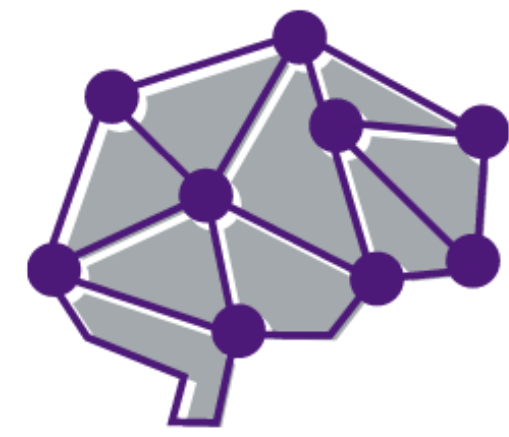




LOUISE DILWORTH DAVIS  
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IBR SOAR LAB  
STUDENT OVERVIEW OF  
APPLIED RESEARCH

# From Feed to Fear: How Social Media News Habits Shape Perceptions of Community Safety

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## Background

- Growing reliance on social media for news may distort perceptions of crime and community safety (Grabe & Zhou, 2000).
- Social media use has been positively associated with fear of crime, even after controlling for traditional media consumption (Intravia et al., 2017).

## Aims

- This study examines how social media usage as a news source influences perceptions of crime severity.
- We hypothesize that more frequent social media usage will be associated with more severe perceptions of crime and greater concerns about community safety.

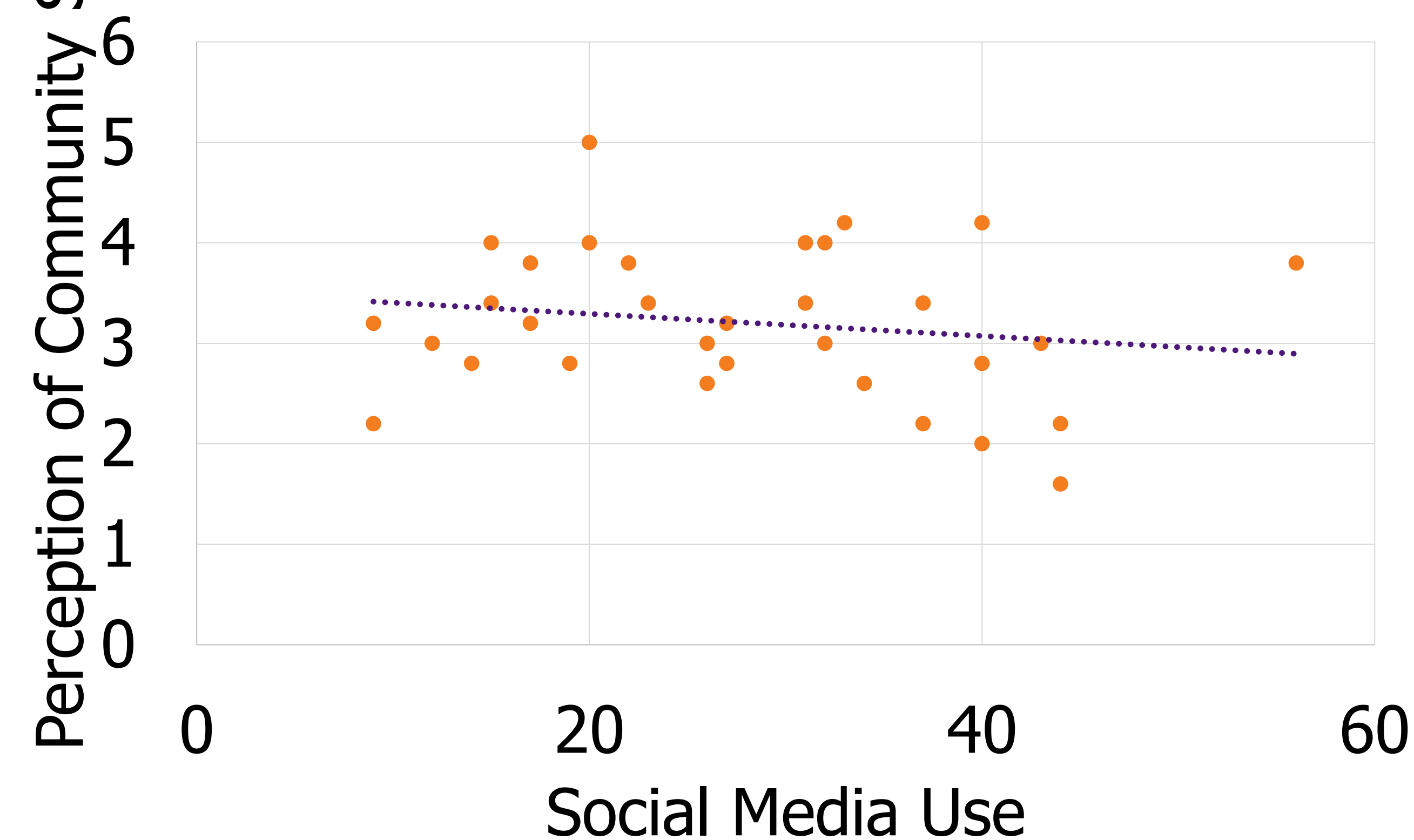
## Methods

- Design: Cross-sectional survey of Dallas–Fort Worth residents ( $N = 33$ ).
- Data Collection: Participants completed an online survey assessing media use and perceptions of crime.

### Measures:

- Perceptions of safety were measured using a 4-item measure of community safety (e.g., *In my area people really do not need to lock their doors when they leave their homes for a short period of time*; 1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*).
- Frequency of use of social media usage was measured using the 9-item Social Media Usage Scale (e.g., *Watched videos such as memes, news, content, and how-tos/recipes*; 0 = *never*, 9 = *hourly or more*).

## Perception of Community Safety as a Function of Social Media Use



## Results

- A linear regression analysis was run to determine the effect of social media usage on perceptions of safety.
- Social media use was not a significant predictor of community safety perceptions ( $p = 0.370$ ). The relationship between social media use and safety perceptions was small and negative ( $R^2 = .03$ ,  $B = -0.102$ ).
- Descriptive statistics showed moderate variation in both safety perceptions ( $M = 3.2276$ ,  $SD = 0.7813$ ) and social media use ( $M = 3.0345$ ,  $SD = 1.32939$ ).

## References

Tuck AB, Thompson RJ. The Social Media Use Scale: Development and Validation. *Assessment*. 2024 Apr;31(3):617-636. doi:10.1177/10731911231173080. Epub 2023 May 25. PMID: 37226810

Intravia, Jonathan & Wolff, Kevin & Paez, Rocio & Gibbs, Benjamin. (2017). Investigating the relationship between social media consumption and fear of crime: A partial analysis of mostly young adults. *Computers in Human Behavior*. 77. 10.1016/j.chb.2017.08.047.

Grabe, Maria & Zhou, Shuhua. (2000). Packaging Television News: The Effects of Tabloid on Information Processing and Evaluative Responses. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media - J BROADCAST ELECTRON MEDIA*. 44. 581-598. 10.1207/s15506878jobem4404\_4.

## Demographics

Demographic Characteristic	N	%
<b>Race</b>		
White	19	57.6
Black or African American	7	21.2
Bi-racial or Multicultural	2	6.1
Other	4	12.1
No response	1	3.0
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	15	45.5
Female	16	48.5
Non-binary	1	3.0
No response	1	3.0
<b>Age</b>		
$M = 32.47$ ( $SD = 12.28$ ), min = 18, max = 61		

## Discussion

- Results of this study are highly limited by the small sample size. However, results indicate that more frequent social media usage does not significantly predict perceptions of safety.
- Future research should expand on how different platforms influence and uniquely shape perceptions of crime and should conduct the analysis with a larger sample size.