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**Credibility, News Sources and Readership:
The Case of Hong Kong Audience**

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship among three sets of variables: credibility, news sources and readership. A large-scale content analysis of fourteen local daily newspapers and a survey of 2,025 Hong Kong residents were conducted to test four hypotheses. Findings show that *Apple Daily*, *Oriental Daily* and *Ming Pao* are the three most popular newspapers in the pool. They were also regarded as the three most credible newspapers in Hong Kong, though the order is different. Newspapers cited the most opinions from a diversified news sources were regarded as more credible while newspapers quoting more unnamed sources were not necessarily perceived to be less credible. Interestingly, the results indicate that not all audience will choose the newspaper they believe to be the most credible to read, which somehow suggest that newspaper credibility is delinked from readership.

Key words: credibility, Hong Kong newspapers, news sources, readership

Hong Kong media has long been criticized for overemphasizing sensationalism, too market-oriented, lack of credibility, and invading people's privacy. There are also increasing complaints that some presses have distorted the truth in favor of the government or businesses leaders. It is believed that some media organizations are out of touch with the concerns of the public and that they treat ordinary people unfavorably. Many media organizations in Hong Kong are owned by business tycoons or corporations that have China backgrounds (Fung, 2007). It is not strange to see that they reflect the interests of the dominant class mostly. Nevertheless, local residents also share a strong faith in the community press in terms of diversity, autonomy, and freedom, particularly when cast in comparison with its mainland counterparts. The public continues to enjoy the freedom of

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speech and the diversified political and professional background of the local press after 1997. The media are still free to report on government scandals and criticize government policies. Newspapers are hard to escape from the subtle political and economic pressures. It was shaped by a combination of different factors including state control, the political economy of the media, media professionalism and actions of civil society (Ma, 2007). This somehow explains why newspapers in Hong Kong project such a paradoxical public image.

Media is regarded as the “Fourth Estate” in Hong Kong. The public expects media to be the one to monitor the government and tycoons and to voice for the unvoiced. The media act as the mediator between people and the decision makers. In fact, people tend to view the media favorably if it carries out the watchdog function and keeps the public interest at heart. They believe that media scrutiny helps to keep government officials in line. The public also expect that news reports to stick to the facts instead of embedding a lot of interpretations. However, the public witnessed the increase in inaccurate and biased reporting in the past few years. Many people also envisaged that there will be more control and repression from China after 1997 (Lee, 1998). This makes the society doubtful about media ethics and so concerned about media’s rights and responsibility. Media credibility becomes an important issue to explore. People rely on press to get information about the reality as most events cannot be known directly. Media plays an essential role in painting the picture of the reality. They can construct, amplify, dramatize or minimize the impact of an event.

Most of the previous studies on media credibility compare the credibility rating of the entire media types. Schweiger (2000) pointed out that the difference within media types may in fact be stronger than between them. This study is going to examine the content of the local press and investigate audience’s perception of press credibility in Hong Kong. It attempts to compare the credibility rating across different newspapers and explore how press credibility relates to news sources and the circulation/readership.

Literature Review

Norman Mailer (1960), an American writer, claimed that “once a newspaper touches a story, the facts are lost forever, even to the protagonists”. Media concerns more about getting a good story than worrying about hurting people. It seems that balanced and neutral reporting is difficult to attain, if not impossible. Media credibility has long been the focus of study by both academic and commercial researchers. It was examined in laboratory experiments and also posed in surveys. Credibility is an important issue to study because it reflects public’s trust toward the media in some ways. It is an index to indicate the health of the media. If the public fails to trust the news media, the nation’s ability to inform the public and to monitor the leaders may be severely hampered (Gaziano, 1988). The large number of media credibility studies is probably due to this perceived importance of the issue.

Credibility

Credibility is a complex and multidimensional construct (Gaziano and McGrath, 1986; Meyer, 1988). It is believed that multitude of operational definitions of credibility should be used. Flanagin and Metzger (2000) proposed that the consistent definition for credibility is believability, accuracy, trustworthiness, and completeness of information. Accuracy, believability and factualness are the three commonly identified items oriented toward the content of information. There are a number of other indicators, such as how the media treat certain groups, media treatment of the average person, if the media act as a watchdog over government officials, if there are too much coverage of “bad news”, etc.

There is considerable popular agreement that the media contain political bias, but there is much less agreement about the direction of that bias (Gaziano, 1988). A number of studies attempted to explore audiences’ perception of media credibility in Hong Kong. So and Chan (2006) conducted a survey in 2006. They surveyed 527 Hong Kong adults and asked them to evaluate the credibility score of the local media with a 0 to 10 scale. Newspaper scores 6.26

out of 10 as compare to 6.82 for the electronic media. Respondents regarded *South China Morning Post* as the most credible newspaper in Hong Kong, followed by *Ming Pao*, and *Hong Kong Economic Journal*. *Ta Kung Pao*, *Wen Wei Po* and *The Sun* received the lowest credibility ratings in the study. The Public Opinion Programme, the University of Hong Kong also conducted a survey about the credibility rating of Hong Kong news media in general and recorded a similar rating of 6.29 (HKUPOP, 2008).

So and Chan (2006) pointed out that there are a number of factors affecting the credibility rating of Hong Kong media, which include media type and media content. Government tends to monitor strictly on electronic media as it displays information in dual mode, both audio and visual. As a result, the content appeared in electronic media is relatively “clean” so it usually receives higher credibility ranking. Newspapers with too much sensationalized, pornographic, and violence coverage was perceived to be less credible. In Hong Kong, a number of the mass newspapers such as *Apple Daily*, *HK Daily News*, *Oriental Daily*, *Sing Pao*, and *The Sun* were frequently accused as including too much sensational, erotic and violent content. On the contrary, *HK Economic Journal*, *HK Economic Times*, *HK Standard*, *Ming Pao*, and *South China Morning Post* were regarded as elite/quality newspapers for their accurate, fair and balanced reporting. It was, thus, hypothesized that:

H1: Respondents perceive elite/quality newspapers to be more credible.

Credibility and News sources

Reporters were sometimes accused for not balancing their sources in an article. They were blamed as treating certain groups such as business people and power holders too favorably while ignoring the others (e.g. young people, senior citizens). Previous studies showed mixed results on the relationship between credibility and news sources. Austin and Dong (1994) studied effects of message types and source reputation on judgments of credibility. They discovered that participants based judgments of news credibility more on

the apparent reality of the message content than on source reputation. In other words, a story stands or falls largely on its merits, regardless of who is quoted in the story. Cozma (2006) conducted an experimental study and found that risk stories with multiple sources were perceived as more credible than the single-source stories.

Though the use of anonymous sources is a long-standing practice in journalism, it has aroused considerable debate. Smith (2007) conducted an experimental study and found that respondents gave similar credibility ratings to named and unnamed versions of story. Other studies indicated that trustworthiness of a source's knowledge on a topic may influence the way a message is perceived. Some editors opposed to anonymous sources with the argument that it undermines news/reporters' credibility. Readers may want to know where the information comes from as it builds confidence when they know it. Many news organizations, including USA Today, The Washington Post and the Associated Press adopted new rules on the use of anonymous sources (Strupp, 2004). Neuharth (2004) even suggested journalists at all levels to ban anonymous sources. It was hypothesized that:

H2a: Respondents rate newspapers with diversified sources as more credible.

H2b: Respondents rate newspapers quoting more unnamed sources as less credible.

Credibility and Readership

There is a common belief that credibility is related to utilization and circulation. People tend to consider the media types they used the most to be the most credible. Schweiger (2000) examined if use experiences strongly influence credibility judgment. The study found that people trust the outlets they regularly use more. In other words, people tend to be less critical of "their media" than of "the media" (Bogart, 1984). Gaziano (1988) proposed that if the public does not believe or trust the press, they are less likely to pay attention to it.

Previous studies seem to suggest that low assessments of newspaper credibility are associated with low levels of newspaper use. However, Blake and Wyatt (2002) reanalyzed

studies' data and found no relationship between newspaper credibility and frequency of newspaper reading. It suggested that credibility and circulation or readership may in fact disconnect. The success of *Apple Daily* in Hong Kong proved that newspaper credibility may not be an essential factor for sales volume. *Apple Daily* continues to enjoy the second largest circulation in the territory though it was blamed as including too much sensational news (Leung, 2006). This somehow suggested that newspaper could continue to report pseudo-events without affecting the sales volume. In other words, people's judgments concerning the credibility of a news story may be more complicated than many have assumed.

H3a: Respondents generally rate newspapers with more readers to be more credible.

H3b: Newspaper credibility is correlated with readership. Respondents tend to rate the newspaper they read the most as the most credible.

Westley and Severin (1964) carried out a comprehensive analysis of channel credibility across different media outlets. They found that certain demographic variables, such as age and education, mediate people's perceptions of channel credibility. A recent study conducted by Gunther (1992) also has similar findings. Whitney's (1985) study showed that some people within the public are particularly critical of the media. They stand at the end of the socioeconomic spectrum, characterized as high education, incomes, media use, and high knowledge and personal experience with media. It is believed that this cohort tends to scrutinize newspapers carefully and they probably will perceive quality newspapers to be more credible. Therefore the following hypothesis was posed:

H4: Respondents who are younger, with higher education and income level tend to perceive elite/quality newspapers to be more credible.

Methodology

The research was divided into two phases: The first phase involved a content analysis of fourteen local daily newspapers currently in circulation in Hong Kong. The fourteen newspapers are *Apple Daily*, *HK Commercial Daily*, *HK Daily News*, *HK Economic Journal*, *HK Economic Times*, *HK Standard*, *Oriental Daily*, *Ming Pao*, *South China Morning Post*, *Sing Pao*, *Sing Tao Daily*, *Ta Kung Pao*, *The Sun*, and *Wen Wei Po*. A coding protocol was set up to analyze news stories in terms of themes of the story, story's headlines, news sources, locality of the story, etc. Systematic sampling technique (constructed week) was employed to sample for newspaper issues of the year 2007. A total of 27,797 news stories (including local news, international news and news about Mainland China and Taiwan) between 1st January and 31st December 2007 were content analyzed. Fourteen undergraduate students competent in Chinese and English were recruited as coders. They were trained and tested to code 10 stories before performing the coding. To examine the inter-coder reliability, ten-percent of the sample (news stories) was then randomly selected and re-examined by two undergraduate students for reliability checking. The discrepancies of the coders were resolved by the researchers. The inter-coder reliability on each of the variables was quite high and all meet the requirement of the minimum reliability level of 85% as specified by Kassirjian (1977).

The second phase involved a survey study to explore the reader's perception toward Hong Kong news media's performance. A random telephone survey was conducted during the period of 17 September to 2 October and 5 to 12 November 2008. All interviewers deployed to carry out the survey have been trained and briefed before the fieldwork was conducted. A total of 2,025 permanent Hong Kong residents age 18 or above were successfully interviewed. The overall response rate of the survey was 68.7% and the standard sampling error for percentages based on the sample was less than 1.6 percentage points. The study explored audience's reading habit, the newspaper they believed to be the most credible one in Hong Kong and the criteria they used to make such judgment. We understood that credibility is an

extremely complicated concept which involves different dimensions and aspects. Attitudes toward credibility of the media with relatively few indicators may be misleading. However, it is impossible to ask a lengthy questionnaire through the telephone. In this study, the respondents were invited to assess the perceived credibility of Hong Kong newspapers. They were asked to choose one newspaper they believe to be the most credible in Hong Kong. One may argue that different people have different interpretation of the concept “credibility”. The focus here is the relative/comparative score of credibility for different newspapers.

Results and Findings

Altogether 27,797 news stories were content analyzed and the telephone survey successfully interviewed a total of 2,025 permanent Hong Kong residents. The final data sets were screened and the result found no severe univariate outliers. Table 1 illustrated the number of news stories for each newspaper that were analyzed. Table 2 showed the demographics of the respondents. About half of the respondents were male and half were female. The distribution of the sample is quite similar to the figures generated by the Census and Statistics Department (2008). It is convinced that the sample could be representative of the community across a wide range of media use habits and perception.

Apple Daily, *Oriental Daily* and *Ming Pao* are the three most popular newspapers in the pool (see Table 3). The three free newspapers, *Hong Kong Headline*, *Metro Hong Kong* and *AM730* are also well-liked by the respondents. Less than five respondents reported that *HK Standard*, *Ta Kung Pao*, *Wen Wei Po* and *HK Commercial Daily* are the newspapers they read the most. In view of this, some analyses in the later part excluded these four newspapers. One-fourth of the respondents opted *Ming Pao* to be the most credible newspaper in Hong Kong, followed by *Oriental Daily* and *Apple Daily*. *Ming Pao*, regarded as a quality newspaper in Hong Kong, was perceived to be the most credible newspaper by the respondents. However, a substantial proportion of the respondents also found that the two

mass newspapers are the most credible. Therefore hypothesis one was only partially supported. Though most respondents are able to indicate the newspaper they believed to be the most credible, about one-fifth expressed difficulty in giving a definite answer.

Table 4 detailed the breakdown of the different news sources cited by different newspapers. *Ming Pao*, *Oriental Daily* and *Apple Daily* are the three newspapers which cited the most opinions from a diversified news sources. The three newspapers are also perceived to be the three most credible newspapers in Hong Kong. Hypothesis 2a was thus supported. Respondents tend to rate newspapers with diversified sources as more credible. Results of the content analysis revealed that *Sing Tao Daily*, *Ming Pao* and *Apple Daily* are the three newspapers which quoted a lot of unnamed sources. However, these three newspapers received top ranking in credibility. Therefore hypothesis 2b was not supported. It is suggested that newspapers quoting more unnamed sources were not necessarily perceived to be less credible.

Results indicated that respondents regarded the three most popular newspapers as the most credible newspapers in Hong Kong though the orders are different (see Table 3). *Apple Daily*, *Oriental Daily* and *Ming Pao* are the three newspapers with the most readers and they are also chosen to be the three most credible newspapers in Hong Kong. Therefore hypothesis 3a was supported. A cross-tab analysis showed that readers do not necessarily consider the newspaper they read the most as the most credible one (see Table 5). Though readers of the elite/quality newspapers tend to choose the newspaper they read as the most credible, a relatively high proportion of readers of *Apple Daily* and the three free newspapers chose *Ming Pao* as the most credible one. Many non-*Ming Pao* readers also considered *Ming Pao* as the most credible newspaper. The results do not indicate that newspaper credibility is correlated with readership. Therefore hypothesis 3b was not supported.

A sub-sample analysis of the three most credible newspapers showed that *Oriental Daily* and *Apple Daily* were top-ranked by older readers, those of low and

medium education level, and people with relatively low household income (see Table 6). *Ming Pao* is ranked first in credibility by younger readers, people with medium and high education level, and those of relatively higher household income. The results seem to agree with what we proposed in hypothesis 4. Respondents who are younger, with higher education and income level tend to perceive elite/quality newspaper to be more credible.

Discussion and Conclusion

The study showed that *Apple Daily*, *Oriental Daily* and *Ming Pao* are the three newspapers read the most. They are also the newspapers perceived to be the most credible. The three free newspapers, *Hong Kong Headline*, *Metro Hong Kong* and *AM730* are also well-liked by the respondents. Free newspapers have high circulation in Hong Kong. They have good distribution network (at the MTR stations and on the street). Free newspapers are smaller and thinner in size as compare to the traditional newspapers and thus contain relatively less sensationalized content and have comparatively neutral standpoint. The results showed that some readers perceived free newspapers to be more credible than some of the mass press or tabloid like *Sing Pao* and *The Sun*.

The core of credibility is trustfulness. It builds on audience's trust and identification toward a newspaper. Credibility is a virtual asset that a newspaper gained in a long period of time. It reflects the reputation, authority and the influence that the newspaper may cause among the public. The study obtained a somewhat different pattern in credibility rating as in So and Chan's (2006) study. Though *Ming Pao* continues to have high ranking in credibility, the two mass newspapers *Oriental Daily* and *Apple Daily* also received relatively high score. *Ming Pao*, an elite-oriented newspaper, has posited itself as a neutral commentator on debates between the Chinese government and local democrats in Hong Kong (Lee, 2007). It has adopted the rhetoric of objectivity in its editorials and is well liked by the

public for its professionalism. This, to some extent, explains why many people perceived it to be the most credible newspaper in Hong Kong.

Nevertheless, it was rather surprised to find that a substantial proportion of Hong Kong people in this study perceive the two mass newspapers to be the most credible newspaper in Hong Kong. *Apple Daily* and *Oriental Daily* were ranked in the lower end in credibility rating in So and Chan's (2006) survey. Previous study also revealed that media professionals considered the mass newspapers to be the least credible (Sze, 2006). Hong Kong public repeatedly reported that they are upset by overdramatization and sensationalism in the press. Mass newspapers are frequently labeled as sensational, biased and exaggerated. Among them, *Apple Daily* and *Oriental Daily* are the two under heavy criticism from time to time. However, they are also the newspapers with the largest circulation in Hong Kong. Their popularity is probably due to the fact that they have a very sharp and firm political stance, especially for *Apple Daily*. *Apple Daily*, with a firm pro-democracy stand, adopts political criticism of the Chinese and Hong Kong governments as a marketing strategy. As a result, people too often see it reports things that are considered to be anti-Hong Kong government or even anti-Chinese government. It posited itself as a defender of the public interest when it is in conflicts with the government. News organizations earn public support and have a higher credibility ranking if they do not depart from public's views. It is obvious that Hong Kong public tends to identify with news organizations that think from their sides.

Newspapers cited opinions from a diversified news sources were perceived to be more credible. It suggested that the public appreciate news stories that can balance their sources. There are also other social benefits from using multiple sources, such as reflecting the pluralism of a community and giving voice to those who are not often heard. Therefore news professionals and journalism educators should try to balance multiple sources in an article. Many people opposed to the use of anonymous sources with the belief that it undermines news credibility. Our study showed that newspapers quoting more unnamed sources were not

necessarily perceived to be less credible. In other words, readers may take into account more than the lack or presence of anonymous sources when they judge a newspaper's credibility.

Many respondents in the study do not choose the newspaper they are reading as the most credible one. This suggests that credibility is not the most important factor for public to decide which newspaper to read. Most respondents reported that they choose a particular newspaper to read out of "inertia". Some may choose a particular newspaper to read because of the stance of the newspaper or the promotional coupons come along with it. The study proved that credibility does not equal to readership. It is quite sure that most of the respondents do not think about credibility when they choose to read a particular newspaper. If one ask the public if the newspapers--*South China Morning Post*, *Hong Kong Economic Journal*, *Hong Kong Economic Times*, *Hong Kong Standard*--are credible. Most of them will think that they are credible even though they may not have read them beforehand. In fact, the circulation of these newspapers is not as high as the mass newspapers. It implies that the judgment of credibility is a kind of impression or intuition more than a rational belief. It is obvious that most, if no all, of the respondents haven't read all the newspapers. They definitely cannot differentiate the difference between *Hong Kong Commercial Daily* and *Hong Kong Daily News*, nor can they distinguish the discrepancy between *South China Morning Post* and *Hong Kong Standard*. Therefore the judgment of news credibility is based on a general impression toward the newspapers instead of a rational diagnosis. The idea that credibility estimation of a particular newspaper is based on the experience with the concrete media product may be incorrect.

Limitations and Future Studies

The survey requested respondents to choose the newspaper they believed to be the most credible. It could be true that different people judge news credibility differently. It is hard to find a set of objective criteria to measure news credibility. Future studies may consider

operationally define credibility in several aspects, such as if the newspaper reports the truth, if the news story includes any own interpretation, if the newspaper contains many sensational news, etc. Besides, the study is based on data from a cross-sectional survey therefore we could not detect patterns over time. It is believed that newspaper with an extremely low credibility will fade out in the long run. Longitudinal study is urged to trace the changes. In addition, provided the prevalence and popularity of the electronic media, future studies may include them for analysis. Information from working journalists about motivation, intention and constraints on the message production and how they assess news credibility should be sought as well. Past research found that newspaper credibility significantly declined in relation to frequency and severity of errors (Maier, 2005). It is suggested that further studies could be conducted to investigate newspaper accuracy and how errors affect newspaper credibility. Studies could be conducted to check if typos, mistake, spelling errors tend to corrode the credibility of a newspaper.

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Table 1 Number of news stories analyzed.

Newspaper	No. of news stories analyzed	Percentage
<i>Oriental Daily</i>	3657	13.2
<i>Ta Kung Pao</i>	3055	11.0
<i>Apple Daily</i>	2562	9.2
<i>Wen Wei Po</i>	2542	9.1
<i>Sing Tao Daily</i>	2489	9.0
<i>The Sun</i>	2399	8.6
<i>Ming Pao</i>	2201	7.9
<i>HK Daily News</i>	1724	6.2
<i>Sing Pao</i>	1409	5.1
<i>South China Morning Post</i>	1389	5.0
<i>HK Commercial Daily</i>	1317	4.7
<i>HK Economic Journal</i>	1293	4.7
<i>HK Economic Times</i>	948	3.4
<i>HK Standard</i>	812	2.9
Total	27797	100.0

Table 2 Demographics of respondents.

Demographics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	2025	100
Male	925	45.7
Female	1100	54.3
Age Group	1960	100
18-25	323	16.5
26-35	264	13.5
36-45	401	20.5
46-55	483	24.6
56 or above	489	24.9
Education Level	2007	100
Primary or below	345	17.2
Secondary	888	44.2
Technical institute/college	167	8.3
Tertiary/university or above	607	30.2
Monthly Household Income	1859	100
Less than \$10,000	309	16.6
\$10,000-\$19,999	437	23.5
\$20,000-\$29,999	373	20.1
\$30,000-\$39,999	222	11.9
\$40,000-\$49,999	116	6.2
\$50,000或以上	245	13.2
Unclear	157	8.4

Table 3 Newspaper readership and readers' perception of the most credible newspaper in Hong Kong.

Newspaper	Readership		Credibility	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Apple Daily</i>	534	27.9	155	7.7
<i>Oriental Daily</i>	525	27.4	301	15
<i>Ming Pao</i>	149	7.8	503	25
<i>The Sun</i>	90	4.7	26	1.3
<i>Sing Tao Daily</i>	80	4.2	148	7.4
<i>HK Economic Times</i>	49	2.6	94	4.7
<i>HK Economic Journal</i>	33	1.7	126	6.3
<i>Sing Pao</i>	19	1.0	33	1.6
<i>South China Morning Post</i>	16	0.8	55	2.7
<i>HK Daily News</i>	16	0.8	6	0.3
<i>HK Standard</i>	4	0.2	NA	NA
<i>Ta Kung Pao</i>	3	0.2	NA	NA
<i>Wen Wei Po</i>	3	0.2	NA	NA
<i>HK Commercial Daily</i>	1	0.1	NA	NA
Free newspaper	305	16	77	3.7
Online news	65	3.4	2	0.1
None of the newspapers	NA	NA	33	1.6
Don't know / Hard to say	22	1.1	418	20.8
Total	1914	100.1*	1977	98.2^

* The percentages did not add up to 100% due to rounding.

^ The total did not add up to 100% since newspapers (include *HK Standard*, *Ta Kung Pao*, *Wen Wei Po* and *HK Commercial Daily*) with less than five readers were not analyzed.

Table 4 Proportion of news stories cited opinions from government officials, corporate, professionals/academic, ordinary people and unnamed sources.

Newspaper	Government officials	Ordinary people	Professionals /academic	Corporate	Unnamed sources	Total*
<i>Ming Pao</i>	1026	622	583	316	343	2890
<i>Oriental Daily</i>	1265	685	366	347	222	2885
<i>Apple Daily</i>	737	814	474	328	295	2648
<i>Sing Tao Daily</i>	958	550	295	339	436	2578
<i>Hong Kong Daily News</i>	886	502	254	348	253	2243
<i>HKEconomic Journal</i>	732	102	350	488	273	1945
<i>The Sun</i>	491	525	283	223	225	1747
<i>South China Morning Post</i>	855	301	286	196	37	1675
<i>Sing Pao</i>	630	377	273	215	131	1626
<i>Hong Kong Economic Times</i>	500	156	258	245	127	1286
Total	8607	4806	3580	3192	2389	22574

Note: Some figures may be larger than the total number of stories analyzed since a news story could cite more than one source.

Table 5 News credibility and readership.

Credibility Readership	<i>Ming Pao</i>	<i>HK Economic Journal</i>	<i>HK Economic Times</i>	<i>Sing Tao Daily</i>	<i>Oriental Daily</i>	<i>Sing Pao</i>	<i>HK Daily</i>	<i>SCMP</i>	<i>Apple Daily</i>	<i>The Sun</i>	Free	Online News	Don't know	Total#
<i>Ming Pao</i>	102 (69.9)	15 (10.3)	2 (1.4)	3 (2.1)	2 (1.4)	1 (0.7)	1 (0.7)	6 (4.1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (1.4)	0 (0)	8 (5.5)	142 (97.5)
<i>HK Economic Journal</i>	4 (12.1)	22 (66.7)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (3.0)	0 (0)	1 (3.0)	0 (0)	5 (15.2)	33 (100)
<i>HK Economic Times</i>	8 (16.7)	5 (10.4)	24 (50)	1 (2.1)	2 (4.2)	1 (2.1)	0 (0)	2 (4.2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (8.3)	47 (98)
<i>Sing Tao Daily</i>	18 (22.5)	6 (7.5)	5 (6.3)	37 (46.3)	3 (3.8)	1 (1.3)	0 (0)	5 (6.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (2.5)	0 (0)	3 (3.8)	80 (100)
<i>Oriental Daily</i>	91 (17.7)	16 (3.1)	15 (2.9)	29 (5.6)	191 (37.2)	8 (1.6)	0 (0)	9 (1.8)	11 (2.1)	2 (0.4)	14 (2.7)	1 (0.2)	116 (22.6)	503 (97.9)
<i>Sing Pao</i>	2 (10.5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (5.3)	1 (5.3)	6 (31.6)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	8 (42.1)	18 (89.5)
<i>HK Daily</i>	0 (0)	2 (12.5)	0 (0)	1 (6.3)	1 (6.3)	0 (0)	5 (31.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (6.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	6 (37.5)	16 (100)
<i>SCMP</i>	5 (31.3)	2 (12.5)	1 (6.3)	3 (18.8)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (25)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (6.3)	16 (100)
<i>Apple Daily</i>	142 (27.6)	37 (7.2)	27 (5.2)	34 (6.6)	23 (4.5)	4 (0.8)	0 (0)	13 (2.5)	109 (21.2)	1 (0.2)	18 (3.5)	0 (0)	99 (19.2)	507 (98.5)
<i>The Sun</i>	12 (13.3)	3 (3.3)	0 (0)	6 (6.7)	15 (16.7)	3 (3.3)	0 (0)	2 (2.2)	3 (3.3)	17 (18.9)	4 (4.4)	0 (0)	25 (27.8)	90 (99.9)
Free	86 (29.0)	7 (2.4)	9 (3.0)	29 (9.8)	32 (10.8)	4 (1.3)	0 (0)	5 (1.7)	21 (7.1)	5 (1.7)	33 (11.1)	0 (0)	62 (20.9)	293 (98.8)
Online News	25 (39.7)	4 (6.3)	5 (7.9)	1 (1.6)	7 (11.1)	1 (1.6)	0 (0)	5 (7.9)	2 (3.2)	0 (0)	1 (1.6)	1 (1.6)	10 (15.9)	62 (98.4)
Total	495 (26.9)	119 (6.5)	88 (4.8)	145 (7.9)	277 (15.1)	29 (1.6)	6 (0.3)	51 (2.8)	147 (8)	26 (1.4)	75 (4.1)	2 (0.1)	347 (18.9)	1807 (98.4)

Note: The total did not add up to 100% since newspapers with less than five readers were not analyzed.

Table 6 News credibility by demographics.

Newspapers	Age Group				Education Level			Household Income			
	35 or below	36-45	46-55	56 or above	Primary school or below	Secondary/ High school	College/ university or above	Less than \$20k	\$20-\$29k	\$30-\$39k	\$40k or above
<i>Ming Pao</i>	216 (43.8)	105 (21.3)	120 (24.3)	52 (10.5)	31 (6.2)	242 (48.4)	227 (45.4)	143 (30)	106 (22.3)	76 (16)	120 (25.2)
<i>Oriental Daily</i>	78 (27.1)	55 (19.1)	75 (26)	80 (27.8)	75 (25.2)	184 (61.7)	39 (13.1)	154 (55.6)	53 (19.1)	24 (8.7)	20 (7.2)
<i>Apple Daily</i>	40 (26.7)	23 (15.3)	44 (29.3)	43 (28.7)	29 (18.7)	99 (63.8)	27 (17.4)	60 (43.8)	31 (22.6)	21 (15.3)	17 (12.4)