A Systematic Literature Review of the Causal Framework of Personal News Curation on Social Media

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Abstract

The changing hierarchical relationship between mass media consumers and media content producers in the information age has given rise to extensive research on personal news curation. This study presents a systematic overview of previous studies on social media users' personal news curation practices. In the study of personal news curation practices on social media, gaps in themes, theories, variables, and conceptual frameworks are to be found and filled by means of this systematic review of the literature. The goal of the study is to provide a causal framework that illustrates the connections between the various research items.Twenty papers that were taken from the Scopus, Google Scholar and Web of Science databases are reviewed using the PRISMA method. Two main study themes, fifteen theories or models, and a comprehensive causality framework emerged from the examination.We recommend that future research on the personal news curation practices provide empirical studies on different types especially the personal productive news curation on social media, widen the field of research and adopt different theories or models according to the new social media environments and contexts. Researchers are also expected to adopt a more complete and detailed systematic approach to review the literature on the study of personal news curation on social media.

Keywords: social media, news curation, personal, systematic literature review, causal framework

1. Introduction

With the information age, the way people receive news has changed dramatically. Traditional newspapers, television and radio are gradually being replaced by the internet and social media, and the hierarchical relationship between mass media consumers and media content producers is further breaking down, making news curation an increasingly important way of disseminating news (Bruns, 2021; Hermida, Fletcher, Korell, & Logan, 2015). Essentially, "curation" refers to people adding their own commentary to collected and organized content (Davis, 2017).According to Thorson & Wells (2016), curation is about selecting and organizing, filtering the richness of content into a manageable size, a smaller shape to satisfy a composite of informational or strategic needs. Rosenbaum (2011) suggests that the curation of news is a way of identifying important stories, discovering thematic ideas, providing context for the information, and interpreting the significance of fragmented information, implying that the curator searches for the content of the information and categorizes it, interpreting it in a particular context. In other words, news curation is a way for curators to add value to information content by collecting, reading, and combining it (Huang, 2014).

On social media platforms, the process of "curation" involves the production, selection, screening, annotation, or framing of content, a process that is carried out by a variety of participants, including not only traditional gatekeepers, but also other participants, such as individual social media users (Merten, 2021). Among them, the personal curation practices of social media users play a determining role in customizing their own information base (Merten, 2021). According to Davis (2017), news curation is decomposed into two curatorial practices, production and consumption. Productive curation refers to the selection of material to be shared and displayed, specifically, the way people distribute content and how, when, and with whom they share it. Nonetheless, consumptive curation describes attention allocation, or the decisions people make about how to divide their time in a congested information economy. Examples of these decisions include skimming, muting, and following on social media (Davis, 2017).

The news curation practices of personal users on social media are particularly notable (Stroud, Peacock, & Curry, 2020). In terms of productive news curation, personal users of social media have become an essential part of the media environment as creators, both of news content that is subjectively produced by individual users, and content that becomes 'distributable' as a result of user-led online sharing (Jenkins, Ford, & Green, 2013), and even personal users of social media have become sources of breaking news or commentators on published news (Hermida, 2014). Previous research has found that although news users do not usually consider themselves journalists, they are happy to engage their subjective views on the news in the journalistic process. The social attributes of being connected to social networks, the desire for expression, and political participation motivate news users to play a role in news content creation (Lotan, Graeff, Ananny, Gaffney, & Pearce, 2011; Robinson, 2011).

Regarding consumptive news curation, in a media ecosystem flooded with information, news consumers' insatiable thirst for high-quality information keeps driving the use of a range of curated news, from broadcasting and sharing news with others on the web to editing, evaluating, and re-creating already-existing news (Bruns, 2015; Lu & Luqiu, 2020). To some extent, social media news feeds are purposefully selected by content editors, and users can reduce the amount of news they are likely to see by changing their followings and settings for news organizations; however, this process is contingent, with journalists' news gatekeeping and algorithmic filtering preventing users from having full control over what, where, and when the news is promoted. Therefore, the practice of personal news curation on social media is one of the effective mechanisms for balancing, counteracting or complementing other content curation (Zuiderveen Borgesius, Trilling, Möller, Bodó, De Vreese, & Helberger, 2016)

1.1 Problem Statement

In order to provide a framework for a systematic investigation of the personal news curation practices of social media users, this study creates a causal relationship structure. This provides greater evidence for future studies into the topics, theories, variables, and conceptual frameworks of social media users' personal news curation practices by looking at the connections between variables in earlier study. Additionally, this study will help users of social media and other news-related actors understand the reasons for their own personal news curation practices on the platform and offer new insights for future research in related topics.

1.2 A Systematic Review Framework for the Study of Personal News Curation Practices on Social Media

Systematic reviews are used several important goals: they can synthesize the vast amount of knowledge in a field, which makes it possible to determine research priorities for the future; they may investigate issues that individual studies are unable to address; they can recognize shortcomings in primary research that should be fixed in subsequent studies; and they can produce or evaluate theories regarding the causes or mechanisms of phenomena (Page et al., 2021). A systematic review's objective is to investigate various designs and concepts through the application of mixed, qualitative, and quantitative approaches (Wong, Greenhalgh, Westhorp, Buckingham, & Pawson, 2013). Systematic reviews are especially useful for explaining the development of concepts since they provide a wealth of information that can be reproduced (Pluye & Hong, 2014).

What are the topics theories, and conceptual frameworks for the analysis of personal social media news curation practices is the primary inquiry for this study. In order to identify the causal relationships between the structures that had been used in the research, this study aims at building a causal framework. In order to gain an overview of personal news curation on social media, the primary goals of this study are to thoroughly investigate and assess the present state of personal news curation practices on these platforms.

2. Methods

This study utilized the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) as a review methodology. The search databases chosen were Scopus, Google Scholar and Web of Science. This section describes the four elements of the adopted method: publication standards (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, Altman, & The, 2009), resources used, systematic literature review process, and data analysis strategy.

2.1 PRISMA

The PRISMA criteria, which are intended to assist systematic evaluators in reporting clearly about the purpose of the evaluation, the actions taken by the authors, and the results they discovered, were applied in this literature review (Page et al., 2021).According to Sierra-Correa & Cantera Kintz (2015), PRISMA is famous for three main strengths: (a) precisely defining the study issue; (b) using strict inclusion and exclusion criteria for screening; and (c) conducting a time-limited search of relevant databases. As a result, PRISMA made it possible to actively search for scholarly studies and classified data relevant to personal social media news curation practices. The search procedure is listed in Figure 1.
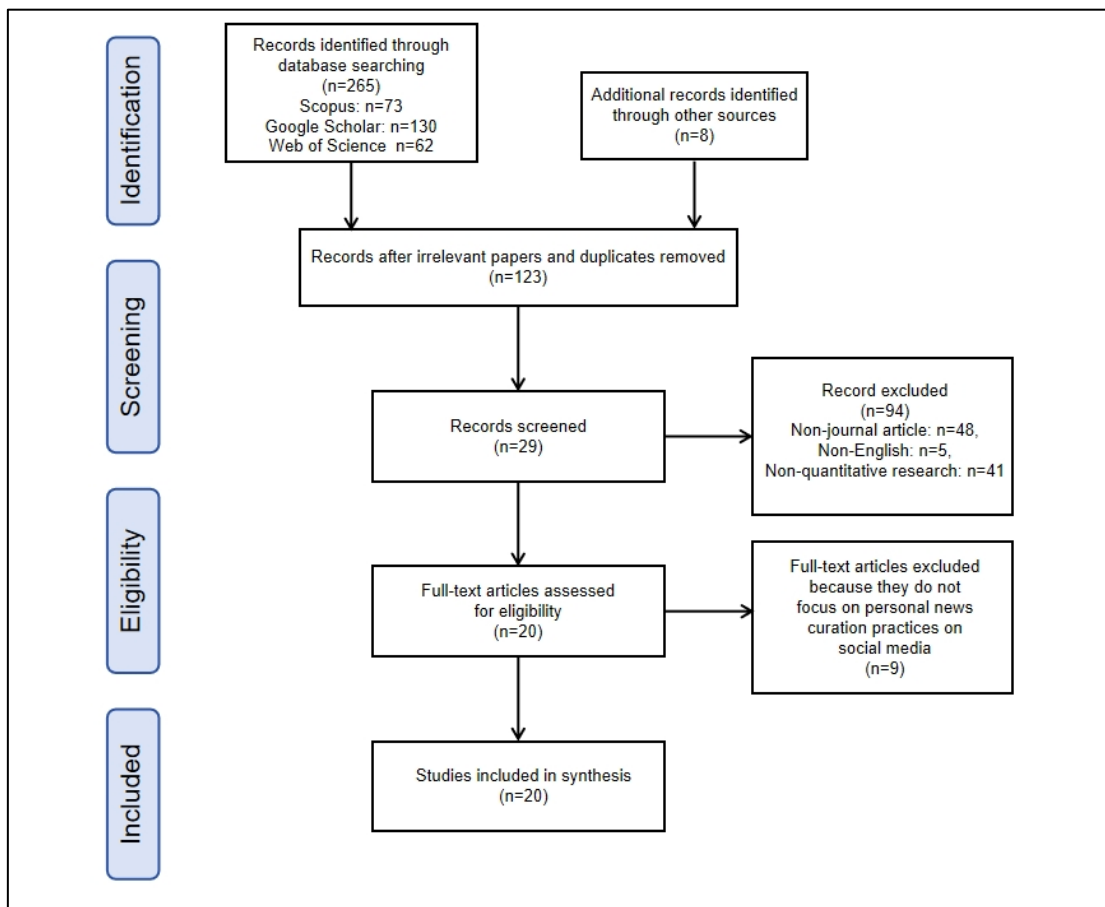
Figure 1. Flow diagram of this review study

Source. Adapted from Moher et al. (2009).

2.2 Resources

In this study, three well-known databases have been selected: Scopus, Google Scholar and Web of Science(WoS).

Scopus is one of the world's largest abstract and citation databases, designed and developed by 21 research institutions and over 300 scientists worldwide. It covers the world's widest range of abstracts, references and indexes of literature from all disciplines. It provides the possibility of including as wide a collection of literature as possible in a systematic literature review.Google Scholar is a Google web application that allows searching of scholarly articles for free. The index includes the vast majority of the world's published academic journals, covering a wide range of subjects in the natural sciences, humanities, and social sciences, making it an easy way to search extensively for academic literature. Web of Science is one of the largest and most comprehensive academic information resources in the world, including the most influential SCI, SSCI and AHCI core academic journals in natural sciences, social sciences, biomedical sciences and other research fields.The strengths of these three databases provide a very important basis for the inclusion of literature and the quality of results in this review.

2.3 Systematic Review Process

2.3.1 Identification

The primary function of the April 2024 stage in the systematic review process was to select keywords for the information search. A relevant keyword for social media and personal news curation was recommended by prior research, synonyms, dictionaries, and databases (see Table 1). 73 articles from Scopus, 130 articles from Google Scholar, 62 articles from Web of Science, and 8 articles from additional sources were obtained in the first stage. There were 123 valid documents left after duplicates and unnecessary items were carefully removed (see Figure 1).

Table 1. Keywords and Information Search Strategy

Database	Keywords
Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY ({social media} OR {social media users} OR {social media usage}) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ({news curation} OR {curate news} OR {news production} OR {news consumption}) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ({personal} OR {individual})
Google Scholar	allintitle: "social media"OR"social media use"OR"social media users"OR"social media usage"AND "news curation"OR"curate news"OR"news consumption"OR"news production"
Web of Science (WoS)	TI=(((social media) OR (social media use) OR (social media users) OR (social media usage))AND ((news curation) OR (curate news) OR (news production) OR (news consumption)))

2.3.2 Screening

Applying inclusion and exclusion criteria led to screening as the second step of the systematic review approach (refer to Table 2). The first condition is to only include research articles published in journals; books, preprints, magazines, papers, conference proceedings, and reviews are not included. Language is the second criteria. Only English publications are included to reduce meaning distortion due to translation and to overcome language challenges. As the third criterion focuses on the causal structure of personal news curation practices on social media, only papers utilizing quantitative research methodologies should be chosen.

Table 2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criterion	Included	Excluded
Literature type	Journals (research articles)	Journals (review papers), books, preprints, book chapters, series, theses, and conference proceedings
Language	English	Non-English
Research method	Quantitative	Qualitative, mixed methods

2.3.3 Eligibility

The procedure of manually including or excluding literature items based on established criteria for the study question and objectives is referred to as eligibility. In this study, every article that was retrieved was thoroughly reviewed, and only those that satisfied all requirements were included. The 123 relevant papers that remain after the removal of 142 duplicates and irrelevant articles related to the research question go through the eligibility process. 20 articles are kept for synthesis after the titles, abstracts, and full texts are manually selected after the application of the inclusion and exclusion criteria (see Figure 1).

2.3.4 Quality Appraisal

The Appraisal Tool for Cross-Sectional Studies (AXIS tool), which is the main assessment tool, is the basis for evaluating the quality of the remaining 20 papers (Downes, Brennan, Williams, & Dean, 2016). To evaluate the quality, each article has been divided into three categories: high, medium, and low quality (Goldsmith, Bankhead, & Austoker, 2007). Considering the outstanding quality of all 20 papers, our analysis confirms the continuation of all 20 articles.

2.4 Data Analytic Strategy

A total of 20 relevant articles are finally included in this study as well as analyzed and discussed. This systematic literature review includes three steps in the data extraction process; firstly, the titles of the articles reviewed, secondly, the abstracts, and finally, This study uses a qualitative approach to synthesize literature and data to identify research topics, theories/models, and conceptual frameworks. Qualitative methods are used in this study to synthesize the literature and data to identify topics, theories/models, variables, and research frameworks through content analysis to create a causal framework that structurally analyzes research theories/models and conceptual frameworks used in previous studies.

3. Results

The review finds that the majority of authors chose to focus on consumptive news curation. 14 of the 20 reviewed articles chose to focus on consumptive news curation (Merten, 2021; Wu-Ouyang, 2024; Strauß, Huber, & Gil de Zúñiga, 2020; Toff & Kalogeropoulos, 2020; Lee, Lindsey, & Kim , 2017; Su, Xiao, Borah, Hong, & Sun, 2022; Wohn

& Ahmadi, 2019; Zhang, Akhter, Nassani, & Haffar, 2022; Tunney, Thorson, & Chen, 2021; Park, 2019a; Song, Jung, & Kim, 2017;Lee, Chan, Chen, Nielsen, & Fletcher, 2019; Lu, 2020; Abu-Ayyash, AlAhmad, & Kukali, 2024), 1 article chose to focus on productive news curation (Hermida et al., 2015), and 5 articles chose to focus on both consumptive and productive news curation (Holton, Coddington, Lewis, & De Zuniga, 2015; Segado-Boj, Díaz-Campo, & Quevedo-Redondo, 2019; Fletcher & Park, 2017; Sang, Lee, Park, Fisher, & Fuller, 2020; Park, 2019b). (see Table 3).

Table 3. Characteristics of the Articles Selected for Analysis

References	News curation type	Topic
Merten (2021)	Consumptive news curation	Predictors of personal news boosting and limiting curation
Wu-Ouyang (2024)	Consumptive news curation	Fear of missing out, news fatigue and personal news curation
Strauß et al. (2020)	Consumptive news curation	A cross-country comparison of incidental news exposure and cross-platform news use
Holton et al. (2015)	Consumptive news curation Productive news curation	Reciprocity and the creation and consumption of news
Segado-Boj et al. (2019)	Consumptive news curation Productive news curation	"News Find Me" and news sharing and consumption
Hermida et al. (2015)	Productive news curation	Predictors of sharing, liking and recommending by social media users
Fletcher & Park (2017)	Consumptive news curation Productive news curation	Media trust and news consumption and participation
Toff & Kalogeropoulos (2020)	Consumptive news curation	The information environment and news avoidance
Sang et al. (2020)	Consumptive news curation Productive news curation	Different interaction patterns of online news users on digital platforms
Lee et al. (2017)	Consumptive news curation	Social media news consumption, news overload and journalistic norms and practices
Su et al. (2022)	Consumptive news curation	Social media consumer news feed curation
Wohn & Ahmadi (2019)	Consumptive news curation	Mobile social media micro-news consumption motivations and habits
Zhang et al. (2022)	Consumptive news curation	News overload, news avoidance and news curation
Tunney et al. (2021)	Consumptive news curation	Following and avoiding fear-inducing news topics
Park (2019b)	Consumptive news curation Productive news curation	Opinion leaders, news consumption and news curation
Park (2019a)	Consumptive news curation	News overload, news efficacy and news avoidance
Song et al. (2017)	Consumptive news curation	News overload and news curation
Lee et al. (2019)	Consumptive news curation	Predictors of consumer news feed curation
Lu (2020)	Consumptive news curation	Predictors of consumer news feed curation
Abu-Ayyash et al. (2024)	Consumptive news curation	Predictors of news consumption for data journalism

Only articles that utilize quantitative research methodologies are selected for this study due to its causal analysis design (see Table 2). In terms of publishing date, five of the articles were published five years ago, while fifteen were published within the last five years.

In antecedent studies of personal news curation practices on social media, the reviewed literature used various theories and models to examine the relationship between news curation and factors such as news interest, news overload, news avoidance, news fatigue, and news trust, as well as included a portion of comparative studies in different national contexts. Table 4 summarizes the 15 theories or models used in the 20 articles. Of these, use and gratification theory (U&G) was used in 3 articles (Merten, 2021; Segado-Boj et al, 2019; Wohn & Ahmadi, 2019). Selective exposure theory was also used in three articles (Merten, 2021; Su et al., 2022; Lee et al., 2019). The stress-strain-outcome model was used in one article (Wu-Ouyang, 2024) and the cognitive mediation model was used in one article (Strauß et al, 2020). Similarly, the structural theory of reciprocity (Holton et al., 2015), persuasion theory (Fletcher & Park, 2017), online behavioral typology (Sang et al., 2020), evolutionary psychology (Tunney et al, 2021), the two-step flow model (Park, 2019b), self-efficacy theory (Park, 2019a), social cognitive theory (Lu, 2020), and domestication theory(Abu-Ayyash et al, 2024) were all used in one article. Cognitive load theory, cognitive tuning theory, and relevance theory were used by one article (Zhang et al., 2022). In addition, four articles did not use any theories or models (Hermida et al., 2015; Toff & Kalogeropoulos , 2020; Lee et al, 2017; Song et al, 2017). These findings suggest gaps that can be filled by future research, especially regarding the different types of research topics and research theories or models of news curation.

Table 4. Summary of Theories and Models Employed in Articles Selected for Analysis

Theory/model	References	No. of articles
Uses and gratifications theory (U&G)	Merten (2021)	3
	Segado-Boj et al. (2019)	
	Wohn & Ahmadi (2019)	
Selective exposure theory	Merten (2021)	3
	Su et al. (2022)	
	Lee et al. (2019)	
Stress-Strain-Outcome model	Wu-Ouyang (2024)	1
Cognitive mediation model	Strauß et al. (2020)	1
Structural theory of reciprocity	Holton et al. (2015)	1
Persuasion theory	Fletcher & Park (2017)	1
Typology of online behaviour	Sang et al. (2020)	1
Evolutionary psychology	Tunney et al.(2021)	1
The two-step flow model	Park (2019b)	1
Self-efficacy theory	Park (2019a)	1
Social cognitive theory	Lu (2020)	1
Cognitive-load theory	Zhang et al. (2022)	1
The cognitive tuning theory	Zhang et al. (2022)	1
Relevance theory	Zhang et al. (2022)	1
Domestication theory	Abu-Ayyash et al. (2024)	1
None	Hermida et al. (2015)	4
	Toff & Kalogeropoulos (2020)	
	Lee et al. (2017)	
	Song et al. (2017)	

4. Discussion

4.1 Theories and Models

As previously mentioned, a range of theories and/or models are used on the research being studied to examine the practices of personal news curation on social media. Analysis reveals that these models are based on two main subjects: communication theories and psychology theories, along with a few theories from various fields.

4.1.1 Psychological Theories

Selective exposure theory.The central idea of selective exposure is that there exists a general psychological preference for information that is consistent with pre-existing beliefs (Freedman & Sears, 1965), it describes the phenomena where

people decide to focus their attention on information that matches their beliefs and attitudes (Festinger, 1962). People try to lessen the cognitive dissonance that results from information that conflicts their preconceived notions by choosing the information to which they are exposed (Sears & Freedman, 1967). For this, two general types of explanations have been proposed - one utilizes a variety of mechanisms through which the individual rejects the inconsistent persuasive information he is confronted with, and the other explains voluntary exposure to information (Freedman & Sears, 1965). As a result, researchers have frequently discussed the connection between users' news interests and their social media curation practices using selective exposure.

Stress-Strain-Outcome model.The "Stress-Strain-Outcome" model was proposed by American sociologist Robert K. Merton in 1938. This model is mainly used to explain the individual's reaction and outcome in the face of social stress. The model describes the psychological and behavioral responses (stress) that individuals have when faced with external pressures (stress), and the outcomes (outcome) that result from these responses (Merton, 2017). According to Koeske & Koeske (1993), stress is defined as environmental stimuli (objective events) that actors perceive and interpret as disturbing and potentially harmful; strain is set as detrimental effects on people's physiology, attention, and emotions, or negative reactions to situational stimuli; and outcome is stated as the long-term behavioral or psychological effects of chronic stress and strain. In research on news curation practices, scholars used the model to incorporate the fear of missing out on information as a predictor.

Cognitive mediation model.The main idea of the cognitive mediation model is that the extent to which people acquire knowledge from media use and exposure is determined by their motivationally induced information processing patterns. An important element of information processing in its theoretical framework, elaborative processing, refers to the way people think about integrating new information with previously accumulated information. In the conceptual meaning of the cognitive mediation model, media users tend to pay attention to media content based on certain motivations, which leads to the thinking and processing of information, and finally to the acquisition of knowledge (Eveland, 2001).Social media's nature facilitates the development of news in the context of curation. Social media interactive tools boost user interaction with material, which encourages more elaboration (Oeldorf-Hirsch, 2018). Therefore, using the cognitive mediation model as a guide, the researcher focuses the study on the relationship between social media news use, news elaboration and knowledge acquisition.

Evolutionary psychology.Evidence from evolutionary psychologists suggests that humans process through mental "modules" that include emotional responses, cognitions, and associated behavioral patterns that have evolved over time as a result of genetically-driven adaptations that increase the possibility of being transmitted their genes (Kenrick & Shiota, 2008; Tooby & Cosmides, 2015). According to evolutionary psychology, humans have developed complicated reaction modules made up of feelings (such fear, rage, or disgust) that are connected to behavior in response to stimuli and cognition (the assessment of the stimulus) (Tooby & Cosmides 2015). In response, scholars have suggested that fear may drive people to seek out and avoid information.

Self-efficacy theory.Self-efficacy is an understanding that a person can influence one's own actions and the circumstances that may impact oneself (Bandura, 1997). People with high self-efficacy have a greater tendency to be actively involved in their work and to rise to challenges and obstacles. On the other hand, people who have low self-efficacy may avoid tough jobs and experience depression when faced with challenges (Bandura, Freeman, & Lightsey, 1999). According to researchers, the degree to which a user has positive confidence in their capacity to find and understand the news they are looking for is what determines how effective social media news is. People are more probable to have a strong sense of self-efficacy if they believe that using a medium satisfies their need for news (Park, 2019a).

Social cognitive theory.The idea of social cognition explains how people perceive and comprehend other people, as well as how they draw conclusions about other people or objects from social cues in their surroundings. The process by which people draw conclusions and pass judgment on the intents, behavioral motives, and mental states of others is known as social cognition. Social cognition is based on a study of pertinent cues as well as the cognizer's prior experiences. and must be conducted through the cognizer's thinking activities, which include some degree of information processing, reasoning, categorization, and induction (Bandura, 1986, 1999, 2009). People lose faith in their ability to obtain the news they desire when there is an abundance of it (Pentina & Tarafdar, 2014). Social media users must believe they have the capacity to appropriately access and comprehend content from social media in order to overcome the problem of news overload. Consequently, social cognition theory is often used by researchers to examine how social media users' perceptions and news curation are related.

Cognitive load theory.In the 1980s, cognitive load theory was developed. According to the theory of cognitive load, the amount of information that a person's cognitive system can handle depends on its capacity. According to Paas, Renk, & Sweller (2003), cognitive load is the result of a learning or problem-solving task being too complicated for a person's cognitive system to handle. Consequently, scholars have suggested that there may be unfavorable effects if technology

is employed excessively (Karr-Wisniewski & Lu, 2010). Due to research, users of news information overload may be suffering from a cognitive disease that prevents or restricts their capacity to obtain knowledge and causes frustration (Savolainen, Timmermans, & Savolainen, 2018).

The cognitive tuning theory.Based on cognitive tuning theory, those who are ready to impart knowledge should have it well-organized, comprehended, and occasionally even memorized since they feel compelled to understand it all (Zajonc, 1960). The central idea of cognitive tuning theory is that individuals feel uncomfortable or unpleasant when they face cognitive inconsistencies (i.e., there is a conflict or contradiction between cognitive elements), and this psychological discomfort is referred to as cognitive dissonance. To reduce this discomfort, individuals take steps to adjust their cognitions to be more consistent with reality (Zajonc, 1960). Accordingly, researchers usually use the cognitive tuning theory as a basis to use the quality of user-perceived news to predict its impact on news curation behavior.

4.1.2 Communication Theories

Uses and gratifications theory.Uses and gratifications theory answers the question of how and why individuals actively use specific media to fulfill specific needs by arguing that people use media based on their personal needs and motivations, not just the delivery of media content. Usage and gratification theory emphasizes the audience's initiative and suggests that audiences choose media and media content to satisfy specific needs, such as information access, entertainment, and social interaction (Ruggiero, 2000). Scholars utilized U&G in the context of news consumption to explore why people select particular news platforms or content (Rubin & Perse, 1987; Ruggiero, 2000), such as social utility, amusement, leisure, and the search for significant, local, and financial information (Wohn & Ahmadi, 2019).

Persuasion theory.Persuasion theory is the theory that examines how people influence others and change their beliefs, attitudes, intentions, or behaviors (Gardikiotis & Crano. 2015).Hovland et al. argued that changes in audience attitudes are influenced by a variety of factors, including characteristics of the communicator, characteristics of the content of the message, persuasive methods and techniques, as well as audience attributes, which the researchers categorized into four categories : communicator factors, communication channel factors, message factors and receiver factors (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953). Accordingly, in news curation practices, scholars have considered that news about the news media can have an impact on news preferences.

The two-step flow model.One of the most important theories in mass communication is the two-step flow model, which first came presented by Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet in 1948. The mass media, opinion leaders, and the general public are the three sets of actors that the model suggests being involved in the dissemination of information. Information first travels through the mass media, then to opinion leaders, and finally to the general public. Opinion leaders have a responsibility to inform and interpret information for the less active sections of the population (Park, 2013). In research in the field of news curation, scholars have continued to develop the two-step flow theory by discussing the relationship that exists between opinion leaders and news consumption on social media.

Domestication theory. Domestication theory provides a framework for understanding how information and communication technologies (ICTs) play a role in people's lives. On the one hand, various ICTs are defined as a range of media, and how these media take their place in people's lives is a concern of domestication theory. On the other hand, domestication theory, with its view that domestication is not a one-time event but an ongoing process, describes the ways in which ICTs can locate new roles in people's lives when their media circumstances change(Berker, Hartmann, & Punie, 2005).

4.1.3 Other Types of Theories

Structural theory of reciprocity.Structural theory of reciprocity is a sociological theory that attempts to explain reciprocal behavior and reciprocal relationships in human societies, this theory emphasizes the fact that reciprocity in social interactions is based on social structures and social relationships and not just mere exchange between individuals, structural theory of reciprocity suggests that reciprocal behaviors are affected by social structures and social relationships that can either facilitate or impede reciprocal behaviors (Molm, 2010). Perugini, Gallucci, Presaghi, & Ercolani (2003) state that there are two ways in which reciprocity can be demonstrated: through perception, or personal views about reciprocal roles in one's life, and through practice, or a set of expected behaviors targeted toward particular social contexts and interaction chances. As such, scholars have used structural theory of reciprocity to discuss personal and social reciprocity in relation to consumer and productive news curation.

Typology of online behavior.Typology of online behaviour refers to a methodology or theory for classifying and generalizing the behavior of Internet users. This typology aims to classify Internet users into different types or groups based on their online behaviors and characteristics, and to describe and analyze their behavioral patterns and preferences (Johnson & Kulpa, 2007). Therefore, when discussing social media personal news curation behaviors, the researchers categorized social media users according to personal factors, demographic variables, and their preferences to analyze their production and consumption preferences for news curation.

Relevance theory.Relevance theory is a framework for cognitive research that was developed primarily to provide psychologically realistic explanations for communication (Allott, 2013). Relevance theory is founded on Grice's succinct "relevance" criterion and describes relevant input as "contributing meaningfully to a person's perception of the world" (Grice, 1975). Relevance is the trade-off between reducing time and effort by getting the most recent information. Crucially, from this perspective, significance is never absolute but rather relative, as individuals will always weigh what is most significant at any particular moment (Barchas-Lichtenstein, Voiklis, Glasser, & Fraser, 2021). Based on the principle of relevance, researchers have argued that the relevance of news is also one of the most important factors influencing the personal news curation on social media.

4.2 Conceptual Frameworks

One of the main objectives of social science research is making conclusions about causality (Imai, Keele, & Tingley, 2010). The causal framework comprises several variable types, including exogenous, mediating, moderating, and endogenous variables (Mohammed, Ferzandi, & Hamilton, 2010). Baron & Kenny (1986) explain that exogenous variables cause endogenous variables, and that mediating variables explain the causality between exogenous and endogenous variables,as well as the moderating variables influence the relationship.

Due to the varied causes and consequences of personal news curation practices in social media, researchers have developed different conceptual frameworks depending on the research area and topic. This study shows the correlations between different variables in previous literature in a causal framework (see Figure 2). When scholars have different perspectives and focuses on personal news curation on social media, the same concept appears in different variable roles in the research framework. For example, news avoidance is considered as a mediating variable in one article (Zhang et al., 2022), but as an endogenous variable in another study (Park, 2019a).
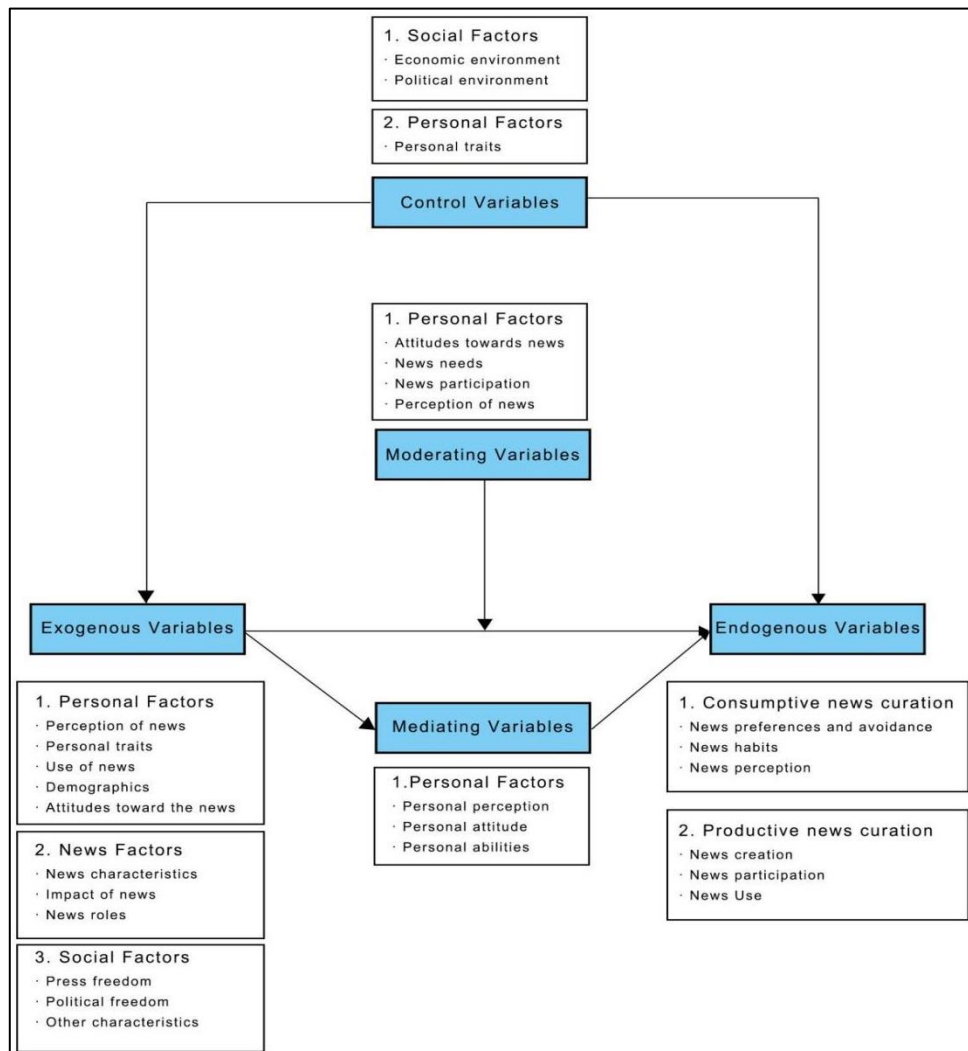

Figure 2. Conceptual framework for research on personal news curation practices on social media

4.2.1 Exogenous Variables

Exogenous variables are output outcomes' predictors in this causal framework. Exogenous variables are divided into three groups in the 20 review articles on social media users' personal news curation practices: personal, news, and societal elements. (see Table 5).

Personal factors are important exogenous variables in the study of personal news curation practices on social media, with the largest number of studies using attitudes toward news as an exogenous variable, 8 in total. Several scholars have examined the relationship between news interest and news avoidance with news boosting and news limiting (Merten, 2021), while the relationship between news interest and news engagement and news consumption has also been discussed in studies (Sang et al., 2020; Su et al., 2022; Lee et al. 2019). While others have examined how the fear of missing news impacts news boosting and news limiting (Wu-Ouyang, 2024). Some studies have also found that trust in news is significantly related to news engagement and use (Strauß et al., 2020; Fletcher & Park, 2017). One study suggests that higher levels of approval of journalists are more likely to contribute to analysis, likes, and recommendations on personal social media (Hermida et al., 2015). Just as important as attitudes toward news is the use of news, which is also examined as an exogenous variable in 8 studies. Several scholars have examined the relationship between social media-related activities and news consumption (Merten, 2021; Lu, 2020), with access to news via social media having a significant effect on selective exposure and avoidance of news (Lee et al., 2017).There are also some scholars who focus on the use of news in terms of how it is used, such as the frequency and time of reading news, and the purpose of using news (dating, news acquisition) (Wohn & Ahmadi , 2019; Sang et al., 2020; Su et al., 2022; Song et al., 2017). Whereas, other scholars have proposed a significant relationship between the level of engagement with news and the consumptive news feed curation (Lee et al., 2019). Perception of news is also one of the important factors influencing personal news curation on social media, with 5 studies using it as an exogenous variable. In this regard, many scholars focused on the perception of news overload, with studies suggesting that users' perception of news overload leads to avoidance, filtering, and curation of news (Tunney et al., 2021; Park, 2019a; Song et al., 2017). Some scholars have included perceptions of news quality in studies of news curation, but the results showed no significant relationship between the two (Zhang et al., 2022). Other scholars have confirmed that social media users' perception of "news finds me", i.e., the perception that people do not need to search for news in an information environment, is positively related to news internalization (Segado-Boj et al., 2019). Furthermore, exogenous variables such as demographics and personality traits are frequently used to predict the predisposing factors of personal news curation practices on social media. Four studies have proposed that different personality traits (e.g., ideological extremism, personal beliefs, individual characteristics, experiences, and choices) lead to different outcomes of consumptive news curation practices (Merten, 2021; Holton et al., 2015; Tunney et al., 2021,Abu-Ayyash et al., 2024). In addition, demographics are one of the important exogenous variables, with four studies proposing that gender, age, and education are related to consumptive news curation practices, and the findings confirm that demographics and other exogenous variables together influence news curation outcomes (Toff & Kalogeropoulos, 2020; Sang et al., 2020; Lee et al. , 2012,Abu-Ayyash et al., 2024).

Not to be ignored are news factors, which are significant exogenous elements that impact people' own social media news curation practices. News roles, news impact, and news characteristics are typical news factors. Seven of the reviewed literatures used news characteristics as exogenous variables, especially in the study of sharing, recommending, and commenting behaviors of individual users in personal productive news curation practices on social media, for example, Hermida et al.(2015) investigated the role of news sources and news appeal produced in a study of the impact of social media space on news consumption. Sang et al. (2020) also confirmed that different digital news paths have an impact on online news users' sharing and commenting on digital platforms. Furthermore, in studies of selective allocation of efforts by social media users in consumptive news curation practices, scholars have considered factors such as incidental news exposure, contextual stability, news relevance, news overload, visual elementsand, news topic's relevance, and news media usage indicators as exogenous variables (Strauß et al., 2020; Wohn & Ahmadi , 2019 ; Zhang et al., 2022; Tunney et al., 2021, Abu-Ayyash et al., 2024).There are also 2 articles in the literature that use the impact of news as an exogenous variable in studies of news curation, with researchers demonstrating for the first time that reciprocity on social media is actually related not only to the consumption of news, but also to the creation of news and content in general (Holton et al., 2015). It has also been confirmed by scholars that news topic induced fear leads social media users to avoid news that induces fearful topics (Tunney et al., 2021). Additionally, only 1 study discussed the impact of news roles on news curation, with Park (2019b) suggesting that there is a relationship between different types of opinion leaders and social media users' news use.

In addition, social factors are usually one of the exogenous variables influencing personal news curation practices on social media, in this study, there is only 1 reviewed literature that includes social factors as predictors of news curation, Toff & Kalogeropoulos (2020), in their study of news avoidance among social media users, confirmed that differences in press freedom in different countries, the degree of political freedom and stability, as well as other characteristics of a country's news supply are associated with news avoidance among social media users.

4.2.2 Mediating Variables

In order to explain the nature and mechanism of the relationship between exogenous and endogenous variables, the mediating variable, a third variable, is a middle variable in the chain of events in which the independent variable is related to the dependent variable. Specifically, the independent variable causes the mediating variable, which in turn causes the dependent variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986). The personal factor is the only kind of mediating variable utilized in the studies that we reviewed.

Personal factors combine personal perceptions, personal attitudes, and personal abilities. Research has indicated that the correlation between social media users' fear of losing out on news and their curation practices of either limiting or enhancing material is mediated by social media news fatigue (Wu-Ouyang, 2024). Lu (2020) confirmed in the study that perceived knowledge of newsfeeds mediates the impact of Facebook use on consumptive newsfeed curation. It has also been argued that perceived news overload increases news fatigue, which leads to news avoidance (Song et al., 2017).Song et al.(2017) in their study considered the mediating roles of personal ability and personal attitudes in addition to personal perception as a mediator variable, and the study confirms that analysis paralysis of news by users increases news fatigue, which leads to news avoidance, which in turn affects news curation. Furthermore, Park (2019a) argued that the positive correlation between perceived news overload and social filtering is mediated over time by users' social media news efficacy. In their studies on the effect of news overload on social media news curation, researchers have also validated the mediating function of news avoidance on the relationship between news quality and news curation (Zhang, 2022). Other researchers investigating consumptive feed curation have found that a positive mediator in the link between news interest, affordability utilization, friending, and consumptive news feed curation is media locus of control, or someone's belief in their ability to control the information environment.

4.2.3 Moderating Variables

Research has identified the function of moderating variables as interactions. Moderating variables affect the structure and/or strength of the relationship between exogenous and endogenous variables. They can be continuous or categorical (Sharma, Durand, & Gur-Arie, 1981). Personal factors are the only kind of mediating variable considered in the studies as this study assessed.

Personal factors include personal perceptions of news, attitudes toward news, news participation, and news needs. One study used two types of personal factors (Uses & Gratifications sought, news internalising & externalising) as moderating variables to examine the relationship between social media users' "news finds me" perceptions and news participation (Segado-Boj et al.,2019). The study conducted by Lee et al. (2017) examined the connection between the perception of news information overload when accessing news using social media and news preference and avoidance, news habitus, and news perceptions. The findings indicated that the interaction between selective exposure and obtaining news by social media was influenced by the perception of news information overload. In addition, researchers have used political interest, news trust, cognitive needs, perceived user controllability, and news curation as moderating variables in studies of consumptive news curation and its exogenous variables (Strauß et al., 2020; Segado-Boj et al., 2019; Su et al., 2022; Park, 2019b; Lu, 2020).

4.2.4 Control Variables

Control variables are an important concept in research, which refers to the process or method of keeping other factors unchanged except for the research target variable when conducting an experiment or study. By using control variables, researchers can more accurately analyze and understand the relationship between the research target variable and other factors, thus effectively eliminating the influence of other factors on the results of the study and ensuring the accuracy and credibility of the study (Campbell & Stanley, 2015). Of the 19 articles reviewed here, only 1 article considered control variables in its research, which included two types of control variables: social and personal factors.

Strauß et al. (2020), in a cross-country study of the relationship between incidental news exposure and cross-platform news use, used macro-factors, i.e., societal factors, and individual factors (demographics) as control variables for the study, with societal factors including GDP per capita, internet connectivity, and press freedom, and individual factors including age, gender, education and income.

4.2.5 Endogenous Variables

In a causal paradigm, endogenous variables refer to the predicted results resulting from the combined influence of exogenous, moderating, and mediating variables. Consumptive and productive personal news curation are the two primary categories of endogenous variables found in the reviewed articles.

Consumptive personal news curation consists of social media users' news preference and avoidance, news habits, and news perception. Research has focused on the study of news preference and avoidance, with 16 articles using it as an endogenous variable in their research, and all focusing on social media users' news boosting and limiting, including selective exposure and

avoidance of news (Merten, 2021; Wu-Ouyang, 2024; Holton et al, 2015; Fletcher & Park, 2017; Toff & Kalogeropoulos, 2020; Sang et al. 2020; Lee et al., 2017; Su et al. 2022; Zhang et al. 2022; Tunney et al., 2021; Park, 2019a; Park, 2019b; Song et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2019; Lu, 2020, Abu-Ayyash et al., 2024), among which Lee et al. (2017) investigated news preference and avoidance while also including news perception as an endogenous variable, examining the association between the utilization of social media news and the perceived quality of the news. While Abu-Ayyash et al. (2024) focused on news preferences of social media digital journalism. Five other articles (Strauß et al., 2020; Segado-Boj et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2017; Wohn & Ahmadi, 2019, Abu-Ayyash et al., 2024) investigated social media users' news habits, including the platforms on which news is read, the speed at which it is read, the strength of the habit, and frequency of reading.

Compared to consumptive personal news curation, researchers have paid less attention to productive personal news curation. Productive personal news curation includes news creation, news participation, and news use. Of the literature reviewed for this study, 4 papers used news participation as an endogenous variable for the study, specifically the topic of the study is the sharing, liking, recommending, and commenting of news by social media users (Segado-Boj et al., 2019; Hermida et al. Fletcher & Park, 2017; Sang et al., 2020), e.g. Hermida et al. (2015) confirmed the relationship between news sources, news appeal and users' attitudes towards social media journalists and social media users' sharing, liking and recommending of news. Other scholars have used the creation of news as an endogenous variable in personal news curation practices, and there are 2 such studies.Holton et al. (2015) investigated the impact of personal and social reciprocity on social media users' news and content creation, and Park (2019b) discussed the relationship between different opinion leaders on social media and whether or not a link to a tweet was attached to news creation. In addition, Park (2019b) examined social media users' news usage as an endogenous variable as well and confirmed the relationship between opinion leaders and news usage on social media users' news sites.

Table 5. Attributes of Variables Employed in Articles Selected for Analysis

Type of variable	References	No. of articles
Exogenous		
1. Personal Factors		
· Perception of news	Segado-Boj et al. (2019)	5
	Zhang et al. (2022)	
	Tunney et al. (2021)	
	Park (2019a)	
	Song et al. (2017)	
· Personal traits	Merten (2021)	4
	Holton et al.(2015)	
	Tunney et al. (2021)	
	Abu-Ayyash et al. (2024)	
· Use of news	Merten (2021)	8
	Sang et al. (2020)	
	Lee et al. (2017)	
	Su et al. (2022)	
	Wohn & Ahmadi (2019)	
	Song et al. (2017)	
	Lee et al. (2019)	
	Lu (2020)	
· Demographics	Toff & Kalogeropoulos (2020)	4
	Sang et al. (2020)	
	Lee et al. (2019)	
	Abu-Ayyash et al. (2024)	
· Attitudes toward the news	Merten (2021)	8
	Wu-Ouyang (2024)	
	Strauß et al. (2020)	
	Hermida et al. (2015)	
	Fletcher & Park (2017)	
	Sang et al. (2020)	
	Su et al. (2022)	
	Lee et al. (2019)	
2. News Factors		
· News characteristics	Strauß et al. (2020)	7
	Hermida et al. (2015)	
	Sang et al. (2020),	
	Wohn & Ahmadi (2019)	
	Zhang et al. (2022)	
	Tunney et al. (2021)	
	Abu-Ayyash et al. (2024)	
· Impact of news	Holton et al. (2015)	2

	Tunney et al. (2021)	
· News roles	Park (2019b)	1
3. Social Factors		
· Press freedom	Toff & Kalogeropoulos (2020)	1
· Political freedom	Toff & Kalogeropoulos (2020)	1
· Other characteristics	Toff & Kalogeropoulos (2020)	1
Mediating		
1.Personal Factors		
· Personal perception	Wu-Ouyang (2024)	3
	Song et al. (2017)	
	Lu (2020)	
· Personal attitude	Zhang et al. (2022)	3
	Song et al. (2017)	
	Su et al. (2022)	
· Personal abilities	Park (2019a)	2
	Song et al. (2017)	
Moderating		
1. Personal Factors		
· Attitudes towards news	Strauß et al. (2020)	1
· News needs	Segado-Boj et al. (2019)	2
	Su et al. (2022)	
· News participation	Segado-Boj et al. (2019)	2
	Park (2019b)	
· Perception of news	Lee et al. (2017)	2
	Lu (2020)	
Control		
1. Social Factors		
· Economic environment	Strauß et al. (2020)	1
· Political environment	Strauß et al. (2020)	1
2. Personal Factors		
· Personal traits	Strauß et al. (2020)	1
Endogenous		
1. Consumptive news curation		
· News preferences and avoidance	Merten (2021)	16
	Wu-Ouyang (2024)	
	Holton et al. (2015)	
	Fletcher & Park (2017)	
	Toff & Kalogeropoulos (2020)	
	Sang et al. (2020)	
	Lee et al. (2017)	
	Su et al. (2022)	
	Zhang et al. (2022)	
	Tunney et al. (2021)	
	Park (2019a)	
	Park (2019b)	
	Song et al. (2017)	
	Lee et al. (2019)	
	Lu (2020)	
	Abu-Ayyash et al. (2024)	
· News habits	Strauß et al. (2020)	5
	Segado-Boj et al. (2019)	
	Lee et al. (2017)	
	Wohn & Ahmadi (2019)	
	Abu-Ayyash et al. (2024)	
· News perception	Lee et al. (2017)	1
2. Productive news curation		
· News creation	Holton et al. (2015)	2
	Park (2019b)	
· News participation	Segado-Boj et al. (2019)	4
	Hermida et al. (2015)	
	Fletcher & Park (2017)	
	Sang et al. (2020)	
· News Use	Park (2019b)	1

5. Limitations and Recommendations

There is still gaps in the previous research on personal news curation practices on social media, and therefore, this review points out specific research areas that need further attention for future related studies.

First, the PRISMA methodology is applicable to social media research, but there is still a need for a more comprehensive systematic assessment approach. This review focuses on English empirical articles using quantitative methods and uses 3 databases, Scopus, Google Scholar, and Web of Science, and it is hoped that future studies will broaden the inclusion of literature for a more complete review.

Second, the social media contexts in the articles reviewed here are changeable over time. For example, during the COVID-19 outbreak between 2019 and 2022, the news curation practices of personalities on social media were placed in an unprecedented context due to widespread and enduring lockdowns and home segregation, however, no relevant research is seen from the current review, and future research should attempt to cover a wider range of research contexts.

Thirdly, in previous research only 15 theories have been used and these are mainly focused on the fields of psychology and communication, and there remains a proportion of studies that do not use theories or models as a guide to their research, this review points to a lack of attention to wider theories of personal news curation practices on social media. There remains significant potential for future research to enrich the literature and expand its theoretical scope.

Finally, the research topic is relatively homogenous, with most studies of social media personal news curation practices focusing on consumptive news curation and comparatively ignoring productive news curation. Future researchers could attempt to bridge this gap by expanding the range of research topics, e.g., social media news re-creation, social media news integration, etc.

6. Conclusion

This study provides an in-depth analysis of 20 articles in the literature on the study of social media users' personal news curation practices. This provides this issue by utilizing the PRISMA systematic evaluation method and covers the main study types, pertinent research topics, theories and models, and research frameworks developed. The five categories of variables used in the article are exogenous, mediating, moderating, control, and endogenous factors. These variables are grouped into a causal framework. Notably, there are four areas in which personal factors can be found: exogenous, mediating, moderating, and control variables. This research implies a relationship between users' personal news curation practices on social media and their perceptions, attitudes, and news consumption. Furthermore, social factors can be found in the exogenous and control variables. Thus, national political traits and press freedom have also been highlighted in earlier research as significant predictors of personal news curation behaviors on social media. The endogenous variables primarily pertain to consumptive news curation, suggesting that prior study has concentrated on the news preferences and avoidance of social media users, as well as the distribution of attention towards news. For future research, the article contains tables and figures that summarize the framework.

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Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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