Restructuring Digital Media Consumption Behaviors under the Influence of Algorithms and Digital Platforms

PhD. Thi Tuyet Minh NGUYEN[1]
minhminhajc@gmail.com
MSc. Thi Minh Tam VU[2]
vuthiminhtam@daihochalong.edu.vn
[1] Academy of Journalism and Communication
[2] Ha Long University

Received: 28/8/2025 Received in Revised Form: 12/9/2025 Accepted: 28/5/2026

Abstract: *This article analyzes the structural transformation of the digital media ecosystem under the combined influence of platform capitalism, algorithmic personalization, and evolving audience behaviors. Drawing on three representative global datasets, Deloitte's Digital Media Trends 2025, Kantar Media's 2025 Media Trends and Predictions, and Kantar TGI's Global Quick View 2025, the study examines how generational differences shape media consumption and how AI-driven recommendation systems reconfigure patterns of trust, engagement, and perceived value. The findings highlight three key dynamics: the ascendancy of social video platforms as primary media hubs, the fragility of subscription-based models amid declining loyalty and high churn rates, and the reconstitution of public trust through creator-led ecosystems and mediated algorithmically interactions. These results are interpreted through the theoretical lenses of media fragmentation, audience evolution, and algorithmic ethics. This offered both conceptual insights and practical recommendations for media organizations, platform designers, and policymakers navigating the challenges of a platformized communication environment.*

Keywords: *digital media; algorithmic personalization; audience evolution; social video platforms; relational trust.*

1. Introduction

The global media and entertainment landscape is undergoing a structural transformation that is unprecedented in both scale and speed. This transformation is propelled by three converging forces. This included the expansion of digital technologies, the consolidation of platform-based

economic models, and fundamental shifts in how audiences consume and value media. Streaming video-on-demand (SVOD) services once promised to redefine television by offering a subscription-based alternative to linear broadcasting. Yet, the spectacular growth of social video platforms, coupled with the increasing integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into recommendation and personalization systems, has reconfigured the dynamics of content production, distribution, and reception. These developments suggest that the traditional subscription model is no longer the unquestioned center of digital media economies.

Industry data illustrate the intensity of this restructuring. Specifically, Deloitte's Digital Media Trends 2025 report indicates that American consumers spend, on average, six hours per day on digital media, a figure that has remained relatively stable in recent years [1]. Rather than demonstrating stability, this plateau signals saturation of the attention economy, where platforms compete for finite cognitive resources. In this environment, social video platforms, such as TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram Reels, have assumed central roles. They capture disproportionate shares of global advertising budgets, and redefine the logic of media engagement through AI-driven algorithms that deliver hyper-personalized content streams. These mechanisms position platforms as gatekeepers of attention, privileging algorithmic relevance over editorial authority. In contrast, SVOD services confront mounting challenges. Younger audiences, particularly Generation Z and Millennials, are growing skeptical of the value of paid subscriptions. Kantar Media (2025) reports that 46% of U.S. users exhibit boomerang behavior they sign up briefly to watch a single program and then cancel immediately after. At the same time, more than half of global consumers (58%) express willingness to accept advertisements in exchange for reduced subscription fees [2, 3]. Such behaviors point to a systemic shift from exclusive, paywalled ecosystems to hybrid models that combine subscription and advertising revenue streams. The shift reflects changing sensitivity to costs as well as broader cultural preferences for flexibility and immediacy. These economic and behavioral shifts intersect with marked generational differences.

These economic and behavioral changes intersect with significant generational differences. Younger audiences devote more time to short-form, mobile-first video content than to long-form television or cinema. More importantly, they place higher levels of trust in social media creators than in conventional celebrities. This transition signals a profound reconfiguration of the trust paradigm. Parasocial relationships with influencers and micro-creators are increasingly replacing the hierarchical celebrity-fan model. Audiences now

construct loyalty through perceived authenticity, emotional resonance, and continuous interaction rather than through institutional authority.

The restructuring of digital media raises pressing theoretical and practical questions. At stake are the future of professional journalism, the sustainability of content monetization models, the ethical limits of synthetic media, and the role of algorithmic governance in shaping public knowledge. This study investigates how social platforms, generative AI, and shifting user practices together reshape the structure of the digital media ecosystem. With platforms merging and user pathways becoming less predictable, producers and distributors are forced to rethink value, engagement design, and the safeguarding of trust. Drawing on secondary data from three globally representative sources, Deloitte's Digital Media Trends (N = 3,595), Kantar Media's Media Trends and Predictions, and Kantar TGI's Global Quick View (N = 84,000 users across 37 countries) [2], the research investigates two central questions: **RQ1.** How do generational differences shape media consumption across SVOD and social video platforms? **RQ2.** In what ways are AI-driven personalization and synthetic content reshaping user trust, attention, and platform engagement?

Through an integrative analysis that combines quantitative indicators with thematic synthesis, the paper aims to advance theoretical debates on audience evolution and algorithmic ethics while offering practical insights for researchers, media strategists, and policymakers operating in an increasingly platformized communication environment.

2. Literature review

2.1. Media fragmentation and audience behavior

The notion of media fragmentation has become central to contemporary media studies, capturing the ways in which audience attention is increasingly distributed across a growing number of platforms, formats, and devices. Napoli (2011) conceptualizes fragmentation as both a driver and an outcome of technological innovation, content proliferation, and the intensification of personalization [4]. The abundance of available options, coupled with algorithmically curated feeds, has produced an environment in which audiences rarely rely on a single medium as their primary source of information or entertainment. Despite improving user selection and diversity, this abundance also challenges traditional broadcast-era business models' ability to maintain audiences' loyalty and continuity.

From an economic standpoint, disintegration undermines established monetization mechanisms. In the past, advertising and subscription models relied on stable audience flows that were predictable. In fragmented settings,

loyalty is negatively impacted as users switch between competing services in a fluid manner. Webster (2014) identifies attention as the critical scarce resource under these conditions. What matters is not simply audience size but the duration and intensity of engagement. Media producers are thus compelled to compete not only for initial contact but also for sustained interaction measured in minutes of viewing, frequency of return visits, or levels of active participation. The transformation alters success measures, redefining retention, interactivity and relational depth in preference for aggregate reach.

Empirical evidence highlights the scale of this change. Deloitte's *Digital Media Trends 2025* report indicates that Generation Z and Millennials the cohorts most deeply embedded in digital cultures, spend an average of six hours per day with media but distribute this time across at least five different activities or platforms [3]. Rarely is their attention concentrated in one location. Instead, they consume content through a mix of short-form videos, interactive social media streams, and on-demand services. Such practices highlight the nonlinear and multitasking nature of digital consumption, where engagement is episodic, dispersed, and shaped by algorithmic cues rather than linear scheduling. At a structural level, this mode of consumption makes long-term loyalty fragile and contingent, raising critical concerns about the sustainability of revenue models, the resilience of journalistic institutions, and the broader implications of fragmented attention for democratic discourse and cultural cohesion.

2.2. Platform capitalism and the rise of social video

The emergence of platform capitalism represents one of the most defining structural shifts in the media economy of the twenty-first century. Srnicek (2017) describes platform capitalism as an economic model in which digital platforms act as intermediaries that extract value by transforming user interactions into data, deploying algorithmic recommendation systems, and monetizing attention at scale [6]. Unlike earlier media industries that relied primarily on content ownership and distribution control, platforms thrive on their ability to orchestrate ecosystems of participation, where users simultaneously function as consumers, data providers, and distributors. This organizational logic situates platforms not merely as conduits for media but as infrastructures that actively structure social and cultural life.

The logic of platform capitalism is best exemplified by social video platforms like TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram Reels in this model. They have achieved success by utilizing machine learning algorithms that are optimized for engagement to analyze and process all interactions, including likes. Over 60% of all digital consumers worldwide are currently discovering new content

through algorithmically recommended feeds, as per a report by Kantar Media in 2025, rather than actively searching [2]. Algorithmic control is gaining importance in this phenomenon as it allows platforms to determine content visibility, priority, and distribution while also providing cultural value. In this setting, transparent algorithmic systems are supplanting traditional editors and cultural intermediaries with commercial incentives that emphasize virality (e.g, retention) and monetizable engagement. A structural change from the SVOD model is being implemented through the development of social video platforms. Some subscription-based services, such as Netflix and Disney+, are closed ecosystems that charge subscribers and offer special libraries.

On the flip side, social networks are based on openness/modularity/virtuality due to algorithmic discovery of content rather than specific searches [7]. A participatory architecture can enable the reimagining, redistribution and reuse of content over various platforms, leading to increased circulation and the elimination of traditional editorial control. Its effects are far-reaching, as users not only consume content but also engage in its dissemination, becoming key players in both the creation and distribution of it. This improves the scale and accessibility of media, but it also accelerates disconnection and increases the reliance of creators and audiences on platform infrastructures.

The political economy of the media is being redesigned by platform capitalism, with the rise of social video from a critical perspective. Instead of providing a stable revenue stream, this value is deferred to data-controlled monetization where advertising is preferred compared to subscriptions. Their structural advantages can be seen in the fact that platforms can record global advertising budgets at the expense of traditional transmitters and SVOD providers. However, this domination is not neutral. The recommendations provide important concerns regarding the impact of algorithms on cultural participation, public trust and political discourse, and government transparency and accountability.

2.3. Parasocial relationships and creator-led influence

Modern media culture has witnessed a significant shift towards embracing the creator economy, which involves influencers, live streamers, and micro-celebrities as key players in influencing audience engagement. According to Horton and Wohl (1956), the way in which parasocial relationships develop is related to one emotional bond between media figures and audiences. Initially, this concept focused primarily on connections with television and radio presenters. However, it includes a wider range of creators who are easier to reach through social media. Real-world examples show how this type of

connection has grown. About half of Gen Z and millennials feel a stronger emotional connection with social media creators than regular actors and television [1], as Deloitte (2025) discovered. Kantar TGI (2025) also found that when influencers recommend a product, people are more likely to buy compared to traditional advertising. This shows that trust comes from trusting large institutions and brands that are real, honest and feel assigned. This change is supported by the way social platforms work, allowing creators to stay active with live streams, short videos and direct chats with followers. This helps to establish deeper and more personal connections with many people [8].

From a theoretical perspective, the rise of parasocial interactions in the platform age demonstrates a broader shift in power dynamics. By promoting inclusion and diversity, democratization enables a new participatory culture. Nevertheless, it undermines ethical and professional standards. While journalists and radio operators are obligated to follow their behavioral skills, influencers are not bound by universal verification standards and are obliged to explain media misconduct and public interest. Perceived authenticity is important in persuasive power than formal expert knowledge, leading to tensions between emotional magnetism and information trust. The results are twice. The rise of creative influence requires traditional media organizations to change the way stories and public strategies to better integrate the interactive style and visual grammar of social platforms. Second, this raises serious questions about the government. Whether it's misinformation, the echo room, or the commercialization of intimacy.

2.4. Synthetic media, algorithmic personalization, and ethical implications

Research increasingly shows the risks associated with this change. Karami, Shemshaki, and Ghazanfar (2024) highlight three important areas: behavioral manipulation, data protection violations, and algorithmic bias. These risks are no longer mere speculation [9]. Social media algorithms have been accused of promoting content and promoting conflict and extremist views, leading to increased user engagement and shame. Creating filter bubbles and echo chambers via personalization logic can lead to narrowing information gaps, which polarizes public opinion. These mechanisms are called personalization logic because they limit diversity. According to Chen et al. (2024) Four ethical paradoxes arise in these scenarios. The struggle for independence between personalization and independence, reduced editorial accountability, increased echo chamber accuracy, and reduced checkability of AI creative content [10]. The difficulties in the logic of a reconciliation platform aimed at efficiency with the normative values of democratic communication are evident in all paradoxes.

Changes in content commitment and formation of knowledge differences are the result of algorithmic personalization at the structure level. According to Moravec et al. (2025), algorithmic personalization tends to reinforce existing knowledge gaps by repeatedly exposing users to familiar information, which reduces their access to alternative viewpoints [11. Socioeconomic and cultural boundaries show significant effects that contribute to large differences in information capital. Thus, personalization technology has been praised for its relevance, but it also has structural imbalances in the distribution of knowledge and can promote public discussion.

The problem is exacerbated by synthetic media, creating a double standard between the real and manufactured content. In addition to the risk of privacy and personal reputation, deep-fark or synthetic media also undermine the reliability of information systems. Despite the fact that these technologies can improve accessibility. By automating translation or production costs, they also undermine traditional measures of reliability, legitimacy and credibility. However, the rise of synthetic media in areas such as journalism, education, and political communication raises considerable questions about maintaining truth and trust in the digital field. As a result, the ethical risks associated with these changes are twice as large as those of traditional information technology. Combined with the personalization of artificial media and algorithms, it can provide content delivery with unprecedented efficiency and scaling. On the other hand, they put collaborative information resources at risk by focusing on relevance rather than accuracy and convenience. These tensions need to be addressed through both technical measures, such as transparent architecture, algorithmic auditing and content provenance labeling, and cultural and institutional responses, including the increased use of algorithms for literacy, public regulation, a renewed emphasis on editorial responsibility. It is crucial to maintain a balance between democratic accountability and innovation in managing AI-mediated media environments, while also ensuring that personalization technologies are not harmful to informed citizens.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

The study employs a content analysis model that is grounded in theory and allows for the systematic examination of secondary data within existing conceptual models of media dispersion, audience dynamics, and algorithmic regulation. Coding of the data was divided into three analytical axes: platform type (e.g, subscription video-on-demand versus social video platforms), content mode (professionally produced compared to user-generated content),

and personalization level (editorially curated or algorithmically cultivated). By emphasizing cross-platform comparison, the research design moves away from a single-case description and towards embracing broader patterns of convergence and divergence in global media usage through elaboration.

3.2. Data sources

The study relies on three secondary datasets that are internationally recognized for their methodological rigor and global reach, including Deloitte's Digital Media Trends 2025, Kantar Media's 2025 Media Trends and Predictions, and Kantar TGI's Global Digital and Tech Trends 2025 - Global Quick View. Particularly, it draws on a nationally representative U.S. survey of 3,595 respondents aged 14 and older [2, 3]. The dataset provides detailed insights into SVOD usage, subscription churn, advertising acceptance, perceived content value, and cross-platform consumption behaviors. Next, a global trends report that integrates quantitative data with strategic forecasts. It offers a macro-level perspective on the convergence of digital media, technological innovation, and communication ethics, with particular emphasis on AI-driven personalization and the governance of synthetic media ecosystems. Finally, a large-scale international survey spanning 37 countries and 84,000 respondents. The dataset captures comparative patterns in media consumption, adoption of ad-supported models, and demographic variations in digital engagement. Its breadth provides a robust basis for cross-national analysis and for testing the generalizability of findings.

3.3. Analytical framework

The analysis procedure follows a three-stage framework to maximize interpretation values for secondary data, simultaneously ensuring internal consistency between sources.

Stage 1: Descriptive statistics extraction. Important metrics were identified from the Deloitte and Canthal TGI datasets. Includes subscription retention rate, platform sandwich behavior, cross-platform time allocation, and ad acceptance levels. These indicators determined basic line measurements regarding generation and platform-specific media use.

Stage 2: Thematic content analysis. Data were coded according to three theoretical frameworks: (a) media fragmentation [4], (b) parasocial interaction and the evolution of audience trust [8], and (c) algorithmic personalization and ethical implications [9]. This stage highlighted how empirical trends intersect with conceptual debates, around attention scarcity, trust realignment, and the risks of synthetic media.

Stage 3: Cross-source triangulation. Findings were compared across the three datasets to assess consistency and identify convergences or divergences.

Particular attention was paid to three dimensions: (1) the sustainability of SVOD usage across generations, (2) emotional attachment and trust toward creators on social platforms, and (3) user perceptions of credibility and ethical concerns regarding AI-mediated personalization.

4. Findings

4.1. The rise of social video platforms as media hubs

The findings from all three datasets converge on the conclusion that social video platforms have become the dominant hubs of digital content consumption, particularly for younger demographics such as Generation Z and Millennials. TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram Reels have grown into primary spaces where audiences dedicate much of their daily attention, rather than acting only as supplementary channels. According to Deloitte (2025), 63% of Gen Z and 49% of Millennials find social platform advertising more influential in shaping purchasing decisions than ads on SVOD or traditional television [1]. This demonstrates a decisive reallocation of advertising influence and audience engagement away from linear and subscription-based models and toward interactive, algorithmically curated ecosystems.

This is a strong emphasis on short content, and especially on mobile formats, which highlights the central role of social platforms in today's media landscape. Kantar TGI, a data analysis firm, shows that almost 54% of users aged 16-34 believe that short social videos are more relevant and engaging than longer episodic or extended programs [2]. It reflects a wider structural shift in media consumption: Rather than being limited to extended narratives or episodic formats, the emphasis has been on immediacy, personalization and shareability. The preferences also support Napoli's (2011) theory of media fragmentation, where audiences no longer focus on one source exclusively, but rather share their experience across multiple content streams that they consume rapidly and easily [4]. Apart from distribution, social video platforms of today are major sources of content discovery. More than 60% of global users are able to discover new content through algorithm-generated feeds, according to 2025's Kantar Media [2]. This discovery emphasizes the increasing impact of algorithmic regulation, as platforms' recommendation mechanisms shape perceived benefits, influence consumption patterns, and shape cultural hierarchies. In this context, content producers have less sway over how their content is distributed, as algorithms determine the conditions for discovery and distribution. The outcomes demonstrate that social video platforms are not only transforming consumption habits but also the media ecosystem. They take over the role of central hubs that were previously held by broadcast television and SVOD models, positioning

themselves as intermediaries and centerers of attention in the digital age. They have the ability to control audience time and shape cultural engagement, advertising flows, and trust and influence within a participatory logic that is platform-based. Additionally, they are dominant in their own domains.

4.2. Erosion of perceived value in SVOD services

While the expansion of SVOD services once signaled the future of digital television, the empirical data reveal mounting evidence of structural fatigue within the subscription model. According to Deloitte (2025), 41 percent of U.S. consumers believe that the content offered by SVOD platforms does not justify the cost of subscription [1]. This sentiment is primarily driven by content redundancy, a perceived lack of novelty, and frustration with frequent price increases. Such findings indicate that consumer expectations are evolving beyond access to vast libraries of content; instead, value is increasingly assessed in terms of uniqueness, affordability, and flexibility.

Subscriber cancelation patterns highlight the SVOD model's instability. In the United States, more than three-quarters of internet users (39 percent) have resorted to canceling all SVOD services within six months, with Generation Z and Millennials making up over half of these users [1]. The act of boomerang usage by Kantar Media (2025) is characterized as the situation where customers subscribe to watch certain programs or movies for a limited time before cancelling. This pattern diminishes the financial predictability of the subscription model that has relied on long-term retention and recurring revenue streams. A decrease in younger audience participation due to cancellations is a consequence of changing consumption patterns and the decreasing loyalty towards SVOD platforms as primary entertainment providers. Increasingly, consumers are turning away from traditional subscription-based access to more advertising by using these models. Kantar TGI (1925) reports that 58% of worldwide users willingly accept adverts in return for discounted or no-cost subscription prices [3]. The inclination suggests that consumers are changing their perspective on value and giving more importance to cost-effectiveness rather than uninterrupted, ad-free experiences. Hulu, Amazon Freevee, and YouTube Premium Lite are examples of hybrid platforms that offer affordable content while providing access to diverse online content. This is reflected in this trend. The data indicates that SVOD services are entering a period of instability, marked by lowered value, high churn rates, and increased competition from advertising-supported and hybrid models. Due to the declining level of customer loyalty, long-term sustainability of subscription based platforms cannot be guaranteed without

considering exclusivity and scale. They must instead rethink their pricing strategies, integrate options that involve advertising, and tame their value propositions to accommodate generational shifts in media consumption and expectations for flexibility.

4.3. Creator economies, AI, and the reconfiguration of trust

The research's third significant revelation centers on the crucial role of content creators in restoring trust and authenticity in the digital media realm. Millennials and Generation Z are more likely to have an emotional connection with independent creators than traditional media figures, as evidenced by the data. Approximately half of those surveyed by Deloitte (2025) reported that they felt stronger personal connections with creators on social media as actors, journalists, or television devices [1]. This shift is the result of institutional trust, which is replaced by relationships, trust, transparency and emotional responses in the trust model. The creator's influence on consumer behavior is so powerful that it is persuasive. In 2025, Kantar TGI discovered that when a product is supported by its creator, it receives product support compared to traditional advertising ads. Not only does manufacturers act as key nodes in the context of the digital marketing ecosystem, they also influence consumption patterns and brand loyalty as key knots. Their success is due to the fact that they can build a parasocial relationship that simulates intimacy and continuity through live streaming, interactive capabilities and continued presence on social platforms. Audience identification is deepened by these interactive practices, with creators acting as both cultural mediators and commercial actors.

The fusion of AI and algorithmic recommendation systems makes reliability even more difficult. AI-controlled personalization improves the perceived value of content, allowing users to interact with creators and their own stories. Deloitte (2025) notes that algorithmically curated feeds are often more accurate and useful for users than content found in active searches [1]. Conversely, the use of algorithmic controls presents new weaknesses. According to Kantar Media (2025), AI-controlled markings create a distinction between fact and fiction. 60% of global users are concerned that mass media can affect the truthfulness of information [2]. These concerns are compounded by the prevalence of fake deepfakes and synthetic content, which raises questions about trustworthiness, verification, and the stability of knowledge within media settings. Hence, the reformulation of trust in digital media shows a double trend: the empowerment of creators as true defence makers and the reinforcement of algorithmic systems as invisible judges of credibility and legitimacy. Despite the fact that creators offer new forms of emotional engagement and perceived authenticity, their impact is

closely tied to the type of recommendation architectures that extend their reach. When combined, these factors lead to an environment of trust that intensifies personalization, emotional resonance, and commercial power, while also posing ethical challenges for algorithmic media organization and media fragility.

5. Discussion

5.1. Platformization and the fragility of subscription - based models

The instability is consistent with Srnicek's (2017) argument that platform capitalism prioritizes interaction and data exploitation over conventional methods of generating revenue [6]. Although SVOD services remain static, the subscription-based ecosystem is at a disadvantage when compared to hybrid models like YouTube or Amazon, which combine AV content with premium subscription tiers. Moreover, the structure of these hybrid platforms is more flexible due to their ability to monetize attention through various channels and distribute risk across advertising, subscriptions, and other services. On the other hand, subscription-based services are highly susceptible to changes in consumer willingness to pay in saturated markets, where competing platforms offer overlapping content libraries. Webster (2014) suggests that SVOD services are vulnerable to the attention economy, which is evident in their ability to capture audience attention sustainably while competing with social video platforms [5]. The younger generation displays a liking for short-form material, prioritizes mobile access, and favors algorithmically recommended content over lengthy series. According to Napoli's (2011) theory of audience evolution, users are no longer governed by fixed schedule or media consumption patterns but rather by on-demand, personalized, and fragmented consumption pathways [4]. Subscription-based models lose their comparative edge as consumers increasingly prefer platforms that provide immediacy, customization, and engagement. This study reveals that SVOD services are not only facing cyclical obstacles but are also experiencing structural limitations within their business models. SVOD providers face the challenge of competing with open, hybrid, and algorithmically optimized platforms without adopting appropriate platform logics, such as layered monetization, algorithmic exploration, or participatory content ecosystems. This puts them at risk of being marginalized.

5.2. From institutional trust to relational trust - the rise of parasocial influence

A second key implication of the findings concerns the shift from institutional trust to relational trust as the basis of audience engagement in digital media environments. Traditional media institutions, television networks, newspapers,

and broadcast journalists, once occupied a privileged role as authoritative gatekeepers of information. Their credibility derived from institutional structures, professional norms, and editorial accountability In contrast, younger audiences today are grounding their trust more in personalized, affective relationships with content creators, whose perceived authenticity, accessibility, and continuity foster a new form of parasocial attachment.

Horton and Wohl (1956) proposed the original parasocial interaction theory, which explains how audiences form emotionally meaningful relationships with media figures through this transition. Technological features in the platform age enhance these interactions by enabling creators to maintain an on-demand presence through live streams, short stories, interactive comments, and enhanced presence with algorithms. Almost half of the Generation Z and Millennials feel more connected to influencers than traditional celebrities, as reported by Deloitte (2025). The evidence indicates that relational trust, which is based on perceived authenticity and emotional resonance, has begun to replace institutional trust due to organizational reliability. This shift has two time effects. Democratizing influence diversifies cultural discourse and allows audiences to deal with more assignable and visible numbers. This opens up a new form of participatory story. Promotion of inclusiveness requires this dynamic hierarchy of representation in traditional media elites. However, transferring trust into a decentralized authored network represents a major challenge in terms of accountability and reliability. In contrast to journalists and broadcasters, influencers and creators work primarily in unregulated environments where commercial incentives can blur the boundaries between actual representation and sponsored convictions. This distinction is not always clear.

The implementation of algorithms becomes more complicated, and instead of journalistic criteria such as accuracy, balance, and public value, platforms based on commitment metrics can be prioritized. This makes transitions difficult. This leads to an increase in the parasocial influence of mechanisms. This emphasizes emotional strength over information integrity, leading to the commercialization of echo chambers, misinformation on socially acceptable topics, and intimacy. While creators can improve their connections and loyalty, they bring new weaknesses to the information world through their actions as trust becomes more personalized. It is conveyed by algorithms and intertwined with commercial conditions. Changes in institutional trust in relational trusts are not only cultural change, but also a framework of trustworthiness in digital communication.

5.3. Algorithmic personalization and the ethics of curated reality

One of the three main degrees is that algorithm personalization is an inherent ethical challenge. It has become a trademark of modern media consumption. Powered by an AI-driven recommendation system, viewers can access and prioritize information. Personalization improves user-friendly, efficiency and relevance by providing content that is relevant to the user's intent. When you look for content, algorithmically curated sources are considered more accurately and at the user level. This suggests the trust of implicit algorithms. The result is the result from the result, not from the opaque process that is generated with this trust. Using a black box curation system means a system that undermines user autonomy and prioritizes commitment rather than integrity.

One of the three primary conclusions is that algorithmic personalization poses inherent ethical challenges. It has become a hallmark of modern media consumption. Audiences are now able to access and prioritize information through the use of AI-powered recommendation systems [1]. Personalization improves ease of use, efficiency and relevance by providing content that is relevant to user intent on one hand. However, it also brings about structural risks that weaken information diversity and undermine editorial accountability as well as cognitive trust. Rather than actively searching for content, algorithmically curated sources are often seen as more accurate and engaging at the user level. Implicit algorithmic trust is suggested by this. Confidence is derived from the results, not from opaque processes that produce them, in this trust. The use of the black box curation system undermines user autonomy and results in reliance on systems that prioritize engagement rather than integrity [9].

Solutions to these challenges include a combination of technical and social measures. Responsibility can be recovered by implementing transparent architectures such as algorithm auditing, which clarifies the functionality of recommendations and source labels. Improving the knowledge of algorithms is extremely important so that citizens can interpret processes that critically influence the information environment. In the absence of intervention, algorithmic personalization offers an opportunity to essentially normalize nature such as the efficiency of balance of truth or diversity related to democratic accountability or personalize balance. However, the promise and risk of algorithm personalization in the context of the platform Medien ecosystem is also highlighted. This allows for unprecedented efficiency in adapting content to user preferences and redefining public life perception frameworks. Therefore, the ethical tensions arising from digital media should

be considered more as a structural factor at the heart of his governance than as a peripheral concern.

6. Conclusion and recommendations

Through the increasing role of artificial intelligence in platform logic interactions, audience behavior, and personalization, this study analyzed the continuous reconstruction of ecosystems aimed at digital media. Research shows that social video platforms are taking SVOD services as the main mode of consumption, especially among younger audiences. The SVOD model was once considered the future of digital television, but is now facing declines in value, high immigration rates and an increasing popularity of hybrid advertising support forms. Audiences connected more with independent creators and restored relationships with the institution rather than institutional structures. These changes raise new opportunities for commitment, personalization and voice diversity among people, but also introduce structural risks. Perceived inequality between cultures, reduced accountability for editing in the context of pressure cultures, and increased sensitivity to synthetic media. These findings hold multiple weights for practitioners and policymakers. The integration of advertising and subscription streams, along with the enhancement of discovery and engagement features, necessitates media providers to adopt more adaptable business models. Heritage organizations must adapt storytelling formats to suit audience preferences for short and interactive content. Moreover, technology platforms must demonstrate transparency and accountability in algorithmic recommendation systems. The urgency for policymakers to create regulatory mechanisms that address issues of algorithmic discrimination, filter bubbles and misinformation while also safeguarding and promoting content for the public good is pressing. Digital literacy and advanced algorithms are necessary to enable audiences to critically assess and navigate curated media environments. Sustainability of digital media is dependent on the ability of various stakeholders to maintain equity, transparency, and democratic accountability within platform ecosystems./.

REFERENCES

[1]. Deloitte. (2025). Digital Media Trends. Deloitte Insights. https://www.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/technology/digital-media-trends-consumption-habits-survey/2025.html.

[2]. Kantar Media. (2025). Media Trends and Predictions. Kantar. https://markatanacsado.hu/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Kantar-Media_2025-Media-Trends-and-Predictions-Report_ENG.pdf.

[3]. Kantar TGI. (2025). Global Digital and Tech Trends 2025 – TGI Global Quick View. https://www.kantarmedia.com/reports/global-digital-media-and-tech-trends-report-2025.

[4]. Napoli, P. M. (2011). Audience evolution: New technologies and the transformation of media audiences. Columbia University Press.

[5]. Webster, J. G. (2014). The marketplace of attention: How audiences take shape in a digital age. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/9892.001.0001.

[6]. Srnicek, N. (2017). Platform capitalism. Polity Press.

[7]. Helmond, A. (2015). The platformization of the web: Making web data platform ready. Social media+ society, 1(2), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305115603080.

[8]. Horton, D., & Wohl, R. R. (1956). Mass communication and para - social interaction: Observations on intimacy at a distance. Psychiatry, 19(3), 215–229. https://doi.org/10.1080/00332747.1956.11023049.

[9]. Karami, A., Shemshaki, M., & Ghazanfar, M. A. (2024). Exploring the ethical implications of AI - powered personalization in digital marketing. Data Intelligence, 7(4), 1035-1084. https://doi.org/10.3724/2096-7004.di.2024.0055.

[10]. Chen, Y. S., Tang, Y. C., & Chen, C. (2024). The Ethical Deliberation of Generative AI in Media Applications. Emerging Media, 2(2), 259-276. https://doi.org/10.1177/27523543241277563.

[11]. Moravec, V., Hynek, N., Skare, M., Gavurova, B., & Polishchuk, V. (2025). Algorithmic personalization: A study of knowledge gaps and digital media literacy. Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 12(341). https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-025-04593-6.