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Determinants of Gen Z's Willingness to Accept News on Social Media: A PLS-SEM Study in Vietnam

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Abstract

This study investigates the factors influencing Generation Z's willingness to accept news on social media in Vietnam. Integrating the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Uses and Gratifications Theory (U&G), and the PERVAL model, the research explores cognitive, social, and contextual determinants affecting news acceptance behavior. A survey of 1,224 respondents aged 15–21 was conducted using stratified random sampling across six socio-economic regions. Data were analyzed through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Results indicate that perceived usefulness, cognitive absorption, news credibility, and news quality significantly influence willingness to accept news. Social factors, including interpersonal influence and motivation for social media use, also play vital roles, alongside contextual understanding, news dependency, media literacy, and algorithm awareness. In contrast, perceived ease of use does not significantly affect news acceptance, suggesting that Generation Z's digital fluency renders usability less relevant. The model explains 68.3% of the variance in news acceptance, offering robust explanatory power. These findings highlight the dynamic interplay between personal cognition and media environment in shaping digital news engagement. The study provides practical implications for media organizations aiming to enhance news credibility and audience trust in the digital age.

Keywords: *News Consumption, Accept News, News Credibility, News Media Literacy, Gen Z*

Introduction

Acceptance is a complex, multidimensional attitude that integrates both affective and rational-cognitive components, such as perceived usefulness. These elements influence the gratification individuals derive from a system and serve as key determinants of their intention to adopt and use it (Adell et al., 2014). In the digital age, the concept of acceptance extends beyond technology adoption to include news consumption behaviors, particularly among youth who increasingly rely on the Internet and social media platforms. Initially, social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and WhatsApp were primarily used for social networking—connecting with friends, family, and colleagues (Olise & Makka, 2013). However, there has been a significant generational shift, with these platforms now serving as critical sources for news consumption and dissemination.

Empirical studies suggest that social media plays a pivotal role in news engagement across different age groups. Ku et al. (2019) and Joëlle Swart (2023) found that individuals of various demographics actively use social media to access and share news. Notably, Sagit Dinnar & Einav (2024) identified that the 18–24 age group constitutes the majority of users who depend on social

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media for news consumption. While these findings highlight the demographic characteristics of social media news consumers, they do not provide sufficient insight into the degree of news acceptance across different or specific age cohorts. Understanding this aspect is crucial, as it determines how individuals engage with and internalize news content.

Several studies have examined the types of social media platforms used as news sources, emphasizing the dominance of Facebook and WhatsApp among youth. For example, Joëlle Swart (2023) explored platform preferences for news consumption, while Devadas Menon (2022) and Matti Vuorre et al. (2023) further reinforced that Facebook and WhatsApp are the most popular news sources for young audiences, particularly in developing regions. This shift in news consumption patterns aligns with broader technological and social changes, where digital natives prioritize real-time access to information.

Despite the convenience of social media as a news source, its role in shaping public perception remains complex. On the one hand, these platforms facilitate rapid information dissemination and democratize access to news; on the other hand, they expose users to fake news and misinformation. Lucas Galan et al. (2019) characterizes youth as a technologically savvy demographic, engaged in fast-paced digital environments and highly dependent on timely news updates. However, their reliance on social media also makes them vulnerable to misinformation, which spreads rapidly due to algorithm-driven content circulation and user-generated sharing. This underscores the need to investigate how young audiences assess the credibility and reliability of news on social media.

Furthermore, research suggests that exposure to news on social media elicits diverse responses, influencing whether individuals accept or reject information. Studies by Robin Blom (2018), and Welbers & Opgenhaffen (2019) indicate that the acceptance or rejection of news is shaped by several factors, including personal biases, media literacy, and trust in news sources. Given this dynamic landscape, an empirical investigation into the level of news acceptance among Generation Z in Vietnam is essential. Understanding their engagement with social media news, their trust in digital sources, and their ability to discern credible information will provide valuable insights into modern news consumption behaviors.

To achieve this, the study integrates multiple theoretical models to provide a comprehensive explanation. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) of Davis et al. (1989) serves as the foundation for understanding the cognitive and individual determinants influencing news adoption. Additionally, Anderson's second-level interaction of the Uses and Gratifications Theory (2024) offers insights into how Gen Z actively engages with news content based on personal motivations and interactive dynamics. The study also incorporates the PERVAL model of Sweeney & Soutar (2001) to assess perceived value, further elucidating the decision-making process behind news acceptance.

By synthesizing these theoretical perspectives, the study systematically examines how and why Gen Z engages with news on social media. It recognizes news acceptance as a dynamic, social, and continuous process shaped by both individual cognition and external influences. Ultimately, this research seeks to answer the central question:

RQ: What influences Generation Z's willingness to accept news on social media in Vietnam?

Literature Review and Hypotheses

Cognitive and Social Media News Acceptance

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), developed by Davis (1989), was designed to predict and assess user acceptance and usage of new technologies. This model has been widely applied in numerous studies due to its strong generalizability, making it one of the most commonly used frameworks for examining media technology acceptance (Al-Qaysi et al., 2020). For instance, TAM has been employed to measure users' beliefs and attitudes toward social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter and to analyze how users' perceptions of these technologies influence their behavior and adoption intentions (Ahmed et al., 2018; Kim & Lee, 2022; Phuong & Vinh, 2017). Additionally, research suggests that many individuals engage with specific technologies to seek personal gratification, which can shape their intention to adopt and use technology (Camilleri, 2020).

Perceived ease of use refers to the degree to which an individual believes that a specific system or technology is easy to use and requires minimal effort. Meanwhile, perceived usefulness pertains to the extent to which users consider a given technology effective in enhancing their performance (Davis et al., 1989). In other words, it determines whether an individual perceives a technology as beneficial for achieving their intended tasks. This study defines perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness in the context of Generation Z, emphasizing that this demographic perceives social media as an effortless tool for news consumption and as a medium that facilitates easy access to news. Furthermore, prior research by Munoz-Leiva et al. (2017) and Nagy (2018) has consistently demonstrated a strong positive relationship between perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness. Specifically, when a technology is perceived as user-friendly, users are more likely to recognize its usefulness. Conversely, according to Yuemin et al. (2023), and Yang & Ha (2021), if a media technology is deemed too complex to operate, individuals are less likely to acknowledge its benefits. Against this background, this study posits:

H1. Perceived ease of use positively influences Gen Z's perception of the usefulness of news on social media.

H2. Perceived ease of use positively influences Gen Z's willingness to accept news on social media.

H3. Perceived usefulness positively influences Gen Z's willingness to accept news on social media.

According to Tourinho & Oliveira (2019), cognition absorptive has been incorporated into the group of cognitive factors influencing Generation Z's willingness to accept news on social media. Research further indicates that cognition absorptive positively affects the perceived usefulness of social media platforms. Users who are deeply engaged in social media experience greater enjoyment and a stronger sense of control, which, in turn, enhances their perception of the platform's usefulness for consuming news. Additionally, cognition absorptive contributes to news acceptance on social media, as individuals who are more immersed in these platforms are more inclined to trust and integrate the news content they encounter. Therefore, the author proposes the following hypothesis:

H4. Cognition absorptive *positively influences Gen Z's perception of the usefulness of news on social media.*

H5. Cognition absorptive *positively influences Gen Z's willingness to accept news on social media.*

Source characteristics and Social Media News Acceptance

The characteristics of news sources play a crucial role in shaping Generation Z's acceptance of news on social media. Two key factors—news credibility and information quality—directly influence how Gen Z engages with and trusts news content.

News credibility refers to the perceived reliability and trustworthiness of a news source (Jang, 2021; Ku et al., 2019). According to Uses and Gratifications Theory (U&G), audiences actively seek credible sources to fulfill their informational and social needs. When a news source is perceived as trustworthy, Generation Z is more likely to accept and share its content, reinforcing credibility as a critical factor in social media news consumption (Kalogeropoulos et al., 2019). Conversely, information quality, which includes accuracy, depth, and clarity, aligns with the quality value dimension of the PERVAL model. Su & Li (2023), Thompson et al. (2020) emphasize that structured, fact-based news content significantly influences news acceptance on social media. High-quality information enhances users' perception of news value, leading to greater engagement. Therefore:

H6. News credibility positively impacts Gen Z's willingness to accept news on social media.

H7. News quality positively impacts Gen Z's willingness to accept news on social media.

Both news credibility and news quality shape users' perceived usefulness of news. Dedeoğlu (2019) found that credible sources enhance trust, making news consumption more meaningful. Similarly, high-quality information—accurate, well-organized, and relevant—increases user satisfaction and engagement (Karlsen & Aalberg, 2023). According to the TAM, when users perceive news as both credible and high-quality, they are more likely to engage with and accept it on social media (Setiawan et al., 2020; Thompson et al., 2020). Hence, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H8. News credibility positively influences Gen Z's perception of the usefulness of news on social media.

H9. News quality positively influences Gen Z's perception of the usefulness of news on social media.

Social Interaction and Social Media News Acceptance

Social interaction plays a crucial role in shaping Generation Z's news consumption behavior on social media. Two key factors—interpersonal influence and motivation for social media use—affect how individuals engage with news content. These factors align with the Uses and Gratifications Theory, which suggests that people actively seek media content that satisfies their social and informational needs. News consumption on social media is not just a passive act; it is a socially driven process where users actively seek content that aligns with their interests and peer group discussions (Vergara et al., 2021).

Interpersonal influence refers to how social networks, peers, and opinion leaders affect individuals' engagement with news. Bergström & Belfrage (2018) highlight that social endorsement, such as likes, shares, and comments, significantly influences the perceived credibility and importance of news content. Additionally, Chen (2020) found that users are more likely to engage with news when it is recommended by someone in their network, reinforcing

social trust. These findings align with UGT, as social media provides a space for users to fulfill their need for social validation and information-sharing.

Motivations for using social media—including entertainment, social connection, and information-seeking—directly influence news consumption patterns (Ku et al., 2019). According to Park & Kaye (2020), users who frequently use social media for social interaction are more likely to encounter and engage with news content, even if incidentally. Oeldorf-Hirsch (2018) further argues that both active and passive exposure to news contribute to knowledge acquisition, reinforcing the idea that social platforms shape news consumption behaviors. Against this background, this study posits:

H10. Interpersonal influence positively affects Gen Z's willingness to accept news on social media.

H11. Motivation to use social media positively affects Gen Z's willingness to accept news on social media.

Understanding Context of News Consumption and Social Media News Acceptance

Environmental factors play a crucial role in shaping Generation Z's acceptance of news on social media. According to Hinton (2015), context is fundamental to digital interaction and meaning-making, highlighting the complexity of how information environments shape user engagement. One of the most relevant approaches to understanding environmental influence is analyzing the context of news consumption—the external conditions influencing how individuals encounter and engage with news. Zhang & Skoric (2018) found that social media use and exposure to digital discussions shape attitudes toward news acceptance. The study by Pentina & Tarafdar (2014) emphasizes that contemporary news environments encourage either deep engagement or superficial scanning, which affects the acceptance of news. As Hinton (2015) suggests, environments are not passive but actively construct user experiences. When platforms alter their content curation mechanisms (e.g., trending topics, algorithmic personalization), they reshape the news consumption landscape, affecting Gen Z's trust and engagement levels. Therefore, the author proposes the following hypothesis:

H12. Understanding the context of news consumption has a positive impact on Gen Z's willingness to accept news on social media.

Personal Identity and News Acceptance on Social Media

The relationship between personal identity and news acceptance on social media among Generation Z is influenced by various cognitive and behavioral factors. Based on the results of previous studies, this study focuses on three key aspects—Dependence on News, News Literacy, and Awareness of Algorithms—to explore how personal identity shapes news acceptance .

Generation Z, as digital natives, increasingly relies on online platforms for information (Westlund, 2015). News consumption habits may reflect individuals dependence on news media for understanding current events and making sense of the world around them. The higher the dependence, the more likely they are to trust and engage with news content on social media. This aligns with Uses and Gratifications Theory, where individuals seek news to fulfill informational needs. Studies indicate that younger individuals with higher news dependency demonstrate greater engagement with news content across social platforms (Fisher et al., 2021; Francis, 2024). Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H13. Dependence on news has a positive impact on Gen Z's willingness to accept news on social media.

Conversely, according to Asraful et al. (2018), individuals with higher news literacy possess stronger critical thinking skills and are more skeptical about the credibility of online information. Studies suggest that news-literate individuals are less likely to accept unverified or algorithm-driven content, as they are aware of biases and misinformation risks. This aligns with media literacy research, which highlights that informed audiences critically assess sources rather than passively consuming news (Koc & Barut, 2016; McWhorter, 2019). Against this background, this study posits:

H14. News media literacy has a positive impact on Gen Z's willingness to accept news on social media.

Klopfenstein et al. (2024) found that individuals become more aware of how social media platforms curate and personalize content through algorithmic mechanisms; they may distrust the credibility of the news presented. This skepticism leads to a reduction in news acceptance as users recognize potential biases in automated content filtering (Ku et al., 2019). With these contradicting results, this paper posits the following:

H15. Awareness of algorithms has a positive impact on Gen Z's willingness to accept news on social media.

We developed a research model as shown in Figure 1, based on our hypotheses:

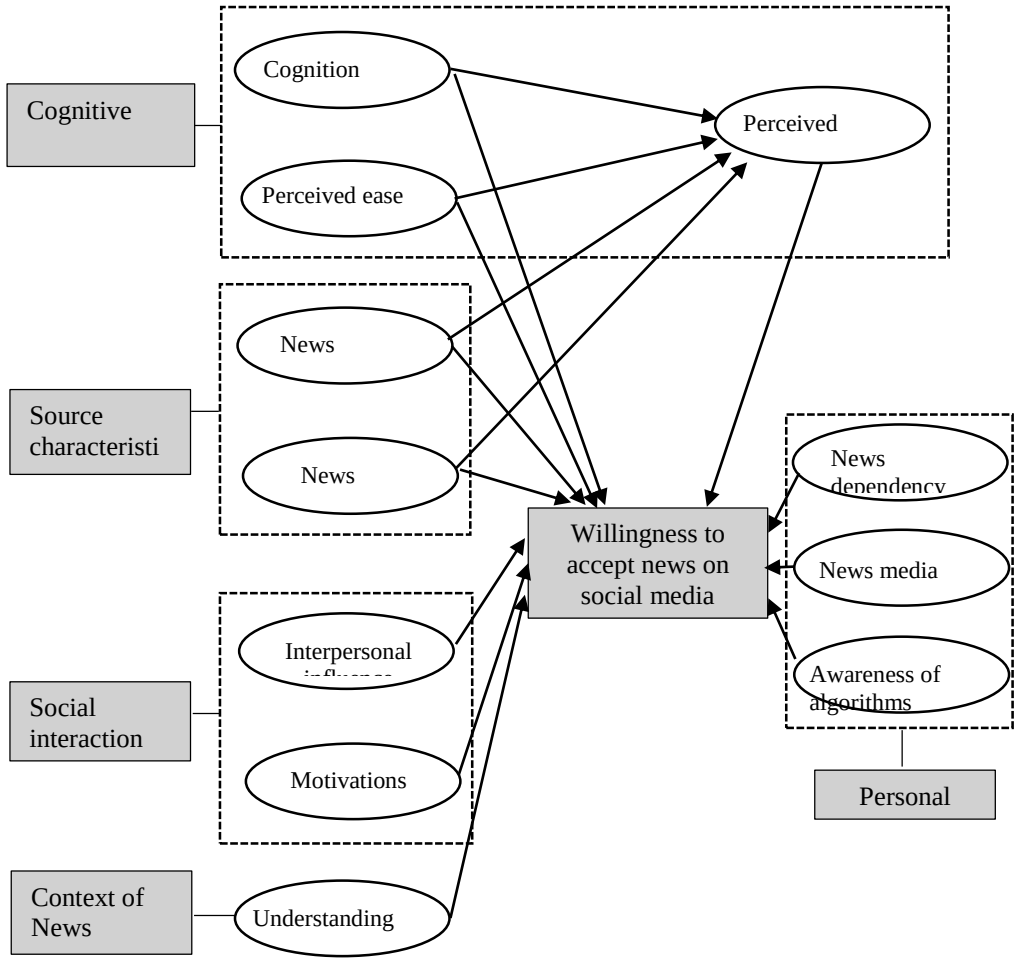

Figure 1. Research Model

Research Methodology

The study employed a stratified random sampling method, using geographical regions and socio-economic divisions as the basis for respondent selection. Participants were recruited through a network of collaborators. The research team selected two collaborators from each of the six surveyed cities, resulting in a total of 12 collaborators. After receiving training in survey methodology and data quality standards, the collaborators were responsible for recruiting high school and university students within their respective survey areas. Recruitment at each site ceased once the predetermined sample size was reached.

According to the 2019 Population and Housing Census conducted by the General Statistics Office of Vietnam, the country is divided into six socio-economic regions. Due to the scope of the study and financial constraints, one representative province or city was selected from each region for data collection (General Statistics Office of Vietnam, 2019). Given that the Generation Z population in each selected province or city exceeds 100,000 individuals, the Yamane formula

was applied to calculate the required sample size, ensuring the representativeness and scientific rigor of the study (n = 204*6, total: 1.224) (Yamane, 1969).

Gender	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Male	516	42.2
Female	708	57.8
Total	1224	100.0
Age	**Frequency**	**Percent**
15-17	506	41.3
18-21	718	58.7
Total	1224	100.0
Level of education	**Frequency**	**Percent**
High School Students	506	41.3
University students	718	58.7
Total	1224	100.0

Table 1. Data collection and demographic analysis

Their ages ranged from 15 to 21 years (M = 18.42, SD = 2.07), with 42.2% identifying as male and 57.8% as female. Of the total sample, 41.3% were aged between 15 and 17, while 58.7% were aged between 18 and 21. As shown in Table 1, a survey instrument was used to accomplish the research goals through a thorough analysis. There were 6 constructions and 23 indicators total. Specifically, items measuring news overload (NO), news avoidance (NA), news efficacy (NE), social filtering (NF) were adapted from Park (2019), while items measuring affective load (AL) were adapted from Nahl (2004). Additionally, the scale items for inattention to "News finds me" (NFM) were adopted and modified from Song et al. (2020).All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree").

PLS-SEM was selected for this study due to its appropriateness for exploratory research and its ability to handle complex models involving multiple latent constructs (Hair et al., 2021). The multivariate modeling technique was implemented using the specialized software SmartPLS (version 3.3.3), with variance-based estimation serving as the core methodological approach (Hair et al., 2019). A two-part assessment process is implied by the PLS-SEM methodology, with the first phase focusing on the measurement model and the second on the structural model (Hair et al., 2019). The model validation in the first phase is managed by taking into account the dependability and validity of the components and the manifest variables that are allocated to them (Hair et al., 2019). This approach entails calculating the hetero trait-mono trait ratio (HTMT), average variance extracted (AVE), composite reliability (CR), outer loadings, and Cronbach's alpha (α) (Hair et al., 2019). In reflective models, the outer loadings are employed to examine the relationships between constructs and indicators. CA and CR are the metrics for inner consistency reliability (Hair et al., 2019). Since HTMT (Henseler et al., 2015) conducts a statistical discriminant validity check, AVE quantifies the convergent efficiency of the factor degree (Henseler et al., 2014). The values of all predictor constructs are shown by the inner VIF values, which point to a complementary test known as collinearity evaluation. The structural model validation, or second phase, determines the level of significance of the correlations between constructs by evaluating the presented hypotheses. The structural model's path coefficients, value of ps, and t-values are calculated at this level. Multi-group analyses are used to validate each control variable, first at the global level and then among data subsets. The level

of fit of the model is determined by the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) measurement (Henseler et al., 2015). However, if there are no credible outputs for the assessment of the inner model's predictive potential, then all indicators and actions taken up to this point from both stages are meaningless (Hair et al., 2019). The final endogenous variable's R^2 and f^2 values are calculated for this purpose using the PLS predict algorithm.

Results and Analysis

The Measurement Model Assessment

The values of the measures, CR, AVE, and outer loading that characterize the convergent validity and inner consistency test for the reflective variables are shown in Tables 2, 3. Some variables CRE1, CRE4, CRE5, NEQ3, PAC3, and PE1 were removed due to factor loadings below 0.7. We see that the outside loadings are higher than the 0.7-percent minimal limit (Hair et al., 2019). In turn, this validates the indication reliability. Every composite reliability value and the value are significantly higher than the reference value of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2019). This demonstrates the internal consistency of all constructs. All AVE values are higher than the threshold of 0.5 (Henseler et al., 2014), confirming the model's convergent validity. The interval [0.230, 0.800] encompasses all HTMT values that demonstrate discriminant validity, satisfying the conservative requirement that they must be less than 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015). This is reflected in Table 4, which supports the claim that each construct is unique from the others in accordance with the criteria of empirical research (Hair et al., 2019; see Table 4).

	CRE	IF	NED	NEQ	NML	NUM	PCA	PE	PSPN	PU	UC	UW
CRE10	0.752											
CRE2	0.834											
CRE3	0.784											
CRE6	0.815											
CRE7	0.873											
CRE8	0.820											
CRE9	0.830											
IF1		0.814										
IF2		0.844										
IF3		0.834										
IF4		0.831										

NED 1			0.846									
NED 2			0.856									
NED 3			0.876									
NED 4			0.853									
NED 5			0.831									
NED 6			0.855									
NEQ 1				0.857								
NEQ 2				0.867								
NEQ 4				0.841								
NEQ 5				0.805								
NML1					0.874							
NML2					0.879							
NML3					0.891							
NML4					0.818							
NUM1						0.832						
NUM2						0.787						
NUM3						0.816						
NUM4						0.834						
NUM5						0.863						
NUM6						0.822						
PCA 1							0.785					
PCA 2							0.814					
PCA 4							0.808					

PCA 5							0.757					
PCA 6							0.827					
PE2								0.905				
PE3								0.898				
PE4								0.887				
PSP N1									0.847			
PSP N2									0.850			
PSP N3									0.834			
PSP N4									0.853			
PSP N5									0.763			
PSP N6									0.778			
PU1										0.848		
PU2										0.865		
PU3										0.866		
PU4										0.867		
PU5										0.814		
UC1											0.828	
UC2											0.773	
UC3											0.809	
UC4											0.824	
UW1												0.876
UW2												0.853
UW3												0.827

Table 2. Factor loadings of constructs

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
CRE	0.917	0.925	0.933	0.666
IF	0.850	0.851	0.899	0.690
NED	0.925	0.926	0.941	0.727
NEQ	0.864	0.864	0.907	0.710
NML	0.888	0.892	0.923	0.750
NUM	0.907	0.908	0.928	0.682
PCA	0.858	0.865	0.898	0.638
PE	0.878	0.880	0.925	0.804
PSPN	0.903	0.907	0.926	0.675
PU	0.906	0.906	0.930	0.726
UC	0.825	0.834	0.883	0.654
UW	0.811	0.815	0.888	0.726

Table 3. Construct reliability and validity

	CRE	IF	NED	NEQ	NML	NUM	PCA	PE	PSPN	PU	UC	UW
CRE												
IF	0.331											
NED	0.393	0.639										
NEQ	0.341	0.557	0.671									
NML	0.230	0.596	0.660	0.647								
NUM	0.396	0.664	0.734	0.710	0.681							
PCA	0.507	0.520	0.649	0.642	0.516	0.605						
PE	0.322	0.586	0.539	0.550	0.577	0.580	0.611					
PSPN	0.327	0.650	0.680	0.597	0.732	0.657	0.530	0.516				
PU	0.437	0.487	0.583	0.644	0.510	0.576	0.589	0.425	0.472			
UC												
UW												

UC	0.375	0.493	0.647	0.641	0.532	0.645	0.542	0.389	0.523	0.476		
UW	0.528	0.716	0.777	0.777	0.704	0.800	0.710	0.575	0.740	0.698	0.718	

Table 4. Discriminant Validity Evaluation for the Reflective Variables by HTMT Criterion

The Structural Model Assessment

The VIF scores for all construct combinations are displayed in Table 5. The greatest value, which falls under the conservative upper limit of 3 (Becker et al., 2015), is 2.609. Therefore, no issues with predictor construct collinearity were found. With SRMR value = 0.058 < 0.08, the research model fits the data.

To assess the suitability of the SEM model, the R^2 coefficient serves as a key criterion. 0.10 as the lowest acceptable R^2 value for the model (Falk & Miller, 1992). The R^2 values obtained for Perceived usefulness (PU), and Willingness accept news on social media (UW) are 0.413, and 0.683. The adjusted R^2 value for UW is 0.683, indicating that the proposed predictors in the model account for 68.3% of the variance in UW. These results suggest that the model has good explanatory power and aligns well with empirical data. In addition, the proposed model explains 41.3% of the variance in PU (Table 6).

The f2 effect size is used to test the effect sizes of the outcome variables. 0.35, 0.15, and 0.02 are acknowledged as having large, medium, and moderate effects, respectively (Hair et al., 2019). Cohen (2013) went on to say that values less than 0.02 have no impact. Table 7 displays the effect size of pathways ranging from no effect to a considerable influence based on these characteristics. The results demonstrate that News Quality (NEQ) plays a crucial role in influencing Perceived Usefulness (PU), while Credibility (CRE) and Information Familiarity (IF) also contribute to users' willingness to accept news on social media (UW). The findings suggest that enhancing the quality and credibility of news content can improve its perceived usefulness and increase user engagement.

	PU	UW
CRE	1.266	1.377
IF		1.900
NED		2.621
NEQ	1.570	2.274
NML		2.300
NUM		2.609
PCA	1.872	2.069
PE	1.507	1.758
PSPN		2.255
PU		1.802
UC		1.759

Table 5. Collinearity evaluation between the predictor constructs by inner VIF values

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
PU	0.415	0.413
UW	0.686	0.683

Table 6: R^2 and R^2 adjusted

	PU	UW
CRE	0.047	0.035
IF		0.023
NED		0.009
NEQ	0.155	0.023
NML		0.006
NUM		0.023
PCA	0.042	0.010
PE	0.001	0.000
PSPN		0.029
PU		0.029
UC		0.029

Table 7. The result of (f2)

Testing of Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis testing was conducted using a bootstrapping procedure (N = 5000 subsamples) to ensure the stability of estimates (Yuan, 2012). The statistical significance of relationships was assessed using t-values (> 1.96) and p-values (< 0.05) (Falk & Miller, 1992). This approach ensures robust inference for evaluating both direct and indirect effects within the model.

The analysis results indicate that most direct relationships between latent variables in the model are statistically significant, as their p-values are less than 0.05. The relationship PE → PU has a P-value of 0.475 (< 0.05), and PE → UW has a P-value of 0.483 (< 0.05), indicating that they are not statistically significant. Furthermore, the model includes indirect effects through mediating variables. According to the analysis results, the indirect relationship PE → PU → UW is not statistically significant, as their P-values exceed 0.05. In contrast, all other indirect effects have p-values lower than 0.05, confirming their statistical significance. The original sample (O) coefficients for all significant relationships are positive, suggesting that these relationships exhibit positive directional effects.

The analysis results provide the foundation for the next step, testing the research hypotheses (see Table 8).

Hypothesis	H	β	T-values	P-Values	Decision
Perceived ease of use -> Perception usefulness	H1	0.028	0.797	0.426	Not supported

Perceived ease of use -> Willingness to accept news	H2	-0.016	0.702	0.483	Not supported
Perceived usefulness -> Willingness to accept news	H3	0.129	5.737	0.000	Supported
Cognition absorptive -> Perception usefulness	H4	0.215	5.386	0.000	Supported
Cognition absorptive -> Willingness to accept news	H5	0.081	2.726	0.006	Supported
News credibility -> Willingness to accept news	H6	0.124	6.044	0.000	Supported
News quality -> Willingness to accept news	H7	0.128	4.621	0.000	Supported
News credibility -> Perception usefulness	H8	0.186	7.013	0.000	Supported
News quality -> Perception usefulness	H9	0.377	11.034	0.000	Supported
Interpersonal influence -> Willingness to accept news	H10	0.118	3.943	0.000	Supported
Motivations use -> Willingness to accept news	H11	0.137	4.456	0.000	Supported
Understanding context -> Willingness to accept news	H12	0.126	4.355	0.000	Supported
Dependence on news -> Willingness to accept news	H13	0.085	2.543	0.011	Supported
News media literacy -> Willingness to accept news	H14	0.065	2.170	0.030	Supported
Awareness of algorithms -> Willingness to accept news	H15	0.143	4.450	0.000	Supported

Table 8. Research Hypothesis Testing

Discussion and Conclusion

This study investigated the factors influencing Gen Z's willingness to accept news on social media in Vietnam, integrating the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Uses and Gratifications Theory (U&G), and the PERVAL model. The findings provide empirical evidence that cognitive, social, and environmental factors significantly impact news acceptance behaviors, highlighting the interplay of perceived usefulness, social interactions, and trust in news sources. The results also emphasize the complexity of digital news consumption, where credibility perceptions, motivation for engagement, and individual identity shape acceptance levels.

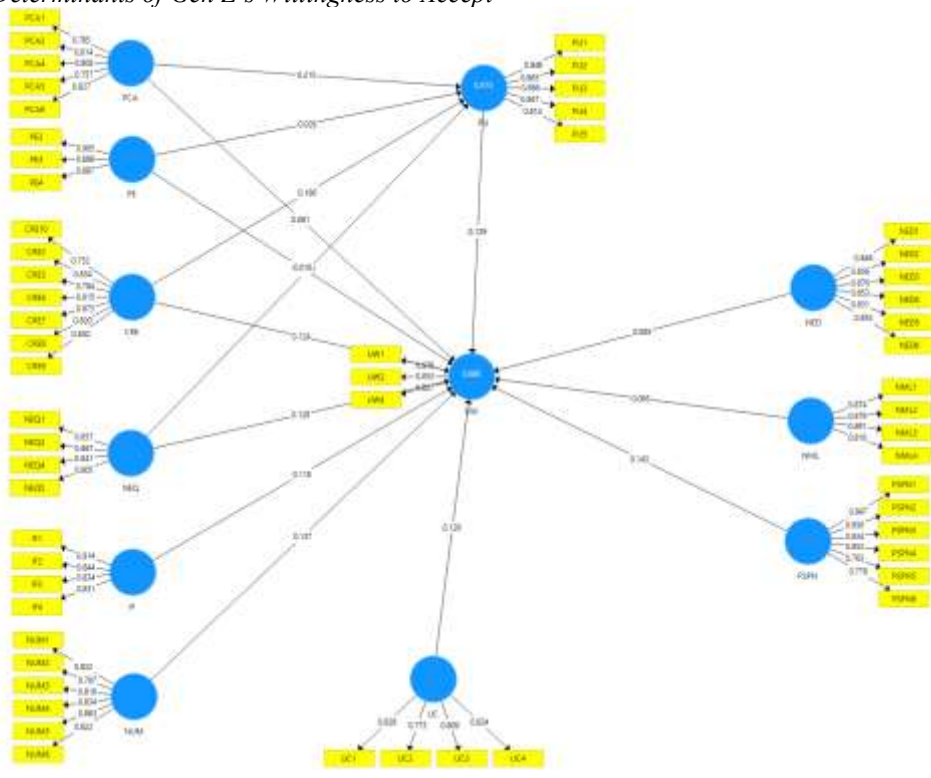

Figure 2. The findings for path coefficient

The study confirms that perceived usefulness (PU) and cognition absorptive (PCA) play pivotal roles in Generation Z's news acceptance. The strong relationship between cognition absorptive and PU (H4, $\beta = 0.215$, $p < 0.001$) suggests that immersive engagement with social media enhances the perceived value of news consumption, supporting prior findings by Tourinho & Oliveira (2019) and Agarwal & Karahanna (2000). This aligns with TAM's assertion that an individual's cognitive engagement with technology determines its perceived usefulness and subsequent adoption.

However, contrary to expectations, perceived ease of use (PE) did not significantly impact PU or willingness to accept news (H1, $\beta = 0.028$, $p = 0.426$; H2, $\beta = -0.016$, $p = 0.483$). These results diverge from the classical TAM model (Davis et al., 1989), suggesting that Generation Z, as digital natives, may already find social media intuitive, making ease of use a negligible factor. This finding underscores the need to revise traditional technology acceptance models when applied to populations with high digital literacy.

News credibility (CRE) and news quality (NEQ) significantly influenced PU and willingness to accept news (H6–H9). News credibility had a direct impact on both PU (H8, $\beta = 0.186$, $p < 0.001$) and willingness to accept news (H6, $\beta = 0.124$, $p < 0.001$), reinforcing the importance of trust in digital news consumption. Similarly, news quality positively influenced both PU (H9, $\beta = 0.377$, $p < 0.001$) and willingness to accept news (H7, $\beta = 0.128$, $p < 0.001$), corroborating prior studies (Kalogeropoulos et al., 2019; Ku et al., 2019). These findings suggest that media organizations should enhance verification mechanisms and transparency to improve credibility perceptions among young users.

Social interaction factors—interpersonal influence (IF) and motivation to use social media (NUM)—were also found to be significant predictors of news acceptance. The strong impact of interpersonal influence (H10, $\beta = 0.118$, $p < 0.001$) aligns with the U&G framework, which suggests that individuals engage with news based on peer recommendations (Bergström & Jervelycke Belfrage, 2018). Additionally, motivation to use social media had a direct effect on willingness to accept news (H11, $\beta = 0.137$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that users actively seek news that aligns with their entertainment and informational needs (Park & Kaye, 2020).

The study found that understanding the context of news consumption (UC) positively influences willingness to accept news (H12, $\beta = 0.126$, $p < 0.001$). This finding supports research by Zhang & Skoric (2018), which argues that digital environments shape news reception by influencing content exposure. Additionally, news dependency (NED) and news media literacy (NML) were significant predictors of news acceptance (H13, $\beta = 0.085$, $p = 0.011$; H14, $\beta = 0.065$, $p = 0.030$), reinforcing the idea that individuals who rely on news for social engagement and possess higher literacy levels are more discerning consumers (Fisher et al., 2021; Koc & Barut, 2016).

Interestingly, awareness of algorithms (PSPN) had a positive impact on news acceptance (H15, $\beta = 0.143$, $p < 0.001$), contradicting previous studies that suggest algorithmic awareness decreases trust (Klopfenstein Frei et al., 2024). This indicates that while Generation Z is aware of algorithmic curation, they still perceive its utility in news personalization, warranting further exploration into how algorithmic awareness shapes trust in digital journalism.

However, this study still has limitations. While the model explains a significant variance in willingness to accept news ($R^2 = 0.683$), external influences such as algorithmic curation and misinformation exposure were not directly measured. Future research should explore how news personalization and misinformation affect long-term acceptance behaviors. Additionally, cross-cultural comparisons could examine whether these findings hold across different digital environments beyond Vietnam.

Overall, this study enhances understanding of Gen Z's news acceptance, offering valuable implications for media practitioners, policymakers, and researchers in the evolving digital media landscape.

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