

The Role of Newswav in Promoting Citizen Journalism in Malaysia: Impact, Challenges, And Ethical Considerations

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Abstract

This study explores the role, significance, and implications of a Malaysian news aggregator, Newswav, in promoting citizen journalism, public discourse, and standards of journalism in Malaysia. Utilising a qualitative approach, in-depth interviews with journalists and media practitioners were conducted to understand their perspectives on user-generated content creation in Newswav and the perceived impact on encouraging public discourse. Additionally, a thematic analysis was applied to examine user-generated content on the platform, focusing on themes such as community engagement, diversity of content, and ethical considerations in journalism. Findings reveal that Newswav provides Malaysians with an outlet to share content and stories, particularly on hyper-local issues that are often unreported or overlooked by mainstream media. Journalists and media practitioners interviewed viewed the platform as a democratic space that facilitates the representation of underreported news and viewpoints. However, the platform also faces challenges in maintaining content accuracy and ensuring quality control of user contributions. Results suggest that while Newswav supports a more inclusive media and reporting landscape, it also contends with concerns related to reliability and accountability, particularly in the absence of formal journalistic training among contributors. In a broader context, the study illustrates that citizen journalism can be both empowering and potentially risky in terms of information integrity. The discussion emphasizes the need for clear guidelines, particularly ethical standards, to support contributors. Balancing openness with journalistic responsibility is crucial. This study contributes to understanding the evolving potential and limitations of citizen journalism, offering insights into how platforms like Newswav can sustain credibility while fostering active public participation.

Keywords: *Newswav, Promoting, Citizen Journalism, Malaysia, Impact, Challenges, Ethics*

1.0 Introduction

The Malaysian media traditionally has a complex relationship with the government. While there are independent media outlets, the government, through government-linked companies, owns and eventually controls many major media platforms, including television stations, newspapers, and their online extensions, which often propagate government-aligned ideologies and interpretations of events [17]. The traditional control of media before the advent of the internet was one of the means used by the

government to limit public access to information and restrict policy discourse, ostensibly to maintain public order [12]. This has led to long-standing criticisms regarding biased reporting and censorship.

With the rise of the internet, however, social media has opened up new avenues for information dissemination, and platforms like Newswav have begun to establish alternative spaces for public discourse. Despite these digital developments, Malaysia was ranked 107th in the 2024 Press Freedom Index by Reporters Without Borders, a drop of 37 places from the previous year [10]. This decline is particularly alarming given that the current Madani government has publicly committed to greater media transparency [9]. In light of the current landscape, it becomes increasingly clear that a transparent and open media environment is essential to upholding the freedoms guaranteed under the Federal Constitution, particularly those pertaining to freedom of speech.

This shift in the media environment is closely linked to Malaysia's digital transformation. In 2024, Malaysia recorded a high internet penetration rate of 97.4 percent, with 83.1 percent of the population having access to social media [4]. This rise in connectivity has provided users with alternative pathways to access and disseminate information. The ability to publish content directly via online platforms has given rise to citizen journalism, where individuals outside the professional journalism sphere become content creators rather than passive consumers [12]. Ordinary people, regardless of formal training, can now publish, discuss, and share their views on local and global issues.

While this digital empowerment introduces more voices into public discourse, it also raises concerns about the credibility and reliability of the information being disseminated. [11] noted that citizen journalists are moderately credible, influenced more by individual-level factors than institutional frameworks. Without editorial oversight or adherence to established newsroom hierarchies, citizen journalism often operates on personal judgement. This shift has challenged traditional media to adapt, with many newspapers transitioning to digital formats or ceasing operations entirely [16].

One such platform that embodies this evolution is Newswav, an online application and website operated by Newswav Sdn. Bhd. As a Malaysian news and content aggregator, it sources material from mainstream outlets, social media, blogs, and independent contributors [18]. It also offers a space for citizen journalists to publish articles, opinions, and reports, with the potential to monetise their contributions and expand their reach [18]. Newswav does not produce original content but relies on web scraping and layered curation tools to aggregate and update its offerings [1]. The platform's dual function as both aggregator and contributor-based space, positions it as a significant actor in Malaysia's evolving digital media landscape.

Citizen journalism platforms and content aggregators such as Newswav have contributed to a more democratic media environment by enabling public participation and access to diverse perspectives [12]. However, the platform's approach to content moderation and the ethical standards of its contributors remains underexplored in academic literature, raising concerns about content accuracy, accountability, and the risk of misinformation. As part of this study, Newswav's contribution to citizen journalism is evaluated by examining how the platform empowers public participation in news creation. The paper also examines how the platform has impacted public discourse, especially in amplifying underrepresented issues often overlooked by traditional media. Consequently, the study examines challenges such as content accuracy issues, ethical considerations, and quality control that may threaten the credibility of the platform. The last element of the report is to propose recommendations towards balancing openness and journalistic standards.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Citizen Journalism and Democratic Engagement

Globalisation has become an important factor in what is termed as digital citizenship, where individuals are expected to become respectful members of the online community. One term that has arisen and is often used in Malaysia is “netizen” to describe those who contribute and share their ideas, content, and feedback to shape internet culture. [15] stated that there is a need for systemic civic education to support individuals, especially youth, in voicing their opinions online. The use of citizen journalism is identified as one approach to help students engage meaningfully while developing competencies such as communication, collaboration, and cultural literacy, and fostering civic responsibilities and awareness of issues of public concern. Ensuring that youths understand their responsibilities and remain aware of their environment is important in enabling democratic participation to flourish.

As the fourth pillar of democracy, the media is tasked with checking and balancing the other three branches of governance. To fulfil this role, the media must be free to report without fear or favour, and journalistic stories should be presented in an honest and balanced manner, serving the public interest without interference from capitalist or political influences [13]. Citizen journalists can serve as a balancing force, as they are not bound by corporate, political, or capital structures. This allows them to process and present news that reflects public aspirations, which elevates the kind of engagement needed for a more democratic society.

However, some scholars argue that citizen journalism may hinder democratic engagement due to contributors' lack of professional training, which increases the risk of inaccurate reporting. [8] referencing countries where democratic institutions remain challenged, observed that as citizen journalism continues to evolve in diverse forms, a reconceptualisation of its practice is necessary. Improved access to the internet and changing attitudes towards political dissent and public participation may contribute positively to a more democratic media landscape.

2.2 Challenges in Citizen Journalism (Credibility, Accuracy and Ethics)

The internet user now has the power to broadcast and report their stories and experiences through platforms that are available worldwide. User-generated content is another term for citizen journalism, where users create content for consumption as an alternative to that presented by mainstream media [21]. However, it is contended that citizen journalism will continue to exist alongside mainstream media, where some viral content on social media is later reported by professional outlets after verification. While citizen journalism is still evolving, both as an alternative and a complement to traditional media, several challenges have emerged, particularly in relation to accuracy, reliability, ethics, and legal compliance. What is certain is that citizen journalism has transformed the media landscape globally.

[20] explained that the emergence of citizen journalism has blurred the lines between conventional journalism and its citizen counterpart. This transformation has created several issues, especially concerning the social responsibility of journalism, which is typically upheld through ethics, education, formal training, and apprenticeship. In contrast, citizen journalism lacks these professional constraints and may lead to unintended consequences, not only for the journalism profession but also for public safety due to concerns over the credibility of citizen-reported content. To support more responsible citizen journalism practices, legal frameworks may be needed. These could include content regulations such as censorship to mitigate misconceptions surrounding the role of citizen journalism in the modern media environment [7].

One approach to enhance credibility was explored by [24], who found that community newspapers sometimes invite public contributions but filter submissions to ensure they meet ethical standards. While

this process upholds journalistic integrity, it also reflects gatekeeping practices, where citizen engagement and collaboration are moderated through institutional control.

2.3 Role of Technology in Journalism

The role of technology in citizen journalism is highly significant, supported by widespread internet penetration and increasingly affordable access costs. In the context of citizen journalism, the availability of social media platforms has accelerated the trend of diverse news offerings that now compete with traditional media sources [19]. The simplicity and accessibility of communication technologies such as smartphones, digital cameras, and social media have expanded the global reach of citizen journalism, significantly affecting political discourse and international relations [5].

One prominent example of this influence is the Israel-Palestine conflict, where citizen journalists offered alternative perspectives and counter-narratives to more established mainstream media coverage. By doing so, they used social media as a vehicle for digital activism to influence public perception [22]. [6] further explored the impact of technology by examining the role of smartphone applications in the development of citizen journalism. Their study suggested that the use of such apps serves as an indicator of how citizen journalists complete the media production process.

3.0 Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach with two key components. The first component is a Thematic Analysis of User-Generated Content guided by Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework [23]. This involves six important steps of: (i) familiarisation with the data, (ii) generating initial codes, (iii) searching for themes, (iv) reviewing potential themes, (v) defining and naming theme, and lastly (vi) producing the report [23].

This approach allows the identification of recurring themes related to community engagement, content diversity, and ethical challenges. This is followed by the second component which involves in-depth interviews with media practitioners to further gather qualitative insights on Newswav's role in shaping citizen journalism and public discourse in Malaysia. Findings from the thematic analysis of user-generated content will be triangulated and compared with the insights gathered from the interviews to provide a more comprehensive and robust analysis of Newswav's role in promoting citizen journalism.

The data collection process will involve two steps. The first step focuses on user-generated content from Newswav's platform. Content published on Newswav platform will be examined over a span of one month with selection criteria of articles that demonstrated significant public engagement or highlighted hyper-local issues. The second step involves interviews with purposively selected informants, including reporters and communication practitioners. Informants will be chosen based on their experience with citizen journalism and their familiarity with online media platforms. Table 1 presents the background of selected informants.

TABLE 1
Informants Background in the In-depth Interview Session

Informant Code	Background	Years of Experience
Informant 1	Editor and experienced journalist at a major Malaysian newspaper	27 years
Informant 2	Experienced Foreign Investigative Journalist	15 years
Informant 3	Communication Officer in Government Agency	17 years
Informant 4	Corporate Communication Manager at a Multinational Corporation	5 years

This study is grounded by three theories to form a theoretical framework. The Public Sphere Theory, which states that public spheres are open communication spaces where common issues are discussed [14], is relevant to Newswav's platform as it solicits user-generated content from citizen journalists. This theory is essential for monitoring politicians, decision-makers, and elites to hold them accountable for their actions. The Gatekeeping Theory, which describes the process of control or filtering of information, resources, and opportunities by gatekeepers, can be used to examine Newswav's curating and moderate content to influence stories on the platform. This theory also reveals how those in positions of power may use their positions to filter information to conceal misappropriations [2]. The Uses and Gratifications Theory explores the motivations of users to actively seek out specific media, focusing on the active role of audiences in selecting media and the motivations behind sharing fake news [3] which will be germane to understand in the context of Newswav.

4.0 Findings and Discussion

The themes in Table 2 were identified from thematic analysis of two primary data sources: (i) user-generated material published on the Newswav platform and (ii) in-depth interviews with selected informants. Guided by Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework [23], a total of nine themes were identified across the data reflecting recurring patterns that was developed in response to the four research objective of this study.

TABLE 2
Theme Summary Table

No	Theme Identified
1	Democratisation of News Production
2	Lack of Consideration on Ethics and Quality of Journalism
3	Impact on Public Discourse and Underrepresented Issues
4	Engagement Metrics and Format Effectiveness
5	Challenges in Content Accuracy and Quality Control
6	Need for Editorial Oversight for Balancing Openness and Journalistic Standards
7	Need for Citizen Journalist Training
8	Role of Algorithms
9	Role of the Government

Table 2 presents a summary of the identified themes. Themes 1 to 7 were identified from user-generated content and interview data containing shared concerns related to citizen journalism, ethics, and public discourse. However, themes 8 and 9 emerged from the interview dataset thus providing a more in-depth understanding of systemic issues like algorithmic bias and the role of government in digital journalism.

ROI: Newswav's Role in Promoting Citizen Journalism

The findings from both content analysis and interviews revealed that Newswav plays a significant role in promoting citizen journalism by democratizing news production. Newswav enables over 400 publishers and independent citizen journalists to share their stories. And to encourage participation, the platform provides monetary incentives and call-to-action options for submitting stories, providing a wide range of content submissions to promote better relations among readers, entertaining reads, and share travel hacks. These posts are published in Malay, English, or Mandarin, catering to a diverse audience, Contributors

are given basic guidelines for formatting articles and videos and is equipped with user dashboards to track the status of their articles and earnings.

While Newswav provides clear structure and technical submission guidelines, it does not provide specific guidance regarding content quality, ethical reporting, or journalistic integrity. Informants observed that although initiatives like the Creator Incubation Programme aim to empower individuals, they fall short in offering training on responsible journalism practices.

“The Creator Incubation Programme is fascinating, but I find its effectiveness debatable. Newswav could think about adding simple training or workshops to help contributors learn basic reporting skills and understand ethics.” (Informant 1)

An informant also raised concerns that monetary incentives lead contributors to prioritise on publishing speed and quantity over accuracy and fact-checking, thereby risking the spread of unverified or biased information.

“Contributors, especially those motivated by financial incentives, might rush to publish stories without thoroughly verifying facts. This can lead to claims or details being shared that are either incomplete or outright incorrect.” (Informant 4)

Due to ensuring content standards, concerns on editorial oversight were also highlighted by the informants. According to the informants, Newswav’s lack of formal editorial processes potentially disrupt the credibility and reliability of citizen generated content.

“Unlike traditional outlets that are hierarchical and editorially controlled, Newswav emphasises decentralisation. This openness enables more diverse narratives but also raises concerns about content quality and accuracy.” (Informant 2)

“Newswav acts as the middleman, and it’s their job to filter and ensure that the content they share is accurate and ethical. Without proper standards and a mode of verification, the responsibility cannot just be passed on to citizen journalists.” (Informant 1)

Consistent with [12] findings, it demonstrates that Newswav provides a platform for ordinary individuals to contribute to journalism by content creations and storytelling. However, aligns with the concerns identified by [11] and [8], both data analysis showed an urgent need to address ethical considerations and implement quality control measures to sustain trust and integrity on the platform.

RO2: Impact on Public Discourse and Underrepresented Issues

By aggregating content from various sources, including independent creators, Newswav facilitates the dissemination of diverse views and perspectives which potentially encourages public discourse. The highlighting of local news and stories in politics and commentary of current events allows for the coverage of hyper-local issues that may be underrepresented in mainstream media, thereby elevating local media and creating engagement with readers. Some examples of content creators from the platform that are popular where their articles have generated interest are listed in Table 3.

TABLE 3
Engagement Metrics for Selected Citizen-Generated Articles on Newswav

Contributor	Title	Views	Reactions	Comments	Shares
The Real Nehruism	<i>Are the non-Muslims in Malaysia the enemy of Islam?</i>	10.2k	122	86	174
Mihar Dias	<i>Tun Mahathir and the Question of Malay Progress: Are Ustadz Really the Problem</i>	5.9k	96	25	104
Citizen Nades	<i>Is incompetency the perfect cover for conspiracy</i>	5.2k	77	13	97
Adil Legal	<i>Ordered to pay Lim Guan Eng RM1.35 million for defamation by the High Court, what's next for Muhyiddin in the case?</i>	12.2k	126	31	129
Asyiqin Razak	<i>Dr. M is prepared to 'mentor' anyone who wants to become a PM</i>	9k	274	94	177

The impact of citizen journalism on the platform however is less evident in video content as presented in Table 4. The viewership and engagement remain low compared to written articles. This suggests preference among Newswav audiences on written publications while engaging with complex or sensitive issues. It is also noted that majority of videos are of news outlets and only several videos are created by citizen journalist. In terms of the impact of public discourse and underrepresented issues, the localised focus on politics and current events may lead to deeper engagement with societal value, as it addresses topics of interest to readers that are not covered by traditional media.

TABLE 4
Engagement Metrics for Selected Citizen-Generated Video Content on Newswav

Contributor	Title	Views	Reactions	Comments	Shares
Mike Hanif	<i>Fishing with Gani Patail</i>	494	1	0	1
Healthy LifeSTYLE	<i>Classic Bernina Express #JomTravel</i>	439	2	0	2
J Young	<i>KL is snowing!#JomTravel</i>	112	2	0	0

In contrast, the findings from interviews reveals that Newswav may not really have been as successful in promoting public conversation. Informants noted that while the platform offers an easy access to multiple news sources, its influence remains unclear in reporting underrepresented issues due to low adoption rate among the wider public. Additionally, concerns were raised by informants about Newswav's algorithmic content delivery, which potentially reinforce echo chambers towards users by promoting articles aligned with user preferences, thus limits the ability for users to be exposed to diverse perspectives of the news.

"I agree that platforms like Newswav can contribute to echo chambers and the spread of misinformation, but to be fair, this also has a lot to do with algorithms. These platforms show us more of what we already like to read, so the bias is there from the start. It's not just the platform's fault, users naturally choose what they want to consume. In the Malaysian context, this means that people might stick to their preferred narratives and avoid opposing views" (Informant 1)

"One notable example is the coverage of urban poverty during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through citizen contributions, Newswav amplified firsthand accounts. However, these examples appear limited and sporadic, suggesting that Newswav's broader influence on sustained public discourse is less pronounced" (Informant 2)

"I'm not sure if I can answer this because I haven't personally seen any significant impact from Newswav on public discourse or underrepresented issues. It might be because I'm unaware of such instances, or perhaps Newswav hasn't had a clear standout moment in this area yet." (Informant 3)

According to the study, although Newswav appears to have the potential in enhancing local and diverse narratives, its impact on the Malaysian public discourse is limited by low engagement and algorithm-driven exposure. This finding aligns with the observation in [15] that emphasises, citizens must actively participate in critical civic participation, and citizen journalism must grow with public discontent, as [8] suggests. Further, [21] suggests that user-generated content may not be able to completely replace traditional media. There is a need for Newswav to actively promote content diversity and mitigate echo chambers.

RO3: Challenges in Content Accuracy, Ethical Considerations, and Quality Control

The open nature of Newswav's platform presents challenges in ensuring content accuracy and maintaining ethical standards due to lack of guidelines upon submission and absence of strict editorial review. The reliance on a wide array of content creators, including independent contributors, can lead to a wide spectrum of variability in the quality and reliability of information published. Without editorial oversight by the platform, there is a risk of disseminating unverified, biased or misleading information, which can undermine the platform's credibility.

Interview findings confirm these observations, with informants sharing concerns about the accuracy of news shared on Newswav. Informants stressed that the responsibility for content accuracy should not rest on the individual contributors solely but must also be shared by the platform itself. This is due to contributors who can submit content without prior verification could lead to ethical issues such as clickbait headlines, incomplete reporting, and potential misinformation. Thus, given the platform functions as an online news publisher, informants also argued that Newswav holds a duty to train public as responsible citizen journalism, verify and uphold journalistic standards across all content published.

"One of the main issues is misinformation. Contributors, especially those motivated by financial incentives, might rush to publish stories without thoroughly verifying facts. This can lead to claims or details being shared that are either incomplete or outright incorrect. For example, a viral post might exaggerate or misrepresent a situation to gain more attention, which then spreads quickly due to Newswav's reach. Another challenge is bias. Many contributors write based on their personal perspectives, and without proper editorial oversight, these stories may lack balance." (Informant 1)

"Inaccuracies often stem from unverified claims or a lack of context in reporting. Ethical breaches include biased reporting, sensationalism, and failure to respect privacy, particularly in sensitive cases." (Informant 2)

"In my view, the primary responsibility lies with the platform itself. Citizen journalists are not trained journalists and often don't understand the importance of thoroughly verifying their sources. Without proper standards and a mode of verification, the responsibility can't just be passed on to citizen journalists." (Informant 3)

"Citizen journalists need to be trained about responsibility in reporting and the platform itself also need to exercise its power to check what it publishes. You need to look at different facets of a single news, and not just judge it from a sensational/ clickbaiting lens."
(Informant 4)

Observations of both content and interviews suggest Newswav should strengthen editorial oversight and provide citizen journalists with training. As [20] note, the absence of editorial processes makes it difficult to distinguish between credible and unverified reporting, resulting in misinformation. Similarly, [7] call for ethical frameworks for citizen journalism is supported by interview participants. Likewise, [24] emphasize the importance of editorial review in improving content quality even on community-powered platforms. Newswav's credibility and its role in fostering responsible public discourse could be enhanced by strengthening oversight and ethical training.

RO4: Recommendations for Balancing Openness and Journalistic Standards

This study finds that Newswav have the responsibility to balance its commitment to openness with the need for integrity in journalism. Through content analysis, the study highlights three primary recommendations: (i) the introduction of editorial oversight mechanisms, (ii) the development and establishment of transparent and clear content guidelines, and lastly, (iii) the promotion of media literacy among contributors and media consumers. This measure of providing a structured editorial review process could greatly benefit in monitoring and verifying user-generated content without withholding the participatory nature of citizen journalism. Additionally, the presence of clear ethical and quality standards with guidance on factual reporting and responsible journalism practices benefits contributors and audience. Finally, promoting media literacy among both contributors and media consumers is also considered crucial in creating an environment with responsible consumption of information.

Interview findings with informants further reinforce these recommendations. Informants emphasised that there is a need for Newswav to implement effective journalism guidelines and fact-checking protocols to maintain its content credibility. The introduction of online journalism workshops, partnerships with higher education institutions, and educational initiatives aimed to improve media literacy. This step would also advocate as a practical step toward building a more responsible citizen journalism community. Informants further recommended that Newswav should consider integrate an editorial review process to balance creativity with credibility. This is to ensure that user-generated content aligns with ethical journalistic standards. In addition, informants also suggested that regulatory oversight by the government is necessary. This is to ensure that platforms such as Newswav adhere to standards compare to those upheld by traditional media.

"Newswav can encourage ethical practices by starting with clear, simple guidelines. Let contributors know what's expected, like fact-checking and avoiding bias, right from the start." (Informant 1)

"Newswav could offer workshops or training sessions for users and contributors. Platforms like the Poynter Institute already do this well, focusing on fact-checking and ethical reporting." (Informant 1)

"A light editorial review would help too. A quick check and some feedback can guide contributors without being too strict." (Informant 2)

"The government's role should focus on setting broad guidelines that ensure accountability without stifling free expression." (Informant 3)

"Newswav could introduce AI-driven content vetting for basic fact-checking and flagging, alongside a peer review system where experienced contributors mentor newer ones." (Informant 4)

The overall thematic findings are summarised in Table 5, showing alignment between both data sources. In addition, the data sources also provide unique insights. The content analysis reveals platform-specific engagement patterns, while the interviews with communication practitioners offer perspectives on issues like algorithms and role of government. Overall, these findings emphasise the significance of structured editorial processes, contributor training, and media literacy initiatives in enhancing Newswav's credibility as a citizen journalism platform.

TABLE 5
Thematic Triangulation Summary of User-Generated Content and Interview Insights

No.	Theme	Content Analysis Findings	Interview Analysis Findings	Triangulation results
1	Democratization of News Production	Newswav empowers citizen journalism by offering incentives in form of monetary compensation to motivate a diverse spectrum of contributors. However, no training that deals with ethical consideration is provided.	The Creator Incubation Program encourages participation of Citizen Journalist and democratizes participation but lacks emphasis on ethics and reporting training.	Both analyses have highlighted the platform's potential for democratization but points out the issue of training the citizen journalists.
2	Lack of Consideration on Ethics and Quality of Journalism	There is an absence of content guidelines published in the platform's website for the purposes of quality control and adherence to ethics. There is a risk of clickbait and misinformation which undermines credibility.	The absence of editorial oversight may lead to ambiguity in the standards and low reliability of the quality of contribution of Citizen Journalists.	To maintain credibility both analyses contend on the importance of creating ethical guidelines and application of editorial oversight.
3	Impact on Public Discourse and Underrepresented Issues	High public engagement for stories relating to popular socio-political issues and hyper-local stories. Underrepresented issues or stories receive a platform.	Algorithms by the platform may reinforce echo chambers, limiting exposure to diverse perspectives.	Content analysis emphasizes positive impacts on discourse, while interviews highlight risks like echo chambers.
4	Engagement Metrics and Format Effectiveness	Articles from citizen journalists outperform videos in terms of views and engagement indicating a preference for written content.	No specific focus on formats but notes the platform's convenience as an aggregator of news.	Content analysis adds quantitative evidence on the most possible popular engagement trends; interviews provide context on content consumption.
5	Challenges in Content Accuracy and Quality Control	Newswav open platform leads to the possibility of unverified and biased contents by citizen journalist. There is also a possibility of incomplete reporting which may lead to ethical challenges.	Newswav needs to strengthen oversight and implement training for citizen journalist making the sharing of responsibility between content creators and the platform to ensure accuracy of contents.	Both analyses underline accuracy and ethical challenges, recommending improved oversight and contributor accountability.
6	Need for Editorial	The absence or lack of editorial	The editorial processes will	Strong alignment on the

	Oversight for Balancing Openness and Journalistic Standards	review undermines trust and credibility of the platform.	ensure that there is balance between openness and journalistic integrity.	necessity of editorial oversight in the effort to improve reliability and standards.
7	Need for Citizen Journalist Training	Workshops and training programs are suggested to enhance contributor quality and integrity.	Training emphasized as vital to address gaps in ethics, accuracy, and reporting standards.	Both analyses agree on the importance of training to improve journalistic quality and combat misinformation
8	Role of Algorithms	The role of algorithms is not explicitly discussed.	Algorithms may create echo chambers and reinforce biases of consumers	Interview analysis identifies issues relating to algorithms, which content analysis does not address explicitly.
9	Role of the Government	The role of governments is not explicitly discussed.	There is suggestion to have regulations made by government to ensure adherence to ethical standards by platforms like Newswav.	Interviews emphasize external regulatory roles absent in content analysis findings.

5.0 Conclusion

This study reveals that Newswav serves as a promising platform for promoting citizen journalism by providing contributors with the opportunity to publish articles and videos, incentivized through monetary compensation. The platform further supports engagement by enabling contributors to monitor their submissions and track earnings, thereby encouraging continuous participation.

The potential for influencing public discourse is evidenced by the significant engagement observed with citizen-generated articles, particularly those addressing underrepresented political and current affairs topics. Through amplifying issues often overlooked by traditional media, Newswav demonstrates its role in fostering democratic dialogue and enhancing the visibility of diverse perspectives.

However, this positive contribution is constrained by critical challenges. The absence of formal editorial oversight, limited emphasis on ethical standards, and insufficient mechanisms to combat misinformation threaten the platform's credibility. These gaps underline the urgent need for Newswav to implement editorial review processes, invest in training programs for citizen journalists, and promote media literacy among its users to uphold journalistic integrity and public trust.

This study contributes to the understanding of how digital platforms can democratize media spaces while highlighting the ethical and operational challenges that must be addressed. Future research should examine the long-term effects of citizen journalism platforms on Malaysia's media ecosystem, particularly their influence on public opinion, political accountability, and democratic participation. In retrospect, Newswav stands at a critical crossroads where balancing openness with credibility determines its lasting impact on citizen journalism and public discourse in Malaysia.

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