from local government. While he found that exposure to local news decreases local government alienation, he did not find any significant impact of television on alienation. Some apparent contradictions may have occurred because of the inconsistencies in the objects of study or the choice of predictor variables. For example, some of the research are more of a commentary on negative advertising existing in the mass media rather than the news reporting itself (see Dardis, Shen & Edwards, 2008). Some studies also mixed negative political campaigns in the media with the performance of the news media, thus accusing the medium for the message (Pinkleton & Austin, 2002). In terms of the choice of predictor variables used to study news media effects, many research studies use respondent-reported exposure rates (see Price & Zaller, 1993). These media exposure variables are inadequately conceptualized or operationalized, which media scholars consider as problematic especially when they are used as predictor variables in media effects studies (Chaffee & Schleuder, 1986; Zukin, 1981). Pinkleton and Austin (2002) caution

that independent variables such as evaluations of news media performance and satisfaction with news media performance are better alternatives to the ubiquitous simple exposure or other single-source measures. Thus, the objectives of this study were to examine the relationships between satisfaction with news media performance (in getting news and discussion of public affairs), and perceptions of news media performance with feelings of alienation from government, and from business/financial corporations.

Alienation and media studies have existed at least since the 1950s. Some scholars have argued that the concept of alienation is better known for its consequences than for its clarity of definition and measurement (McLeod, Ward & Tancill, 1965). This obfuscation is a result of the plethora of studies and uses of the concept since Rousseau's scholarly legitimization of the concept (Chen, 1992). In this study, the dimensions of alienation include powerlessness (over the environment), meaninglessness (of life's alternatives), normlessness (of individual and societal conduct), isolation (from cultural and social institutions), cynicism and disaffection toward major institutions in our society such as the government, big business/financial corporations, and the mass media (Seeman, 1959; Pinkleton & Austin 2002; Southwell, 2008).

Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is organized as beginning with Chapter I: Objectives of Study, and Review of Literature, followed by Chapter II: Methodology and Research Design, Chapter III: Results and Chapter IV: Summary, Discussion, and Conclusions. After the chapters come References and Appendix respectively.

CHAPTER II. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

This section explains the methodology and research design of the study. It begins with explaining the population and sample size. This is followed by operationalization of the scales used in the research questions and how the items in each scale are measured. The last section of the chapter describes the data collation, preparation and analysis procedures used in the study.

Population and Sample

In the past decade, about 13 states have played a crucial role with Ohio, Florida, and Pennsylvania getting most of the attention of political candidates and the news media. These states are often separated from the *red* and *blue* states where neither political party is sure of a lock (Hertzberg, 2006). 2016 also saw focus on largely the same states again; states like Ohio, Florida and Arizona received attention and played a crucial role in the election (Kentish, 2016; Todd, Murray & Dan, 2018). This study is set in Ohio. Since the 1960s, Ohioans have accurately predicted the outcome of every presidential election, making the Buckeye State the bellwether in sensing the political pulse of the nation (Kentish, 2016). Ohio mirrored the national outcome of the Presidential election yet again in 2016, when the Republican party won 52.1% of votes in Ohio while the Democratic party received 43.5% (Politico, 2016). The documented swing status of Ohio makes the location of the study apt for this study to study attitudes toward the news media as well as the ‘big’ government and ‘big’ businesses.

The target population was students at a Midwestern University in the United States. The choice of younger citizens was deliberate. In the 2008 election, when Mr. Obama was elected president, there was intense interest and participation by younger Americans, and pundits gave a lot of credit to this demographic bloc for carrying Obama to victory. Millennials’ (ages 20-35)

participation increased in 2016 and are close to approaching the baby boomer generation (ages 52 to 70) in becoming the largest generation in the American electorate (Fry, 2018). Despite large potential in increasing number, this generation is often under discussion because of its lack of political participation (Khalid, 2016). Research has also indicated that younger people have “less stable and more discontinuous political orientations than those with higher age, more experience, and more sophistication in politics.....younger voters are most vulnerable to being caught in a spiral of cynicism and apathy when exposed to strategy coverage of political affairs” (Elenbaas & de Vreese, 2008, p. 552-553; also see Jennings & Niemi, 1978) making them a good choice for a study on news media influences on persuasion and change (Sears, 1983).

Research Design

This study was a secondary analysis of survey data collected in Spring 2016 and Spring 2017 semesters at a Midwestern University in the United States.¹ A non-probability quota sampling method was used to select BGSU students (N= 760) for the surveys.

In general, a survey is conducted among a sizable sample from a pre-selected population. Population includes the whole group of people whom the research is interested in. A sample survey attempts to collect data from a sample of the population in order to make an inference about the larger population. Surveys are “designed to provide a snapshot of how things are at a particular time” (Denscombe, 1998).

¹ Study data were collected by Dr. S. Melkote as part of a larger study on political attitudes and news media preferences. The data used in this study has not been previously analyzed.

There are various advantages in using survey as a research design. Surveys make larger samples more attainable and realistic (Baxter & Babbie, 2004). Surveys can also be online which reduces the constraint of being in the same place as the interviewee and saves time as well. It can also reach out to a large number of people at the same time and bring all the data together to be analyzed more easily. Baxter and Babbie (2004) also explain that survey design is more flexible than experimental design because it allows researchers to establish operational definitions from the responses received. Surveys also do not control settings or influence variables, they also do not change treatment like experimental designs (Kelley, Clark, Brown, & Sitzia, 2003). Because of its straightforward, clear close-ended questions and the ability to answer the survey within limited time and resources, it can be assumed that such a tool was helpful as the survey population was college students. As the students were not asked to provide any personal information that could be used to identify them, they were free to express their opinions.

Baxter and Babbie (2004) also discussed some weaknesses of survey design. Surveys are considered to not be able to articulate or bring out intricate topics making the reporting artificial and might seem disconnected from the socio-cultural context of the respondent. Surveys mostly record verbal information that respondents offer and may not actually describe the actions of the respondents.

Operationalization of Concepts

A structured questionnaire was used to collect the data. A copy of the questionnaire is attached to the Appendix at the end of this thesis document. The questionnaire started out with questions about exposure to different news media on a weekly basis. Each was measure on a four-point ordinal scale:

	1	2	3	4
In general, my exposure to news	No	Low	Moderate	Strong
(per avg. week) for the following media is:	Exposure	(1-2 times)	(3-4 times)	(5-7 times)
1. Daily newspaper (paper print copy).....	()	()	()	()
2. Television	()	()	()	()
3. Online News.....	()	()	()	()
4. Social Media (Ex. Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	()	()	()	()
5. Radio News	()	()	()	()

The next set of questions examined the rate of satisfaction with the reporting by the news media on a five-point scale. Levels of satisfaction with news media performance (in getting news and discussion of public affairs) was measured separately for the different media with the following item: please rate your satisfaction for each of the media listed for getting news or discussion of public affairs. Responses were recorded on a scale ranging from 1 to 5 with '1' signifying low satisfaction and '5' signifying high satisfaction.

Please rate how satisfied you are (on a 1-5 scale) with the reporting of news in each of the media listed below:

	Satisfaction Scale				
	Low		High		
	1	2	3	4	5
6. Daily Newspaper (paper copy).....	()	()	()	()	()
7. Network (National) TV News (ABC, CBS, NBC)....	()	()	()	()	()
8. Local TV News.....	()	()	()	()	()
9. Social Media (Ex. Facebook, Twitter, etc.).....	()	()	()	()	()
10. Online News.....	()	()	()	()	()

11. Radio News.....() () () () ()
 12. Podcasts.....() () () () ()

Perceptions of news media performance were measured with an index that consisted of five items: Role of news media in reporting the present economic crisis has been helpful to me; News media make matters/issues about our country/local community worse off; News media in general, are biased in their reporting; I hold a favorable view of news media; Generally speaking, mass media help our country/local community solve important problems. All items used a five-point scale consisting of *completely disagree (1)*, *disagree (2)*, *neutral (3)*, *agree (4)*, and *completely agree (5)*.

Below, on each of the statements on US television news media, check an option that closely matches your opinion:

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly
	Disagree				Agree

- The role of TV news media in reporting the present economic crisis has been helpful to me () () () () ()
 In general, TV news media make matters/issues about our country worse () () () () ()
 TV news media, in general, are biased in their reporting of government/politics () () () () ()
 I hold a favorable view of TV news media () () () () ()
 Generally speaking, national TV news media help our country solve important problems () () () () ()

Alienation from government was measured with an index that consisted of five items, which as adapted from Craig, Nieimi, and Silver (1990) and Pinkleton and Austin (2002): Washington politicians in US House and Senate are out of touch with ordinary Americans; Washington politicians in US House and Senate only care about getting elected; Washington politicians do not care much about opinions of people like me; I hold a favorable view of US House and Senate politicians; People like me have very little say in what goes on in Washington DC (i.e. in US Congress). All items used a five-point scale consisting of *strongly disagree* (1), *somewhat disagree* (2), *neutral* (3), *somewhat agree* (4), and *strongly agree* (5).

Below, on each of the statements on US government/politicians, check an option that closely matches your opinion:

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Completely	Somewhat	Neutral	Somewhat	Completely
	Disagree	Disagree		Agree	Agree
Representatives & Senators in the US Congress are out of touch with ordinary Americans.....	()	()	()	()	()
Representatives & Senators in the US Congress only care about getting elected.....	()	()	()	()	()
Representatives & Senators in the US Congress do not care about opinions of people like me.....	()	()	()	()	()
I have a favorable view of US House and Senate politicians.....	()	()	()	()	()
People like me have very little input in what goes on in US Congress.....	()	()	()	()	()

Alienation from business/financial corporations was measured with an index that was made of five items: business/financial companies only care about their profits; too much power is concentrated in the hands of a few big business/financial corporations; big business/financial companies make too much profit at the expense of ordinary Americans; Wall Street financial firms do not care about people on Main Street (i.e. ordinary Americans). These items are based on similar measures in the literature (Craig, Niemi, and Silver, 1990). All items used a five-point scale consisting of *strongly disagree* (1), *somewhat disagree* (2), *neutral* (3), *somewhat agree* (4), and *strongly agree* (5).

Below, on each of the statements on US corporations/financial corporations, check an option that closely matches your opinion:

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Completely	Somewhat	Neutral	Somewhat	Completely
	Disagree	Disagree		Agree	Agree
Corporations/financial companies only					
care about their profits.....()	()	()	()	()	()
Too much power is concentrated in the hands of a few big					
corporations/financial companies....()	()	()	()	()	()
I have a favorable view of corporations/financial					
companies.....()	()	()	()	()	()
Big corporations/financial companies make too much profit at					
the expense of ordinary Americans..()	()	()	()	()	()
Wall Street financial firms do not care about					
ordinary Americans.....()	()	()	()	()	()

The last three items on the questionnaire collected information on biological sex, age, and class standing:

Are you: Female (1) _____ Male (2) _____

Are you: Undergraduate student (1) _____ Graduate student (2) _____

The last two digits of your birth year are: 19_____

Data Preparation and Collation

All survey questionnaires (N=760) were disseminated in paper format. Each questionnaire was given a serial number. Once the questionnaires were numbered, the Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS) software package was used for input and analyses. Variable 1 (V1) of the data was considered the serial number of the questionnaire. Data collected in 2016 (N=400) were inserted in the SPSS spreadsheet first, followed by 360 questionnaires from 2017. The information in each questionnaire was inserted in SPSS in the chronological order of the questions appearing in the questionnaire, starting from variable 2 (V2) to variable 31 (V31). After all data were entered in the SPSS spreadsheet, frequency distributions were generated. The results of the frequencies were observed carefully in order to find errors in the data tabulation. After fixing the errors, the data file was saved for data analysis.

Reliability Analysis

The five questionnaire items measuring *perception of news media* were combined into an index and a reliability score (Cronbach alpha) was computed for this index. Similarly, *alienation from government* and *alienation from business/financial corporations* were collapsed into two separate indices and a reliability score (Cronbach alpha) was computed for these indices. For every scale, minimum alpha level of 0.70 was used to be included in further analysis. It measures reliability where the alpha coefficient indicates the internal consistency of the scales. Table 2.1

shows the Cronbach alpha coefficient scores for every scale. As all three scales had Cronbach alpha scores of .70 or higher, they were used for further data analysis.

Scales	Alpha Coefficient	N (of Items)
Perception of News Media	0.71	5
Alienation from Government	0.78	5
Alienation from Business/Financial Corporations	0.81	5

Data Analysis

RQ 1: What is the level of satisfaction with news media among college students?

RQ2: What are the perceptions of news media among college students?

RQ3: Among college students, what is the level of alienation from the government

RQ4: Among college students, what is the level of alienation from business/financial corporations?

Simple descriptive statistics such as frequency counts/ bar charts/ pie charts were used to answer RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, and RQ4.

RQ 5: Do higher levels of satisfaction with news media (i.e. daily paper newspaper, national network TV news, and local network TV news) performance predict lower or higher levels of alienation from government?

Multiple linear regression analysis was used to answer RQ5. The regression analysis examined the relationship between satisfaction with news media (newspaper, national television news, local television news, online news, and social media) and alienation from government. Alienation from government was the dependent variable to test the prediction of satisfaction with newspaper, national television news, local television news, online news, and social media.

RQ6: Do higher levels of satisfaction with news media (i.e. daily paper newspaper, national network TV news, and local network TV news) performance predict lower or higher levels of alienation from business/financial corporations?

Multiple linear regression analysis was used to answer RQ6. The regression analysis examined the relationship between satisfaction with news media (newspaper, national television news, local television news, online news, and social media) and alienation from business/financial corporations. Alienation from business/financial corporations was the dependent variable to test the prediction of satisfaction with newspaper, national television news, local television news, online news, and social media.

RQ7: Do positive perceptions of news media performance predict lower or higher levels of alienation from the government?

Simple linear regression analysis was used to answer RQ7. The analysis examined the relationship between perception of television news media performance and alienation from government. Alienation from government was the dependent variable to test the prediction of perception of television news media performance.

RQ8: Do positive perceptions of news media performance predict lower or higher levels of alienation from business/financial corporations?

Simple linear regression analysis was used to examine RQ8. It examined the relationship between perception of television news media performance and alienation from business/financial corporations. Alienation from business/financial corporations was the dependent variable to test the prediction of perception of television news media performance.

CHAPTER III. RESULTS

This chapter provides a detailed description of the results that were found after the data were analyzed in SPSS. The first part of the chapter includes the profile of respondents of the study, which includes their age, sex, and class status, followed by their level of exposure to different news media.; The second part of this chapter then describes the results for each research question posed in this study.

Profile of Respondents

Respondents were recruited from undergraduate and graduate students in Bowling Green State University (BGSU). A total of 760 students responded to the survey, which were collected in 2016 (N=400) and 2017 (N=360). The profile of the survey respondents is presented below.

Age of Respondents. The age of the respondents ranged from 18 to 52 years. Among the 754 valid responses, the mean age was 22.5 years (See Table 3.1). Figure 3.1 shows a long tail (right skew) with a vast majority of the students ranging from 18 to 25 years.

Table 3.1: Respondents' Age in Years

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18.00	8	1.1	1.1	1.1
	19.00	73	9.6	9.7	10.7
	20.00	148	19.5	19.6	30.4
	21.00	138	18.2	18.3	48.7
	22.00	108	14.2	14.3	63.0
	23.00	99	13.0	13.1	76.1
	24.00	51	6.7	6.8	82.9
	25.00	25	3.3	3.3	86.2
	26.00	33	4.3	4.4	90.6
	27.00	15	2.0	2.0	92.6
	28.00	12	1.6	1.6	94.2
	29.00	6	.8	.8	95.0
	30.00	2	.3	.3	95.2
	31.00	6	.8	.8	96.0
	32.00	8	1.1	1.1	97.1
	33.00	2	.3	.3	97.3
	34.00	5	.7	.7	98.0
	35.00	5	.7	.7	98.7
	36.00	2	.3	.3	98.9
	37.00	3	.4	.4	99.3
40.00	1	.1	.1	99.5	
47.00	2	.3	.3	99.7	
49.00	1	.1	.1	99.9	
52.00	1	.1	.1	100.0	
	Total	754	99.2	100.0	
Missing	System	6	.8		
Total		760	100.0		

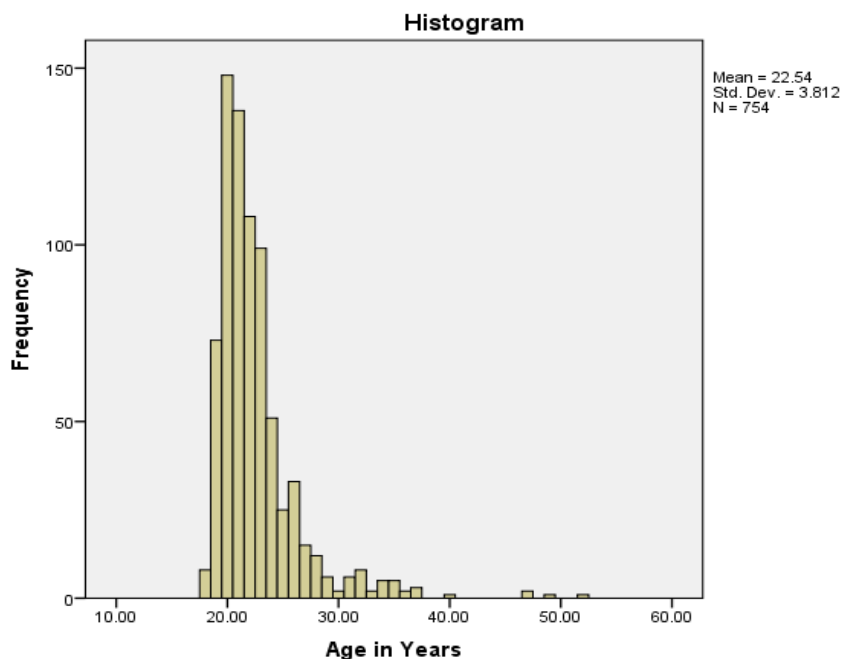


Figure 3.1: Respondents' Age in Years

Sex of Respondents. Out of the 756 respondents, 379 (50.1%) respondents were female and 377 (49.1%) respondents were male (see Figure 3.2 and Table 3.2 below).

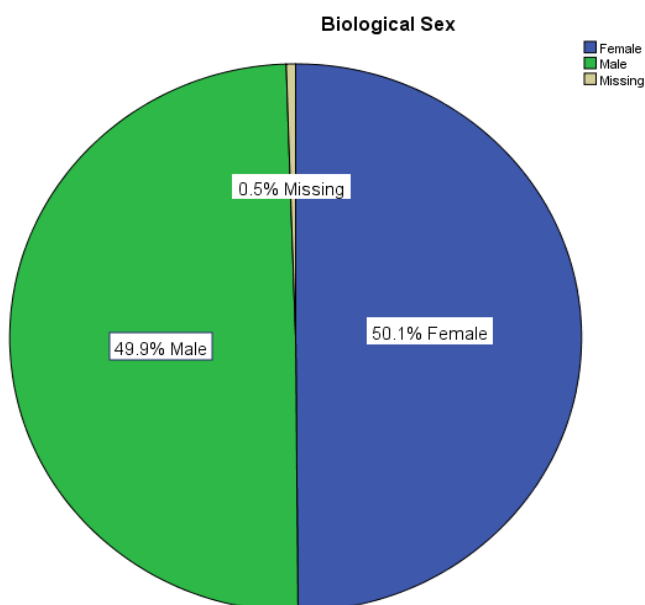


Figure 3.2: Pie Chart of Respondents' Biological Sex

Table 3.2: Biological Sex of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	379	49.9	50.1	50.1
	Male	377	49.6	49.9	100.0
	Total	756	99.5	100.0	
Missing	System	4	.5		
Total		760	100.0		

Student Status. All the respondents who participated were students of the university and the data described the respondents in two categories– undergraduate and graduate. Out of the 757 respondents, 643 (84.9%) respondents were undergraduate students and 114 (15.1%) respondents were graduate students . as shown in Figure 3.3 and Table 3.3 below.

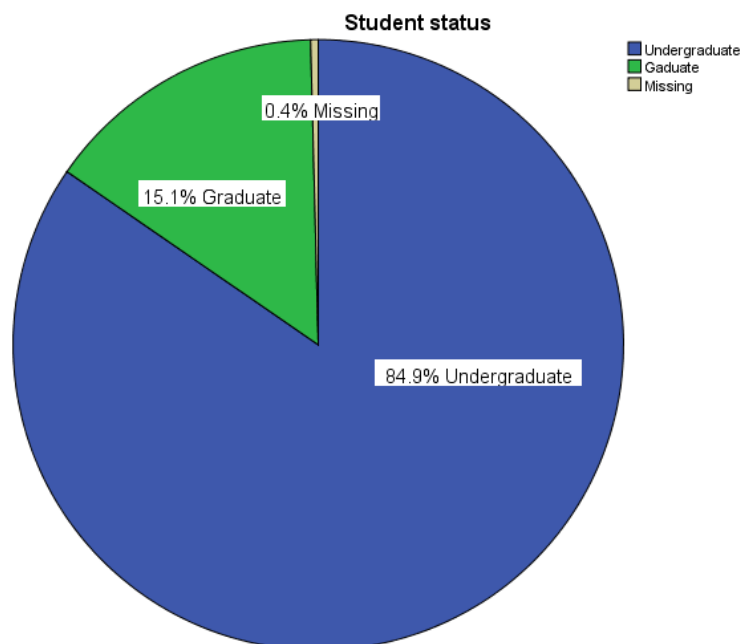


Figure 3.3: Pie Chart of Respondents' Student Status

Table 3.3: Student Status of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Undergraduate	643	84.6	84.9	84.9
	Graduate	114	15.0	15.1	100.0
	Total	757	99.6	100.0	
Missing	System	3	.4		
Total		760	100.0		

Exposure to Different News Media

Exposure to Daily Newspaper. Almost 61% of the respondents mentioned that they had “no exposure” to daily newspaper. Around 32% responded that they had “low exposure” to daily newspaper (see Table 3.4 and Figure 3.4). Hence, nearly 93% of the responses ranged from zero to 1-2 times of reading a daily newspaper.

Table 3.4: Exposure to Daily Newspaper in an Average Week

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No Exposure	462	60.8	60.9	60.9
	Low Exposure (1-2 times/week)	242	31.8	31.9	92.8
	Moderate Exposure (3-4 times/week)	40	5.3	5.3	98.0
	Strong Exposure (5-7 times/week)	15	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	759	99.9	100.0	
Missing	Missing Value	1	.1		
Total		760	100.0		

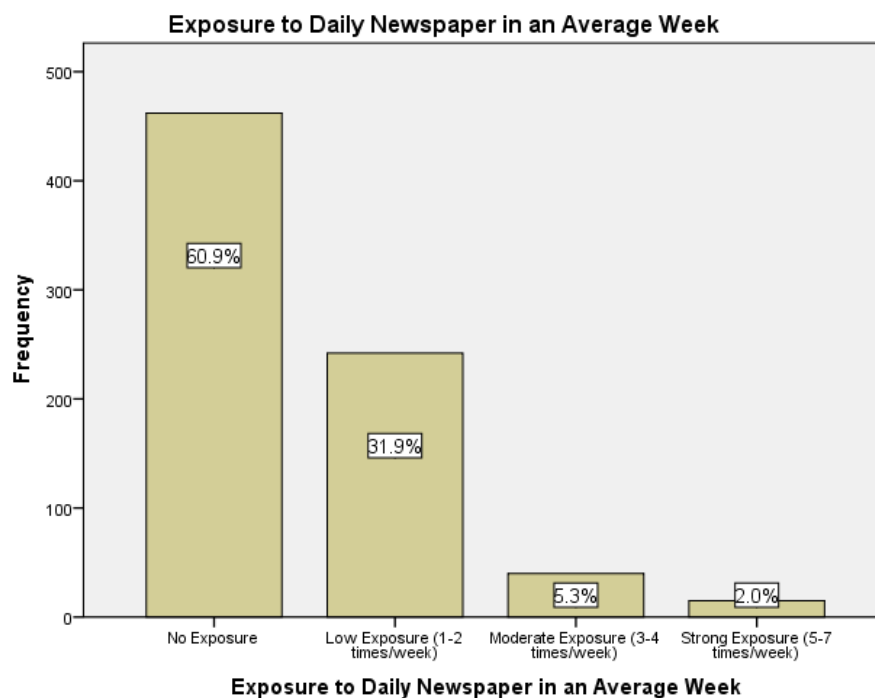


Figure 3.4: Bar Graph of Exposure to Daily Newspaper in an Average Week

Exposure to Television News. A total of 118 students did not watch news on television. “Low exposure” was the highest response with 32.5% (247 students) followed by 29.8% (226 students) under the “moderate exposure” to television news. Nearly 22.1% (168 students) also responded with “strong exposure” as their answer, which is shown in Table 3.5 and Figure 3.5.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No Exposure	118	15.5	15.5	15.5
	Low Exposure (1-2 times/week)	247	32.5	32.5	48.1
	Moderate Exposure (3-4 times/week)	226	29.7	29.8	77.9
	Strong Exposure (5-7 times/week)	168	22.1	22.1	100.0
	Total	759	99.9	100.0	
Missing	9.00	1	.1		
Total		760	100.0		

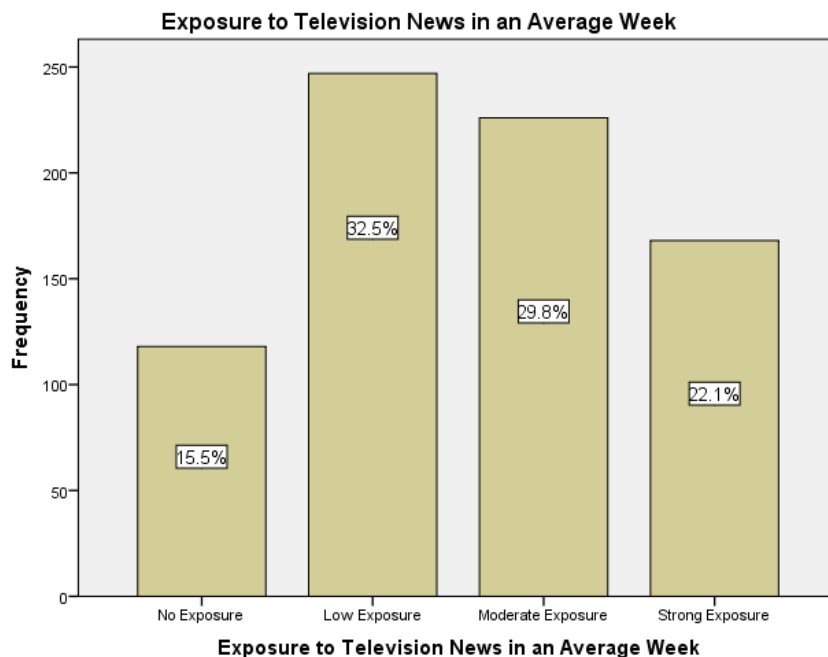


Figure 3.5: Bar Graph of Table 3.5: Exposure to Television News in an Average Week

Exposure to Online News. As shown in Table 3.6, about 13% of the respondents had low to no exposure to online news sites. About 53.8% (n=407) responded that they had a “strong exposure” to online news. “Moderate exposure” was the second highest response with 32.8% (n=248). We can see that the majority (86.6%) of respondents indicated moderate to high exposure to online news sites (see Figure 3.6)

Table 3.6: Exposure to Online News in an Average Week

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No Exposure	21	2.8	2.8	2.8
	Low Exposure (1-2 times/week)	80	10.5	10.6	13.4
	Moderate Exposure (3-4 times/week)	248	32.6	32.8	46.2
	Strong Exposure (5-7 times/week)	407	53.6	53.8	100.0
	Total	756	99.5	100.0	
Missing	9.00	4	.5		
Total		760	100.0		

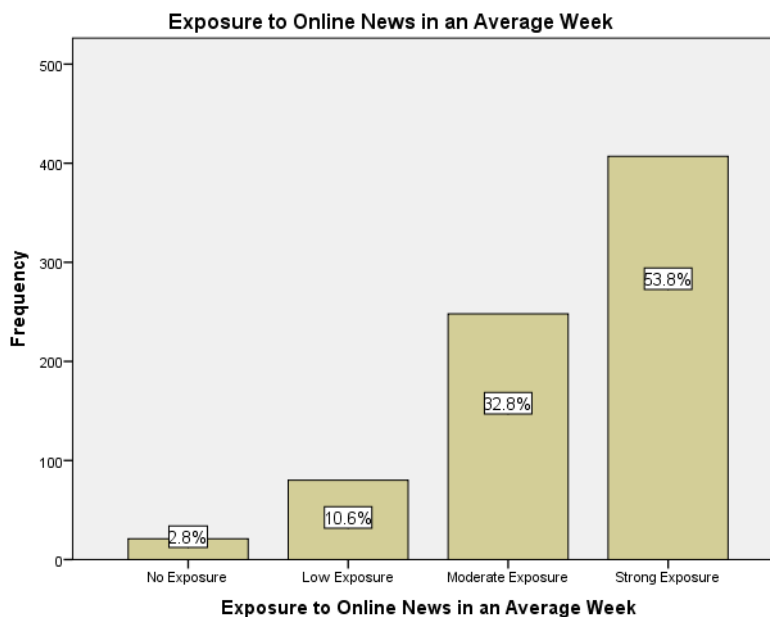


Figure 3.6: Bar Graph of Table 3.6: Exposure to Online News in an Average Week

Exposure to Social Media. According to the data in Table 3.7 and Figure 3.7, the highest option chosen regarding exposure to social media such as Facebook and Twitter was “strong exposure” (74.2%, n = 562). Meanwhile, 9% (n = 68) of the respondents indicated “no exposure” or “low exposure” of social media.

Table 3.7: Exposure to Social Media in an Average Week

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No Exposure	21	2.8	2.8	2.8
	Low Exposure (1-2 times/week)	47	6.2	6.2	9.0
	Moderate Exposure (3-4 times/week)	127	16.7	16.8	25.8
	Strong Exposure (5-7 times/week)	562	73.9	74.2	100.0
	Total	757	99.6	100.0	
Missing	9.00	3	.4		
Total		760	100.0		

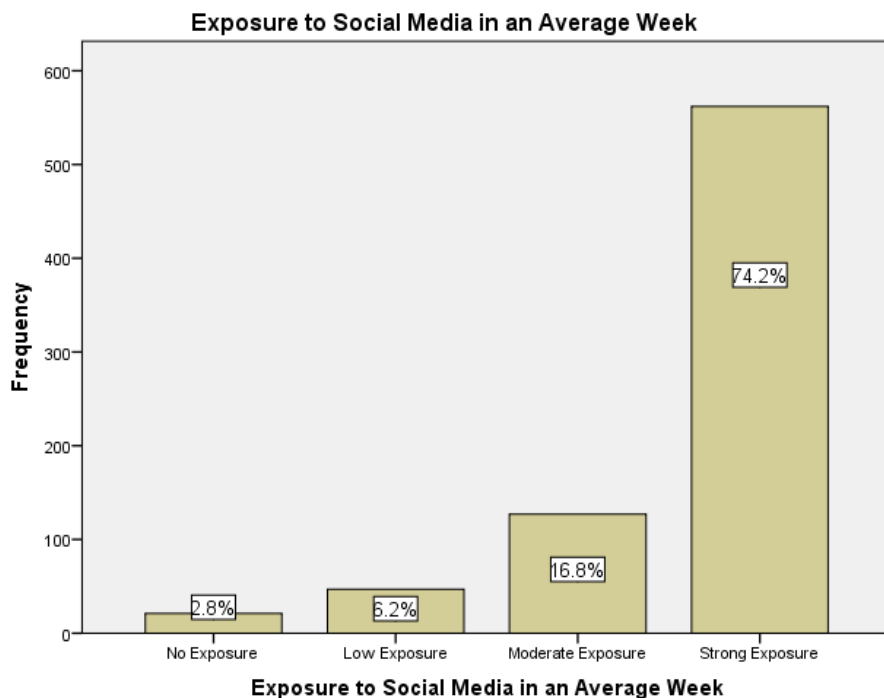


Figure 3.7: Bar Graph of Exposure to Social Media in an Average Week

Exposure to Radio News. A large majority of respondents answered “no exposure” (32.5%, n = 247) or “low exposure” (41.1%, n = 312) regarding their exposure to radio news which made up 73.6% of the responses (as seen in Table 3.8 and Figure 3.8). About 19.9% (n = 151) went with “moderate exposure” and 6.5% (n = 49) answered “strong exposure”.

Table 3.8: Exposure to Radio News in an Average Week

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No Exposure	247	32.5	32.5	32.5
	Low Exposure (1-2 times/week)	312	41.1	41.1	73.6
	Moderate Exposure (3-4 times/week)	151	19.9	19.9	93.5
	Strong Exposure (5-7 times/week)	49	6.4	6.5	100.0
	Total	759	99.9	100.0	
Missing	9.00	1	.1		
Total		760	100.0		

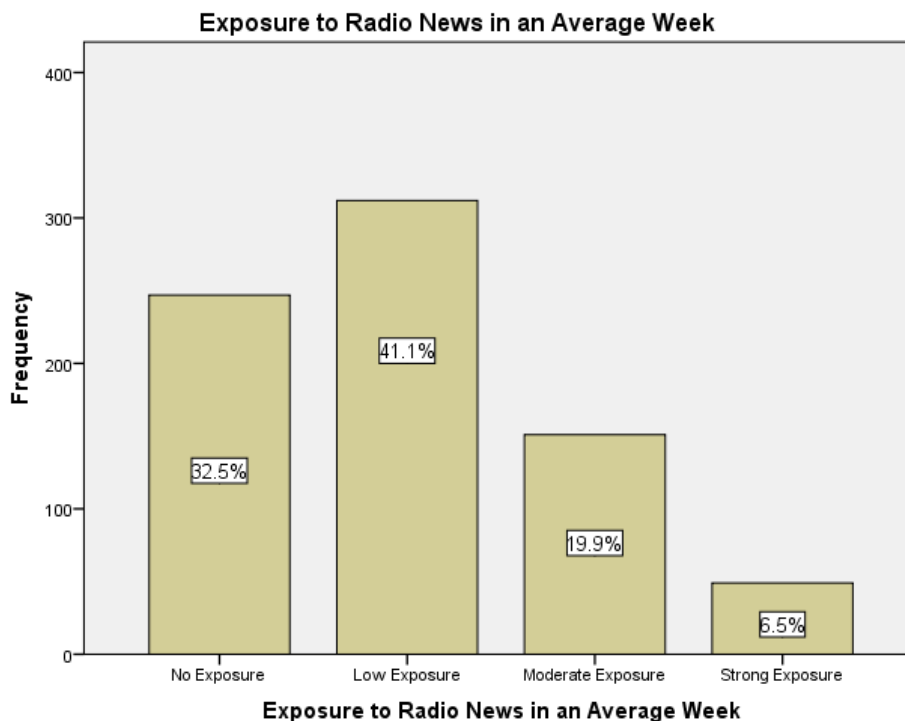


Figure 3.8: Bar Graph of Exposure to Radio News in an Average Week

By observing the data above, majority respondents' answers went towards "no" or "low" exposure for newspaper and radio news, while the responses for online news and social media news exposure were mostly towards "moderate" or "strong" exposure. Responses to television news exposure was rather well balanced among the four categories.

Research Questions

The following research questions were proposed leading up to an interest in examining people's alienation from government, and from business/financial corporations and examining the role and effects of news media.

RQ1: What is the Level of Satisfaction with News Media Among College Students?.

This research question attempted to elicit respondents' satisfaction with different news media.

To answer this research questions, respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with daily

newspaper, national TV news, local TV news, social media, online news, and radio news a on a scale of 1 to 5 with '1' signifying low satisfaction and '5' signifying high satisfaction.

Table 3.9 provides the score distributions including the mean, median, standard deviation, range of scale and rank for satisfaction with newspaper, national television news, local television news, social media, online news, and radio news. Figures 3.9 to 3.14 show the spread of the scores for each of the news media.

News Media	N Valid	Mean	Median	SD	Min.	Max	Rank
Newspaper	750	2.57	3	1.26	1	5	6
National TV	757	3.06	3	1.18	1	5	3
Local TV	753	2.88	3	1.15	1	5	4
Social Media	758	3.28	3	1.28	1	5	2
Online News	756	3.45	4	1.11	1	5	1
Radio	752	2.60	3	1.19	1	5	5

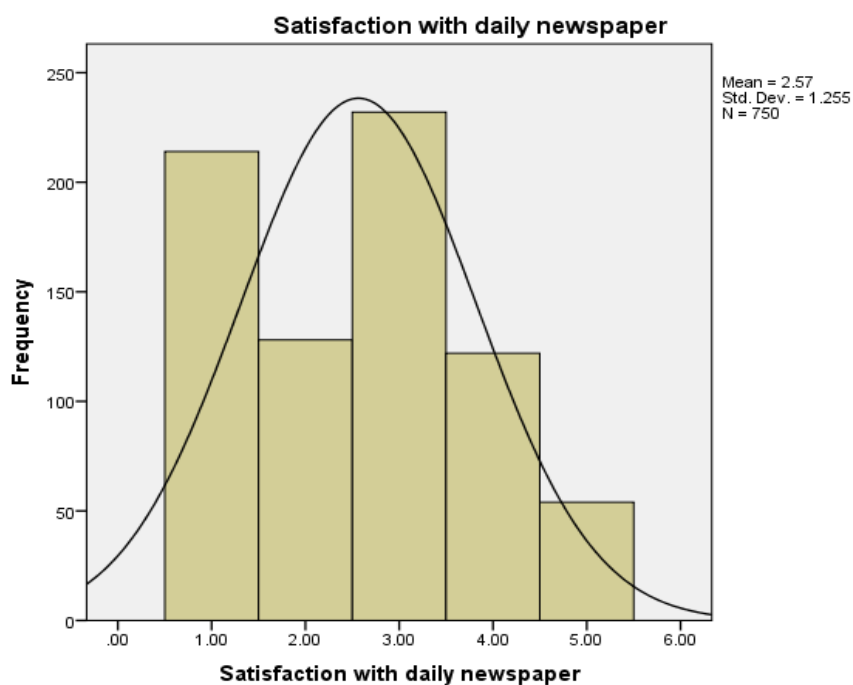


Figure 3.9: Spread of Scores on Satisfaction with Newspaper Scale

For each news medium, the upper end of the scale represents higher level of satisfaction. As seen in Table 3.9, among 750 responses, the mean score was 2.57 on the scale ranging from 1 to 5 with a standard deviation of 1.26. The result shows an average level of satisfaction with newspaper displaying a positive skew of .21, which indicates that many scores gather at the lower end of the curve (See Figure 3.9).

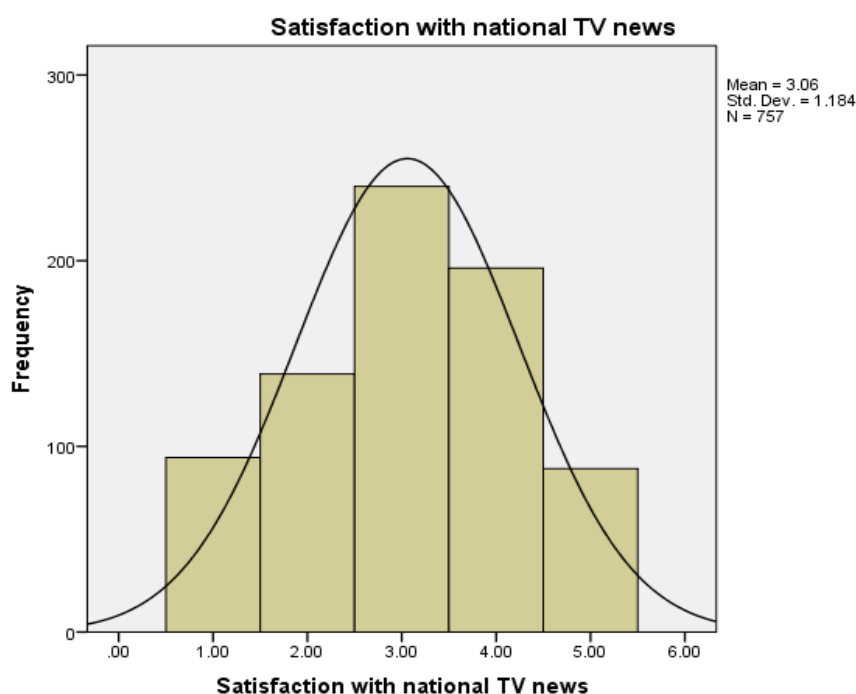


Figure 3.10: Spread of Scores on Satisfaction with National Television News

As seen in Table 3.9, among 757 responses, the mean score was 3.06 on the scale ranging from 1 to 5 with a standard deviation of 1.18. The result shows a higher level of satisfaction with national television news displaying a negative skew of -.14, which further indicates that many scores gather at the upper end of the curve (See Figure 3.10).

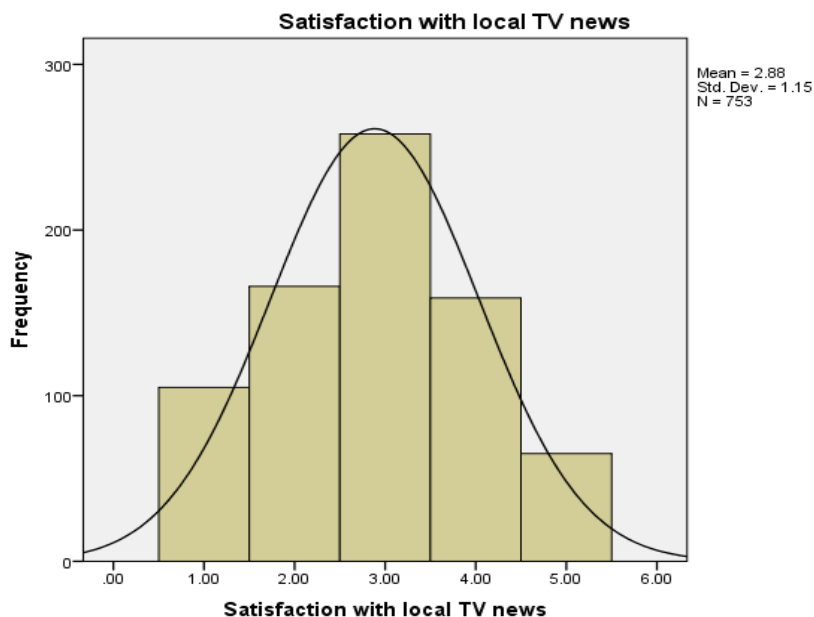


Figure 3.11: Spread of Scores on Satisfaction with Local Television News

As seen in Table 3.9, among 753 responses, the mean score was 2.88 on the scale ranging from 1 to 5 with a standard deviation of 1.15. The result shows an average level of satisfaction with local television displaying a positive skew of .02. Scores seem to be evenly balanced around the mean (See Figure 3.11).

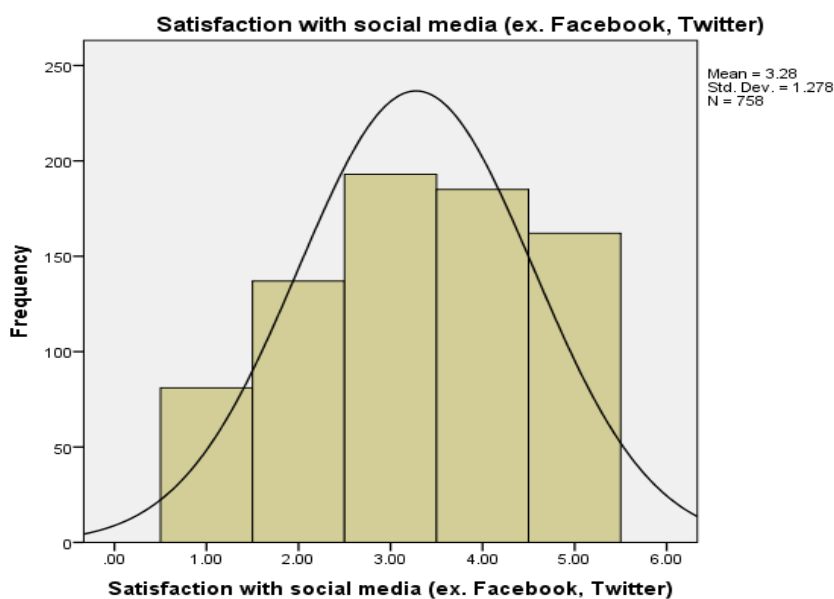


Figure 3.12: Spread of Scores on Satisfaction with Social Media

As seen in Table 3.9, among 758 responses, the mean score was 3.28 on the scale ranging from 1 to 5 with a standard deviation of 1.28. The result shows a moderately high level of satisfaction with social media displaying a negative skew of $-.22$, which further indicates that many scores gather at the upper end of the curve (See Figure 3.12).

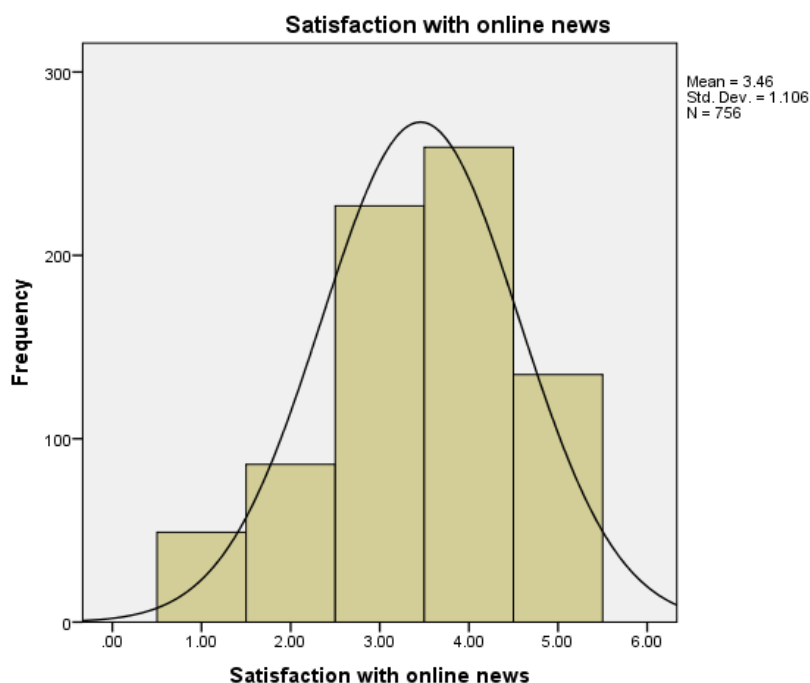


Figure 3.13: Spread of Scores on Satisfaction with Online News

As seen in Table 3.9, among 756 responses, the mean score was 3.45 on the scale ranging from 1 to 5 with a standard deviation of 1.11. The result shows a higher level of satisfaction with online media displaying a negative skew of $-.47$, which further indicates that many scores gather at the upper end of the curve (See Figure 3.13).

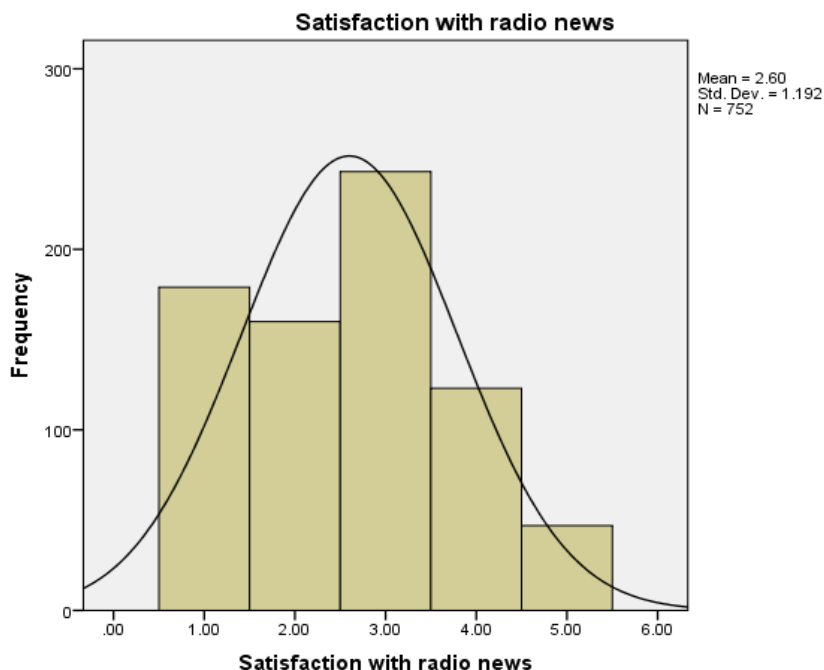


Figure 3.14: Spread of Scores on Satisfaction with Radio News

As seen in Table 3.9, among 752 responses, the mean score was 2.6 on the scale ranging from 1 to 5 with a standard deviation of 1.19. The result shows an average level of satisfaction with radio news displaying a positive skew of .19, which further indicates that many scores gather at the lower end of the curve (See Figure 3.14).

RQ2: What are the Perceptions of News Media Among College Students?. As mentioned in Chapter 2, perceptions of news media among college students has been measured by an index. This scale is made up of 5 questions: Role of news media in reporting the present economic crisis has been helpful to me; News media make matters/issues about our country/local community worse off; News media in general, are biased in their reporting; I hold a favorable view of news media; Generally speaking, mass media help our country/local community solve important problems.

The distribution of scores on the perception of news media scale is exhibited in Table 3.10, including the mean score along with the standard deviation and range of scale.

Table 3.10: Summary of Scores on Perception of News Media Scale

Scale	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range Minimum	Range Maximum
Perception of News Media	753	13.5	3.18	5	25

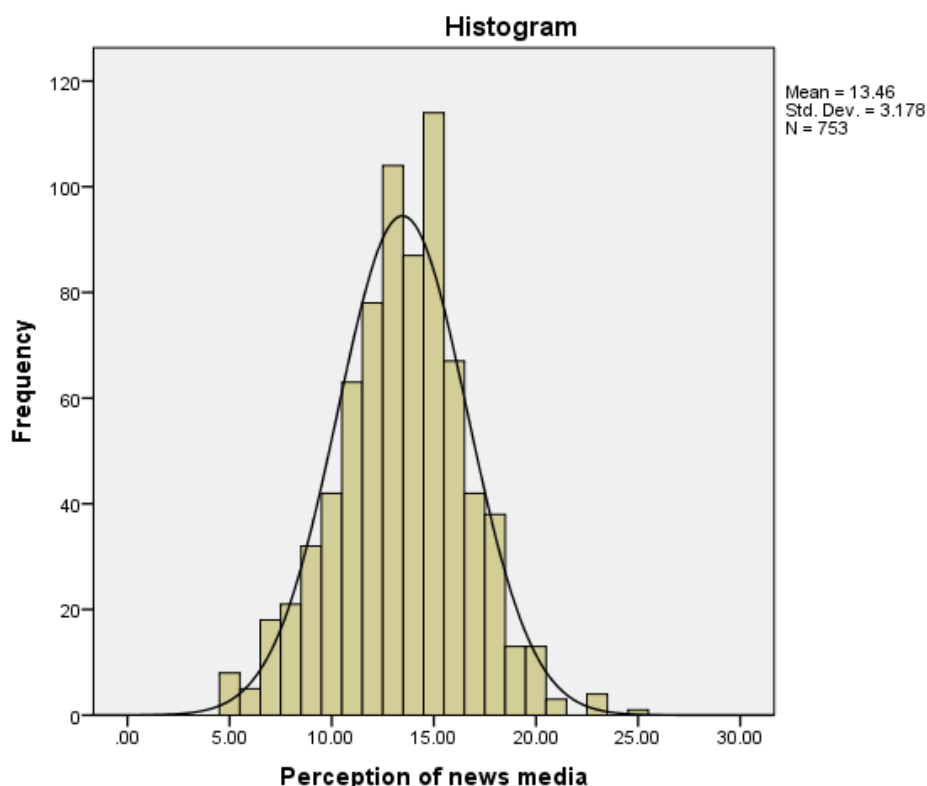


Figure 3.15: Spread of Scores on Perception of News Media Scale

Higher scores on this scale represent positive perception of news media. As seen in Figure 3.15, among the 753 responses, the mean score was 13.46 on the scale ranging from 5 to 25 with a standard deviation of 3.18. The results show an average level of perception of news media. Figure 3.15 shows a slight negative skew of -0.08 .

RQ3: Among College Students, What is the Level of Alienation from the Government?. As mentioned in Chapter 2, alienation from government among college students has been measured by an index. This scale is made up of 5 questions: Representatives & Senators in the US Congress are out of touch with ordinary Americans; Representatives &

Senators in the US Congress only care about getting elected; Representatives & Senators in the US Congress do not care about opinions of people like me; I have a favorable view of US House and Senate politicians; People like me have very little input in what goes on in US Congress.

The distribution of scores on alienation from government scale is exhibited in Table 3.11, including the mean score along with the standard deviation and range of scale.

Table 3.11: Summary of Scores on Alienation from Government Scale

Scale	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range Minimum	Range Maximum
Alienation from Government	747	17.43	3.6	5	25

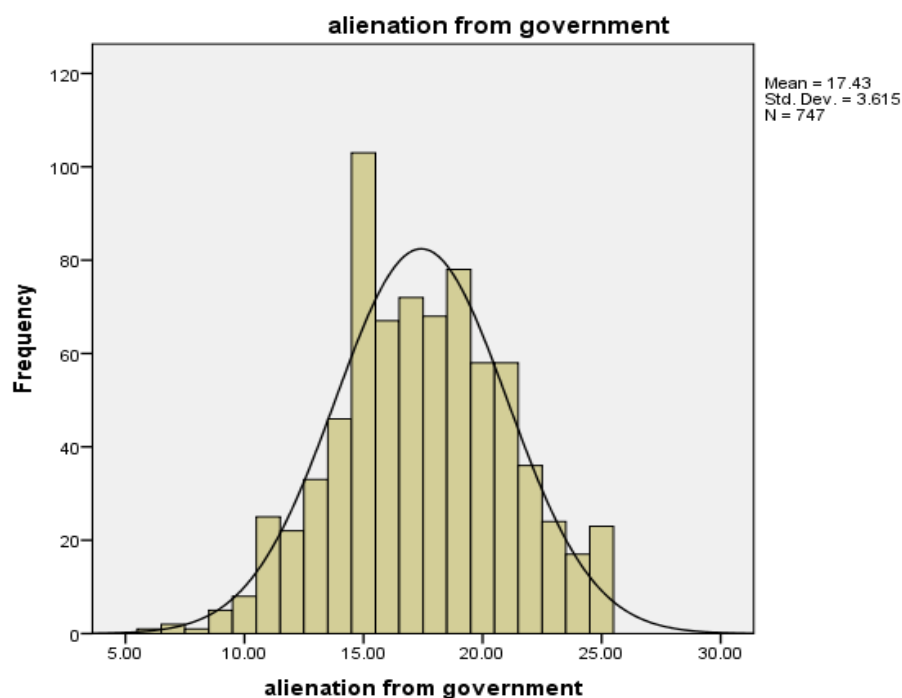


Figure 3.16: Spread of Scores on Alienation from Government Scale

Higher scores on this scale represent higher levels of alienation from government. As seen in Figure 3.16, among the 747 responses, the mean score was 17.43 on the scale ranging from 6 to 25 with a standard deviation of 3.6. The results show slightly above average level of

alienation from government. Figure 3.16 shows a slight negative skew of $-.03$ suggesting slightly more scores on the upper end of the scale.

RQ4: Among College Students, What is the Level of Alienation from Business/Financial Corporations? As mentioned in Chapter 2, alienation from business/financial corporations among college students has been measured by an index. This scale is made up of 5 questions: business/financial companies only care about their profits; too much power is concentrated in the hands of a few big business/financial corporations; big business/financial companies make too much profit at the expense of ordinary Americans; Wall Street financial firms do not care about ordinary Americans.

The distribution of scores on alienation from business/financial corporations scale is exhibited in Table 3.12, including the mean score along with the standard deviation and range of scale.

Scale	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range Minimum	Range Maximum
Alienation from Business/Financial Corporations	750	18.40	3.62	5	25

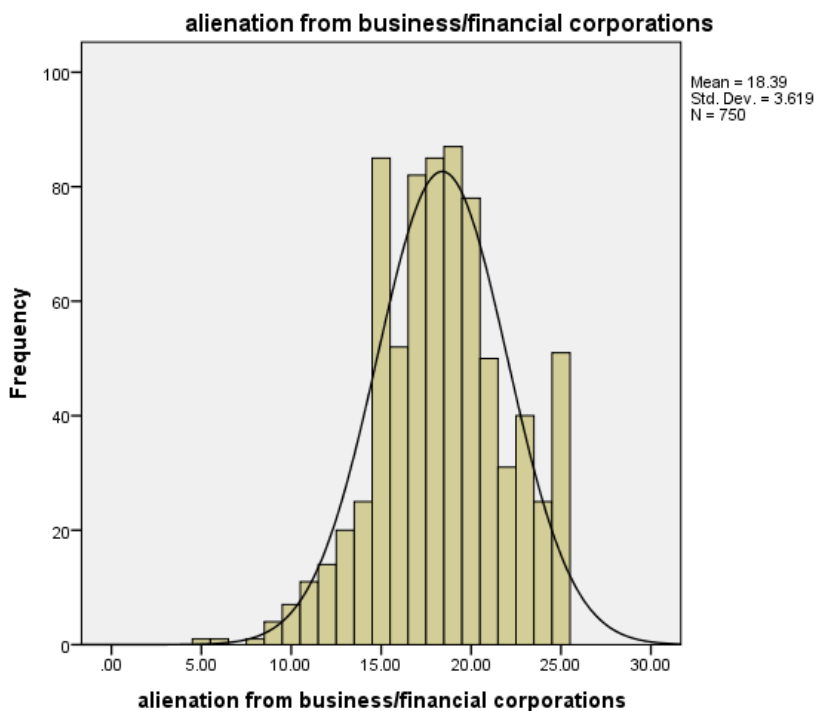


Figure 3.17: Spread of Scores on Alienation from Business/Financial Corporations Scale

Higher scores on this scale represent higher levels of alienation from financial/business corporations. As seen in Figure 3.17, among the 750 responses, the mean score was 18.4 on the scale ranging from 5 to 25 with a standard deviation of 3.62. The results show above average level of alienation from business/financial corporations. Figure 3.17 shows a negative skew of -.14 suggesting slightly more scores on the upper end of the scale.

RQ 5: Do Higher Levels of Satisfaction with News Media Performance Predict Lower or Higher Levels of Alienation from Government?. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between satisfaction with news media (newspaper, national television news, local television news, online news, and social media) and alienation from government.² Alienation from government was the dependent variable to test the prediction of

² The significant relationships remained unchanged when regressions for RQ5, RQ6, RQ7 and RQ8 were run while keeping “sex” and “level of study” as control variables.

satisfaction with newspaper, national television news, local television news, online news, and social media. The model is significant [$F_{(5, 722)} = 5.21, p < .001$] (See Table 3.13) showing that the relationship is significant. Satisfaction with newspaper, national television news, local television news, online news, and social media explain 3.5% ($R^2 = 0.035$) of the observed variability in the dependent variable of alienation from government (See Table 3.14). The predicted value for alienation from government decreases by .38 units for 1 unit increase in satisfaction from national television news ($b = -.377, p < .01$) (See Table 3.15) This indicates that higher level of satisfaction from national television news predicts lower levels of alienation from government. Satisfaction with newspaper, local television news, online news, and social media do not predict significant levels of change in alienation from government.

Table 3.13: ANOVA Regression of Satisfaction with Newspaper, National Television News, Local Television News, Online News, and Social Media News Predicting Alienation from Government

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	333.03	5	66.61	5.21	.001
	Residual	9234.03	722	12.79		
	Total	9567.06	727			

^A dependent Variable: Alienation from Government

^B predictors: (Constant), Satisfaction with Online News, Satisfaction with Newspaper, Satisfaction with Local TV News, Satisfaction with Social Media (Ex. Facebook, Twitter), Satisfaction with National TV News

Table 3.14: Model Summary of Satisfaction with Newspaper, National Television News, Local Television News, Online News, and Social Media News Predicting Alienation from Government

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.187 ^a	.035	.028	3.5762

^a Predictors: (Constant), Satisfaction with Newspaper, National Television News, Local Television News, Online News, and Social Media

Table 3.15: Coefficients of Satisfaction with Newspaper, National Television News, Local Television News, Online News, and Social Media Predicting Alienation from Government

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	19.774	.566		34.946	.000
	Satisfaction with Daily Newspaper	-.191	.121	-.067	-1.585	.113
	Satisfaction with National TV News	-.377	.142	-.124	-2.661	.008
	Satisfaction with Local TV News	-.062	.142	-.020	-.436	.663
	Satisfaction with Social Media (Ex. Facebook, Twitter)	-.206	.127	-.072	-1.617	.106
	Satisfaction with Online News	.041	.143	.013	.287	.774

^a Dependent Variable: Alienation from Government

RQ6: Do Higher Levels of Satisfaction with News Media (i.e. Daily Newspaper, National Network TV News, and Local Network TV News) Performance Predict Lower or Higher Levels of Alienation from Business/Financial Corporations?. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between satisfaction with news media (newspaper, national television news, local television news, online news, and social media) and alienation from business/financial corporations. Alienation from business/financial corporations was the dependent variable to test the prediction of satisfaction with newspaper, national television news, local television news, online news, and social media. The model is significant [$F(5, 724) = 4.0, p < .001$] (See Table 3.16) showing that the relationship is significant. Satisfaction with newspaper, national television news, local television news, online news, and social media explain 2.7% ($R^2 = 0.027$) of the observed variability in the dependent variable of alienation from business/financial corporations (See Table 3.17). The predicted value for alienation from

business/financial corporations decreases by .35 units for 1 unit increase in satisfaction from national television news ($b = -.35, p < .05$) (See Table 3.18) This indicates that higher level of satisfaction from national television news predicts lower levels of alienation from business/financial corporations. Satisfaction with newspaper, local television news, online news, and social media do not predict significant levels of change in alienation from business/financial corporations.

Table 3.16: ANOVA Regression of Satisfaction with Newspaper, National Television News, Local Television News, Online News, and Social Media Predicting Alienation from Business/Financial Corporations

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	254.156	5	50.831	4.003	.001 ^b
	Residual	9193.241	724	12.698		
	Total	9447.397	729			

^A dependent Variable: Alienation from Business/Financial Corporations

B. Predictors: (Constant), Satisfaction with Online News, Satisfaction with Daily Newspaper, Satisfaction with Local Tv News, Satisfaction with Social Media (Ex. Facebook, Twitter), Satisfaction with National Tv News

Table 3.17: Model Summary of Satisfaction with Newspaper, National Television News, Local Television News, Online News, and Social Media Predicting Alienation from Business/Financial Corporations

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.164 ^a	.027	.020	3.5634

^a Predictors: (Constant), Satisfaction with Newspaper, National Television News, Local Television News, Online News, and Social Media

Table 3.18: Coefficients of Satisfaction with Newspaper, National Television News, Local Television News, Online News, and Social Media Predicting Alienation from Business/Financial Corporations

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	19.991	.562		35.568	.000
	Satisfaction with Daily Newspaper	.107	.120	.038	.893	.372
	Satisfaction with National TV News	-.345	.141	-.114	-2.449	.015
	Satisfaction with Local TV News	-.181	.141	-.058	-1.283	.200
	Satisfaction with Social Media (Ex. Facebook, Twitter)	-.178	.126	-.063	-1.414	.158
	Satisfaction with Online News	.073	.143	.023	.513	.608

^a Dependent Variable: Alienation from Business/Financial Corporations

RQ7: Do Positive Perceptions of Television News Media Performance Predict Lower or Higher Levels of Alienation from Government?. Simple linear regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between perception of television news media performance and alienation from government. Alienation from government was the dependent variable to test the prediction of perception of television news media performance. The model is significant [$F_{(5, 738)} = 72.76, p < .001$] (See Table 3.20) showing that the relationship is significant. Perception of television news media performance explains 9% ($R^2 = 0.09$) of the observed variability in the dependent variable of alienation from government (See Table 3.19). The predicted value for alienation from government decreases by .34 units for 1 unit increase in perception of television news media performance ($b = -.34, p < .001$) (See Table 3.19) This indicates that higher perception (i.e. more positive) of television news media performance predicts lower levels of alienation from government.

Table 3.19: Coefficients of Perception of Television News Media Performance Predicting Alienation From Government

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	22.012	.554		39.732	.000	20.924	23.099
	Perception of TV News Media	-.341	.040	-.300	-8.530	.001	-.420	-.263

a. Dependent Variable: Alienation from Government

Table 3.20: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.300 ^a	.090	.089	3.46021

a. Predictors: (Constant), Perception of Television News Media

Table 3.21: ANOVA Regression of Perception of Television News Medium Predicting Alienation from Government

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	871.187	1	871.187	72.762	.001 ^b
	Residual	8836.104	738	11.973		
	Total	9707.291	739			

a. Dependent Variable: Alienation from Government
b. Predictors: (Constant), Perception of Television News Media

RQ8: Do Positive Perceptions of Television News Media Performance Predict Lower or Higher Levels of Alienation from Business/Financial Corporations?. Simple linear regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between perception of television news media performance and alienation from business/financial corporations. Alienation from business/financial corporations was the dependent variable to test the prediction of perception of television news media performance. The model is significant [$F_{(5, 742)} = 58.38, p < .001$] (See Table 3.23) showing that the relationship is significant. Perception of television news media

performance explains 7.3% ($R^2=0.073$) of the observed variability in the dependent variable of alienation from business/financial corporations (See Table 3.22). The predicted value for alienation from business/financial corporations decreases by .31 units for 1 unit increase in perception of television news media performance ($b= -.31, p<.001$) (See Table 3.21) This indicates that higher perception (i.e. positive) of television news media performance predicts lower levels of alienation from business/financial corporations.

Table 3.22: Coefficients of Perception of Television News Media Performance Predicting Alienation from Business/Financial Corporations

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	22.523	.557		40.408	.000	21.429	23.618
Perception of TV News Media	-.308	.040	-.270	-7.641	.001	-.387	-.229

a. Dependent Variable: alienation from business/financial corporations

Table 3.23: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.270 ^a	.073	.072	3.48286

a. Predictors: (Constant), Perception of Television News Media

Table 3.24: ANOVA Regression of Perception of Television News Medium Predicting Alienation from Business/Financial Corporations

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	708.196	1	708.196	58.382	.001 ^b
	Residual	9000.674	742	12.130		
	Total	9708.870	743			

a. Dependent Variable: Alienation from Business/Financial Corporations

b. Predictors: (Constant), Perception of Television News Media

CHAPTER IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter begins with by reviewing the objectives of the thesis as well as the summary of the key findings. These sections will be followed by a discussion of the findings and their implications, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.

Objectives of Study and Summary of Main Findings

The objective of this research is to understand peoples' satisfaction with and perceptions of news media performance and its relationship with alienation from government and big business corporations. This study will investigate peoples' perceptions of and satisfaction with news media, and then their level of alienation from the government and business/financial corporations. It will then analyze if perception and satisfaction levels towards news media predict levels of alienation from government and alienation from big corporations.

RQ1: What is the level of satisfaction with news media among college students?

Responses to satisfaction with different news media shows that online news media had the highest mean (N=3.45, S= 1.11) with a negative skewness (S=-0.47), indicating the most positive or higher-end answers among all the news media. Social media, national television news media followed next and were ranked 2 and 3 respectively in terms of satisfaction scores, while responses to newspaper, local TV news and radio news received average scores on the scale. As seen in Chapter 3, responses to exposure to different news sources show that the college students may be shifting towards internet-based platforms of news. Satisfaction levels show that online news and social media as the two avenues with highest satisfaction scores though national television news also scored the third highest on the scale. The first research question clearly shows that online platforms of news are now the most trending and widely followed among the

youth. It also shows that there is no general deep dissatisfaction towards any news media, which some may assume considering the contested political climate at the present.

RQ2: What are the perceptions of news media among college students?

The mean score on perceptions of news media was 13.5 (S= 3.18) on the scale that ranged from 5 to 25. The results show an average level of perception of news media. The skewness is very low (skew = -.08) indicating an almost-normal distribution. The distribution of scores shows that the respondents mostly do not have a positive or negative perception of news media necessarily. A large portion of the responses are in the “neutral” zone of the scale. Just like satisfaction towards news media scales, there is also no indication of distrust or poor perception towards news media in general.

RQ3: Among college students, what is the level of alienation from the government?

Higher scores on the alienation scale represent higher levels of alienation from government. The mean score for alienation from government was 17.43 on the scale that ranged from 5 to 25 with a standard deviation of 3.6. Alienation scores show that there is a slightly above-average level of alienation as seen by the mean score of 17.43. It may be argued that there is some level of alienation from government that exists among the respondents. This alienation does not necessarily stem from the present government as around half of the data were collected in 2016 during the previous government, and the other half was collected in 2017, the beginning of this government’s term. The alienation found in the data does align with other forms of survey data which shows dissatisfaction among the general public from the government and is discussed further in this chapter.

RQ4: Among college students, what is the level of alienation from business/financial corporations?

Higher scores on this scale represent higher levels of alienation from financial/business corporations. The mean score for alienation from financial/business corporations was 18.4 on the scale that ranged from 5 to 25 with a standard deviation of 3.62. The results show above average level of alienation from business/financial corporations. The data show that there is an evident sense of alienation by a larger number of respondents. This result may not be surprising since economic matters are always on the forefront of recent American issues such as unemployment, international trade, recession etc., which have a direct connection with perceptions of business and financial corporations. These large corporations have been the prime stakeholders and decision makers in key issues that impact jobs, trade and the economy as a whole. A deeper discussion will follow later in the chapter.

RQ5: Do higher levels of satisfaction with news media performance (i.e. daily paper newspaper, national network TV news, and local network TV news) predict lower or higher levels of alienation from government?

Multiple linear regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between satisfaction with news media (newspaper, national television news, local television news, online news, and social media) and alienation from government. The model is significant [$F_{(5, 722)} = 5.21, p < .001$] (See Table 3.12) showing that the relationship is significant. However, satisfaction with newspaper, national television news, local television news, online news, and social media explain only 3.5% ($R^2 = 0.035$) of the observed variability in the dependent variable of alienation from government. In the social sciences there are multiple variables that impact a certain change

and while it shows that satisfaction does impact alienation, there are presumably plenty of other variables which are impacting this change even more.

The predicted value for alienation from government decreases with an increase in satisfaction from national television news ($b = -.377, p < .01$) (See Table 3.14) This indicates that higher level of satisfaction from national television news predicts lower levels of alienation from government. Satisfaction with newspaper, local television news, online news, and social media did not predict significant levels of change in alienation from government. It is interesting to see that only national television news was a significant predictor among all the news media. This may indicate that television is still a player as the major purveyor of news in spite of the popularity of online media among college students.

RQ6: Do higher levels of satisfaction with news media (i.e. daily paper newspaper, national network TV news, and local network TV news) performance predict lower or higher levels of alienation from business/financial corporations?

Multiple linear regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between satisfaction with news media (newspaper, national television news, local television news, online news, and social media) and alienation from business/financial corporations. The model is significant [$F(5, 724) = 4.0, p < .001$] (See Table 3.15) showing that the relationship is significant. However, satisfaction with newspaper, national television news, local television news, online news, and social media explain only 2.7% ($R^2 = 0.027$) of the observed variability in the dependent variable of alienation from business/financial corporations. In the social sciences there are multiple variables that impact a certain change and while it shows that satisfaction does

impact alienation, there are presumably plenty of other variables which are impacting this change even more.

The predicted value for alienation from business/financial corporations decreases with an increase in satisfaction from national television news ($b = -.35, p < .05$) (See Table 3.17) This indicates that higher level of satisfaction from national television news predicts lower levels of alienation from business/financial corporations. Satisfaction with newspaper, local television news, online news, and social media did not predict significant levels of change in alienation from business/financial corporations. Again, we see that only national television news was a significant predictor among all the news media. This reiterates the earlier finding in the case of alienation from government that television is still a player as the major purveyor of news inspite of the popularity of online media among college students.

RQ7: Do positive perceptions of television news media performance predict lower or higher levels of alienation from government?

Simple linear regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between perception of television news media performance and alienation from government. The model is significant [$F(5, 738) = 72.76, p < .001$] (See Table 3.20) showing that the relationship is significant. Perception of television news media performance explains 9% ($R^2 = 0.09$) of the observed variability in the dependent variable of alienation from government (See Table 3.19). The predicted value for alienation from government decreases by .34 units for 1 unit increase in perception of television news media performance ($b = -.34, p < .001$) (See Table 3.18) This indicates that higher perception (i.e. more positive) of television news media performance predicts lower levels of alienation from government.

RQ8: Do positive perceptions of television news media performance predict lower or higher levels of alienation from business/financial corporations?

Simple linear regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between perception of television news media performance and alienation from business/financial corporations. The model is significant [$F_{(5, 742)} = 58.38, p < .001$] (See Table 3.23) showing that the relationship is significant. Perception of television news media performance explains 7.3% ($R^2 = 0.073$) of the observed variability in the dependent variable of alienation from business/financial corporations (See Table 3.22). The predicted value for alienation from business/financial corporations decreases by .31 units for 1 unit increase in perception of television news media performance ($b = -.31, p < .001$) (See Table 3.21) This indicates that higher perception (i.e. positive) of television news media performance predicts lower levels of alienation from business/financial corporations.

Discussion and Conclusion

As observed in the results section, respondents elicited their satisfaction with different kinds of news media and their perceptions of it. They also indicated their alienation from government and business corporations. These data were analyzed with multiple linear regression models to see if satisfaction with and perceptions of news media predicted any level of alienation.

Looking at the level of satisfaction from different news media, it can be easily seen that people have responded with online media being their most satisfactory mode of news. Social media and national TV news also received above average scores. Radio news got average scores and the lowest among all the news media. Print newspaper also got weaker scores than most

other sources and almost the same as radio news. The first assumption for explaining the lower satisfaction rates for newspaper and radio news would be the declining popularity of these news sources as a large number of people are using their screens or television to get news. If we go back to the Pew Research article that showed which news media were popular in getting news about the 2016 U.S. Presidential election, we see that after cable news (24%) it was social media (14%), local TV (14%) and news website/app (13%) that were popular sources, but radio news (11%) was also not far behind (Gottfried, Barthel, Shearer & Mitchell, 2016a). It means that the popularity of radio is diminishing mostly among the youth since the larger percentage of respondents in this study were 18 to 23 years of age. Newspaper popularity is also declining as local (3%) and national (2%) newspaper had very low usage and showed low exposure in the Pew Research study as well. Finally, we can definitely agree with the data that internet-based news media are gathering increasing acceptance especially among the youth.

Perceptions of television news media were observed in the second research question. It can be seen from the data that the mean was below-average ($M=13.46$) but there was a negative 0.081 skewness which indicates that there were more responses towards the higher half of the mean compared to the lower half. It is safe to say that peoples' perception of television news media is about slightly below average on the scale. Long-term polls around the United States indicate somewhat similar perceptions. Trust in news media has been declining constantly in the long run with some increase in 2017 and 2018 (Gallup, 2019a). One survey poll showed that 92% of the Republicans and Republican-leaning independents, 79% of the independents and 53% of the Democrats believe that news outlets knowingly report false or misleading stories a lot of times or sometimes (Fischer, 2018). Bias, inaccuracy and misinformation are also thought to be popular in news media by many as a survey among 1440 individuals found that they believe

62% of the news they read in newspapers, see on television or hear on the radio is biased, while it is 80% for news on social media (Jones, 2018). They also estimated that 44% of what they see in news is inaccurate (64% for social media) and 39% of it is misinformation (65% for social media).

Tsfati & Cohen (2012) have cited various research which indicate that this trust or mistrust in media generally comes from two sides. One is the quality of the text of the news, which includes sourcing and quoting practices, as well as traits of the individual presenting the story (i.e.: race and gender). Another reason for trust or mistrust is the viewers themselves, whose interpersonal and political trust influence their trust in the media. Older studies have shown that conservatives tend to have more mistrust towards the news media whereas liberals tend to be more trusting of media (Jones, 2004). Gunther (1988) found that individuals with more extreme attitudes are more likely to mistrust than moderates. In recent polls, people with most mistrust of news and those with more extreme political views tend to be the most biased readers. (Rothwell, 2018). While some scholars have seen this mistrust of news as healthy skepticism (Gaziano, 1988), more recent studies have seen it as an issue for democracy (Jones, 2004). In this study, we did not ask the respondents to state their political leaning, which could have given a better idea about their personal views and if that was influencing their perceptions.

Alienation towards government showed above-average scores by respondents. As explained in the results section, the mean and skewness of the score distributions indicate an above-average alienation from the government. Concerns about political alienation is not just American, but political participation as a whole is being heavily studied in order to progress the contemporary development of western democracies (van Deth, 2014). Studies have shown that alienation and distrust toward social and political institutions have been growing among the

youth of European Union (EU) as well among the general audiences in European countries (Henn, Weinstein & Forrest, 2005; Mierina, 2014). In the case of European countries, Dahl et al. (2018) showed that political apathy is the factor contributing to political passivity rather than political alienation; whereas alienation is more closely related to unconventional political participation. Regardless of the reasons, political passivity was reflected in the United States both in the 2014 midterm elections and 2016 presidential elections where an estimated 143 million and 92 million voters respectively did not participate (2014 November General Election Turnout Rates, 2018; 2016 November General Election Turnout Rates, 2018). The respondents' feeling of alienation can be backed by other polls and recent political climate. According to Gallup, the U.S. Presidential job approval rating was only 37% in the beginning of the 2019 (Gallup, 2019b). From January 2017 until January 2019, the average term approval has been 39%. Congress job approval rate was also only 20% in January 2019 (Gallup, 2019c). Even looking at partisan groups, approval rate for Congress among Republicans was only 35%, while for Democrats and Independents it was 9% and 21% respectively according to November 2018 data (Reinhart, 2018). Despite various data showing alienation from the current government bodies, it can be argued that the data is not just based on peoples' perception of the present government but of the American government as a whole. As 400 responses were taken before the 2016 election, it can be reasoned that this alienation is not just a sudden spike due to the present government. While it does align with the current political climate, this data can be considered more stable in the long run considering that it has been collected during two different government administrations.

Alienation from big corporations is very clear judging from the data. The high mean, median and level of skewness points to an above average score of alienation. Only 11.2% of the

responses range from scores of 5 to 14 and the rest of the responses are 15 and above on a scale that goes from 5 to 25. The mean is 18.39. This feeling or perception of alienation from business and financial corporations is also relatable with the present scenario as concerns about the economy and corporate behavior is one of the major issues in the United States. Economic debates have always taken front stage in politics especially after the 2008 recession. A few big corporations have always been the center of attention as well. Worldwide, there is a growing concern about income and wealth inequality as a recent Oxfam study showed that 8 men control the same amount of wealth as the bottom 3.6 billion people in the world, 6 of which are American even though their companies may be transnational (Hardoon, 2017). In the United States, even before the data for this study was collected, the top 10 % had more than nine times as much income as the bottom 90 percent according to 2015 data (Inequality.org, 2015). A prime issue and promise by the current United States government has been to focus on the economy and create jobs. Even though the American economy created around 4.9 million jobs during the term of the present government according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2019), critics have pointed out that the big corporations get large favor from the government regarding policies and tax cuts. For 2017, the combined pay-package for the top 10 corporate executives in the United States rose by 60% from the year before (Ritcey, Zhao & Melin, 2018). For 2018, the e-commerce website Amazon, which is owned by one of the 8 wealthiest people as mentioned before, has paid zero federal taxes in 2018 (Ingraham, 2019). Many opposition leaders have severely criticized the current administration, pointing out several ways that various policies that were branded to put taxes on the rich and help the poor has rather recoiled to hurt the poorest and benefit the corporations instead (Sanders, 2019).

Many polls and studies as mentioned before, have shown that confidence in the press is declining. But is declining confidence or any changes of perception towards news media predicting any kind of positive or negative feelings towards any large institutions? This study shows that there is no evidence of news media satisfaction or perception predicting increasing alienation towards government or big corporations. Rather, the data show evidence that increasing satisfaction with national television news predicts lower levels of alienation from the government. Looking at the regression between different news media satisfaction and alienation from government and from big business in two different research questions, the results show that satisfaction towards news media do not distance the public from any important institutions; as in, they do not predict alienation from government or big corporations. This finding resonates with another similar study conducted by Melkote (2011), which showed that differential levels of news media satisfaction performance significantly discriminated between levels of alienation from government and business corporations. Data showed that respondents with high satisfaction levels were least alienated and respondents with low levels of satisfaction were most alienated from government and business corporations” (Melkote, 2011). The findings of this study also align with a study done Pinkleton & Austin (2001). This study showed that importance of newspapers was negatively associated with cynicism and no other news source showed any relationship. It also found newspapers and radio talk shows to be positively associated with efficacy. Lee (2005) also found that most media do not contribute to the political disengagement of the public.

While that data does show that increase in satisfaction of news media lowers levels of alienation, it is not high. All the news media combined show that they explain 3.5% of the variance for decreasing alienation from government and 2.7% for decreasing alienation from

business/financial corporations. This means that there are other larger factors that are contributing and playing a more serious role in shaping this alienation from large institutions. While news media satisfaction is not increasing alienation among public, it is not the key component in decreasing alienation as well. Regardless, this finding does align with a large amount of research that has been done in this field. The literature in agenda setting and framing have suggested that the media often support the prevailing governments on important issues and therefore may help in reducing the alienation. Entman (1993) posited that framing plays an important role in political communication. It brings out a specific aspect of reality by blocking other elements, which helps the audience see the 'frame' and have a different reaction. For example, Bennett (1994) argued that the news media index their coverage of an issue, event, object, etc. to the viewpoints of government and other elites.

When there was a strong bipartisan support for President Bush in early 2003 to go to war in Iraq, there was a unified voice and set of opinions emanating from the political establishment in Washington DC about Saddam Hussein, WMDs, the UN and countries such as France, Germany and Russia. In such a scenario, as the index model would predict, the media frames reflecting the viewpoint of the president and other political elites tended to be overwhelmingly one-sided, thus sharply curtailing alternate frames about Iraq and the war. (Melkote, 2009).

Lehmann (2005) suggested an 'executive manufacturing consent' model where the President actively framed issues, events and actors in a self-serving manner, when the United States attacked the small country of Grenada in the early 1980s and again when US intervened in Panama (1989) and Libya (1986). Zaller and Chiu (1996), based on a longitudinal study of the

coverage of 35 US foreign policy crises since 1945, termed the media as ‘little helpers’ of the government. In another influential study that used a content analysis to examine the reporting of the *New York Times* prior to the start of the Iraq War in 2003, Melkote (2009) showed that the views of the president and US political elites were given more prominence and opposing and critical views were not vigorously sought. “In fact, the excessive coverage given to the administration’s view of Saddam Hussein, Iraq and the WMDs seems to support the cultivation (Gerbner et al., 1994) of the government’s point of view. Also, the relative lack of criticism of the administration seems to suggest a spiral of silence (Luther et al., 2005; Noelle-Neumann, 1991) of alternate views” (Melkote 2009, p. 557). This type of ‘friendly’ reporting may have contributed to the lack of alienation from the government during the early years of the US-Iraq War.

There does exist a certain political alienation among American citizens considering the low number of voter participation and other political engagement compared to other developed countries. It is also clear why media have been criticized for creating alienation from large institutions. Plenty of research has pointed that way and this perception has also been recently externalized by the President of the United States who according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, has made 1339 Tweets during his first two years in office on the social media website Twitter about the media being “critical, insinuating, condemning, or threatening” (Sugars, 2019). In this contested political climate, this research has concluded that the vilification that the news media has received of spreading negativity towards the government and other institutions is not justified, as empirical findings do not find any relationship between satisfaction with and perceptions of news media with alienation from government and big corporations. Rather, it has found some support for the opposite, showing a positive relationship of satisfaction

with national TV news and perceptions of television news media predicting lower levels of alienation from both government and business/financial corporations. News media are important tools and actors in informing the citizens and facilitating democracy. Distrust from such an important institution will lead to further disinformation, political alienation and hinder the progress of the country as a whole.

Limitations of the Study

Despite valuable results, there were certain limitations to this study, many of which are often seen in most social scientific research. As this was a master's thesis, there was a constraint of time which the researcher was restricted with. Another limitation was the lack of resources, because of which, the respondents did not receive any incentive to complete the survey and were left up to their own goodwill to complete the survey with the needed diligence and concentration.

Even though the sample size of this study was quite large, the mode of sampling was a non-probability method. Therefore, it could be argued that it is not a representative sample of the students in this university. Adding to that, the questions that were asked focused on characteristics of the media and how the respondents evaluated them. The study did not focus much on the individual's characteristics which would allow them to have different evaluations. As such individual level variables were not examined, therefore how they have evaluated their satisfaction or perception of news media remains unknown.

One of the individual level variables that the respondents were not asked about was their political affiliation. Depending on their political preferences or affiliation, there could have been a bias in their responses. If the data of their political preferences were present, it would have

given new insights and allowed new observations and interpretations. Similarly, data on respondents' race were also not available which could have also given interesting insights.

Lastly, there were two sets of data which were taken before and after the 2016 U.S. Presidential election. Since the election was politically highly significant, an analysis of the two sets could have revealed interesting findings which were not covered in this thesis.

Recommendations for Future Research

As mentioned in the methodology chapter, the data was collected in two separate times in 2016 and 2017, before and after the 2016 U.S. Presidential election. With the same data, it can be analyzed if the answers for satisfaction and perception scales varied before and after the election by separately analyzing the 2016 and 2017 responses. With criticisms of the news media as well as poor relationship between the media and the White House being key issues during and after the election campaign, it would be interesting to see if such tension made an impact in peoples' responses.

Another extension to this study could be to include their political affiliation or preference in the survey, so that it can be analyzed if people with certain political following or ideology tend to have specific views on news media, government and big corporations. That might also help to explain any relationship between peoples' satisfaction and perceptions of news media and their alienation from government and business corporations.

It is advised to use a probability sample since the results may be generalized to large populations. Also, with a broader sample including more diversified demographic and education level would have made the findings of this research more generalized to a larger population.

Finally, there is scope for future studies to understand that if news media do not decrease alienation, then what are the significant factors that are actually contributing towards alienation from government and big institutions? Such studies will further help citizens become aware about the wrongful allegations that have come upon the American news media and help them identify what factors are pushing them away from big institutions.

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APPENDIX A. QUESTIONNAIRE

Research Project Questionnaire on Media Effects

I am doing this survey among BGSU students as part of my class assignment. Your participation is voluntary. Your responses will remain anonymous. All completed questionnaires will be stored securely with the professor of this course. The name and contact number of my professor is printed at the end of the questionnaire. Thanks.

This questionnaire is part of a study that examines media use and its relationships (if any) with perceptions of the media, government, business corporations, and political attitudes.

	1 No Exposure	2 Low (1-2 times)	3 Moderate (3-4 times)	4 Strong (5-7)
In general, my exposure to news (per avg. week) from the following media is: (times)				
1. Daily newspaper (paper print copy).....	()	()	()	()
2. Television	()	()	()	()
3. Online News.....	()	()	()	()
4. Social Media (Ex. Facebook, Twitter, etc.).....	()	()	()	()
5. Radio News	()	()	()	()

Please rate how satisfied you are (on a 1-5 scale) with the reporting of news in each of the media listed below:

	Satisfaction Scale				
	Low 1	2	3	4	High 5
6. Daily Newspaper (paper copy).....	()	()	()	()	()
7. Network (National) TV News (ABC, CBS, NBC).....	()	()	()	()	()
8. Local TV News.....	()	()	()	()	()
9. Social Media (Ex. Facebook, Twitter, etc.).....	()	()	()	()	()
10. Online News.....	()	()	()	()	()
11. Radio News.....	()	()	()	()	()
12. Podcasts.....	()	()	()	()	()

Below, on each of the statements on US television news media, check an option that closely matches your opinion:

	(1) Strongly Disagree	(2) Disagree	(3) Neutral	(4) Agree	(5) Strongly Agree
13. The role of TV news media in reporting the present economic crisis has been helpful to me	()	()	()	()	()
14. In general, TV news media make matters/issues about our country worse	()	()	()	()	()
15. TV news media, in general, are biased in their reporting of government/politics	()	()	()	()	()
16. I hold a favorable view of TV news media	()	()	()	()	()
17. Generally speaking, national TV news media help our country solve important problems	()	()	()	()	()

Continued on page 2

Below, on each of the statements on US government/politicians, check an option that closely matches your opinion:

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Completely	Somewhat	Neutral	Somewhat	Agree
Completely	Disagree	Disagree		Agree	Agree
18. Representatives & Senators in the US Congress are out of touch with ordinary Americans.....()	()	()	()	()	()
19. Representatives & Senators in the US Congress only care about getting elected.....()	()	()	()	()	()
20. Representatives & Senators in the US Congress do not care about opinions of people like me.....()	()	()	()	()	()
21. I have a favorable view of US House and Senate politicians.....()	()	()	()	()	()
22. People like me have very little input in what goes on in US Congress.....()	()	()	()	()	()

Below, on each of the statements on US corporations/financial corporations, check an option that closely matches your opinion:

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Completely	Somewhat	Neutral	Somewhat	Agree
Completely	Disagree	Disagree		Agree	Agree
23. Corporations/financial companies only care about their profits.....()	()	()	()	()	()
24. Too much power is concentrated in the hands of a few big corporations/financial companies.....()	()	()	()	()	()
25. I have a favorable view of corporations/financial companies.....()	()	()	()	()	()
26. Big corporations/financial companies make too much profit at the expense of ordinary Americans.....()	()	()	()	()	()
27. Wall Street financial firms do not care about ordinary Americans.....()	()	()	()	()	()
28. Are you: Female (1) _____ Male (2) _____					
29. Are you: Undergraduate student (1) _____ Graduate student (2) _____					
30. The last two digits of your birth year are: 19____					

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME. IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION OR WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE A COPY OF THE RESULTS AFTER THE STUDY IS COMPLETED, PLEASE CONTACT OUR PROJECT DIRECTOR, DR. S. MELKOTE AT 419-372-9324 <Melkote@bgsu.edu>.