

Motivation Versus Intention of Sharing Fake News Among Social Media Users during the Pandemic – A SEM Model

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Are intentions important in deciding the outcome of an action such as sharing misinformation among social media users during the pandemic? What is their role and how far they are important for the very act of fake sharing news? The social media users' actions on the social platform are determined by what they plan to do themselves; however, their motivation has an immense role to play in the dissemination of fake news on social media. The study proposes a conceptual model for understanding how select factors affect fake news sharing motivation and intentions of social media users. The study scrutinizes the relationship between content and context, fear of missing out (FoMO), news verification and news sharing gratification on the motivation and intention of social media users of networked Asian society. Empirical Data were drawn from social media users (N = 243) from India, using an online questionnaire based on prior studies and structural equation modeling (SEM) approach was used to analyze the data collected. Results indicate that news content, news verification, and news sharing gratification have a direct and positive relationship with sharing motivation. On the other hand, news context and content, FoMO and news sharing gratification have a positive significant relationship with sharing intention. Likewise, it was discovered that news verification will decrease sharing intention of the social media users. However, news context, that is the pandemic in the case of the present study and FoMO were not identified as determinant variables for sharing motivation among social media users. The research limitations and further scope were discussed.

Keywords: Amos SEM, FoMO, Verification of News, Gratification, Social-Media

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1. Introduction

Are intentions important in deciding the outcome of an action such as sharing misinformation among social media users during the pandemic? What is the role of intention in sharing fake news on social media and how does it affect in proliferation of fake news? The social media users' actions on the social platform are determined by what they intend to do share. Their perceptions, emotions, voluntary and involuntary sensations play a vital role in shaping the action of sharing fake news on social media which allows communication and diffusion of novel ideas (Zhou & Zafarani, 2018). At times, social media users do not succeed in affecting information, at times affect the information otherwise; on other occasions, efforts do not yield any result or the outcome does not get changed as per the intent of sharing news on social media. Sharing fake news on social media is also determined and clouded by emotional reactions on which humans don't have any control. Sydell (2016) has argued that fake news websites provide the revenue for advertising. To affect fake news on social media, one needs to act and for the purpose of letting things happen, one need not act. However, they can also control, modify and suppress the information on social media. Lazer, Baum, Benkler, Berinsky, Greenhill, Menczer, Metzger, Nyhan, Pennycook, Rothschild, Schudson, Sloman, Sunstein, Thorson, Watts, and Zittrain (2018) suggest that social media spreads unfiltered content. Research also suggests that social media increases the chances of manipulation in the public's perception of reality (Ireton & Posetti, 2018). Thus, intention and motivation are two important concepts, affecting and moderating the action of sharing news on social media. The present paper offers an insight into the role of intention/motivation of sharing news on social media explores the select factors which lead to the proliferation of misinformation on social media and encapsulates the interface between digital media and socio- cultural conditions of society.

In the treatment of altruistic and prosocial behaviour, intentions are conflated with motivation but it is true that intentions require conscious purposeful attention whereas motivations do not (Laura & Carlo, 2014); both have an important part in sharing fake news on social media. Intentional actions are actions which are completed with an objective in mind, actions for which we tend to be responsible. The intentions are significant enough to explain the reason to act; they also play a role in producing the action. Whereas motivation is a psychological construct that promotes a specific act. Psychological state can promote a deliberate action with a purpose or an expressive action with no purpose at all. A motivation is a push factor which works in an action but it can never be the sole reason. Other factors also play a role in completion of a particular task. The completion of an action illustrates the effectiveness of motivation. If the person is motivated to follow some specific path, he pursues it and acts on it. In other cases, depending upon the good in the action involved, the person feels motivated to complete the task. With motivation of sharing news, people overcome certain impediments and inhibiting factors and indulge in the act of sharing it.

The relationship between intention and motivation is rather more complex as intention to complete a task may continue whereas the motivation for the action may dwindle. A time lapse may also exist between receding motivations and abandoning of intention. Motivation may be based on fulfillment of certain conditions but when conditions are fulfilled then unintended

intentions may emerge. If the intention is attached to self-image, it may add to the motivation for that particular task. Thus, motivation incites one to act, whereas intentions keep him on track.

To understand all these matters and to know the dominating influences, the current study puts forward a model defining interrelationship and the impact of select factors on certain variables in Asian society during COVID-19.

1.1 Research gap

Abundant research papers are available on the negative side of social media covering FoMO, social media fatigue, News verification, social media openness etc. and their associations with intention for sharing fake news on social media (Baccarella, Wagner, Kietzmann & McCarthy, 2018; Dhir et al., 2018 a, b, c; Dhir et al., 2016a; Dhir et al., 2016b; Dhir et al., 2015; Bright et al., 2015; Blackwell, Leaman, Tramposch, Osborne & Liss, 2017). There are just a handful of studies which have looked into people's motivations for sharing 'fake' news (e.g., Chen, Sin, Theng & Lee, 2015; Chadwick & Vaccari, 2019; Chen & Sin, 2013; Talwar, Dhir, Kaur, Zafar & Alrasheedy, 2019; Duffy, Tandoc & Ling, 2019). An understanding of the motives and intention of sharing fake news on social media can enable tackling this growing menace. The lack of research on the factors behind proliferation and dissemination of fake news on social media is a research gap that needs to be covered and bridged. The current paper aims to provide the understanding of the factors which are responsible for wide dissemination of fake news through a SEM model.

1.2 Research objective

Given this context and due to long-lasting effects of sharing of fake news among social media users, the current study's main objective is to find the factors that affect Sharing Motivation and Intention, as they are essential for comprehending the widespread misinformation sharing Social Media Users during the Pandemic. Due to the importance and impact of the select variables as well as the scarcity of investigation exploring the relations between the select variables and Sharing Motivation and Intention, this study was conducted using a structural model (SEM), which represents the select endogenous and exogenous variables and provides statistical and empirical proof of the relations, if any, among them. Based on existing theories, this study hypothesized that Context, Content, Authentication, FOMO and Gratification will influence Sharing Motivation and Intention. The study also focused on assessing the influences and framing a model of effect of the select variables on Sharing Motivation and Intention with regard to Misinformation among Social Media Users during the Pandemic. It also discusses the role of digital media during COVID-19 which became an integral part of country's social and political platform. The proposed model will be verified with IBM AMOS SEM.

India has been a victim of fake news for the past few years. Fake news not only instigates people to communal violence and lynching but also generates discontent with the system (Arun, 2019; Farooq, 2018; Mukherjee, 2020). The propagation of fake news is a major concern in India

whereas several countries like China, Canada, France, the USA have opted several measures to curb the misinformation by implementing laws, bills and judicial procedures. In India, the government has often chosen to shut the internet services which occurred almost 95 times in 2019 (Nazmi, 2019). Media illiterate netizens have also contributed in worsening the problem (Raj & Goswami, 2020). Hence the researchers have chosen Indian context which is quite significant for the study.

2. Literature Review

The proliferation of fake news is a concern for all (McGonagle, 2017). With social media gaining popularity, interaction and diffusion of novel ideas take place (Zhou and Zafarani, 2018). As a corollary, social media has become a pertinent ground to spread fake news and misinformation (Lazer et al., 2018). Misinformation is easily believed in by most of the individuals and gets shared, although it tends to be negative, thought provoking and shocking. It is important to distinguish between the two terms; misinformation and disinformation. Misinformation refers to the inaccurate information whereas the latter implies the information which intends to beguile people (Ireton & Posetti, 2018).

Undoubtedly, troubled times serve as a suitable ground for nourishment of fake news, with uncertainties and fears, such that social media has now become a fertile platform for the circulation of fake news. Duffy (2019) argues that the purpose of fake news is to make public believe that it is valid and reliable too. The unprecedented growth in fake news sharing requires engrossing research on the reasons of fake news proliferation via social media. However, there are little insights on intention and motivation of fake news sharing during COVID-19 (Jang and Kim, 2018; Talwar, Dhir, Khalil, Mohan & Nazmul, 2020). A better understanding of the motives and intentions may aid in identifying the solution of the grave issue of false news on social media. To respond to this call, the study is conducted in India, a developing country, where there is a paucity of research in the field of fake news sharing.

2.1 Sharing motivation and intention

There are several factors which serve as motivation for sharing fake news. Duffy et al. opine that the interest in controversy, strange things or bizarre aspects have always attracted humans and it motivates greater sharing (2019). Fake news primarily covers sensational and debatable headlines and hence gets widely disseminated. Fake information also gets shared on account of having similarity with user's belief and ethos (Uscinski et al., 2016; Marwick, 2018). The intention to generate money by dissemination of fake news is also the motivation for sharing fake news.

The motives for dissemination of fake news also include social integrative, surveillance, mood uplifting and the need to understand the entire world (Tsfati and Cappella, 2005). Research has confirmed that individuals succeed in finding information if they are motivated and have the intention of sharing, in on-line environments (Brand, Kammerer, Van & Van Gog, 2017; Cho and Afflerbach 2017; Coiro, Sparks & Kulikowich, 2018). Cognitive theorists (Kai & Huan,

2019) opine that human-beings are not adept in art of identifying fake news and hence anything which matches with their bias, is shared without verification. Social bots also play their role in dissemination of fake news. Roozenbeek and Linden (2019) have aptly remarked that the attempt to verify the fake news often works as a catalyst for the proliferation of fake news. Information seeking is also one of major factors to share fake news. Fake news is also shared widely to acquire good status in community (Lee & Ma, 2012). Stieglitz and Dang Xuan (2013) comment that news content, which is widely shared on social media, evokes feelings of anger, anxiety and amusement. Instead of neutral news content, the news content rich in emotion, gets widely circulated (Khuntia, Sun & Yim, 2016; Stieglitz & Dang Xuan, 2013; Oeldrof -Hirsch & Sundar, 2015). Peters, Kashima and Clark (2009) suggested that the content rich in interest, happiness and surprise gets widely disseminated. Lerman and Ghosh (2010) concluded that the information spreads faster with more interconnected networks.

2.2 Sharing based on news context and content

Recent research depicts that false content has been shared on social media on COVID-19 (Frenkel, Alba & Zhong, 2020; Russonello, 2020). The content pertaining to COVID-19 which was shared on social media is socially undesirable, opinionated and biased (Rojas, Shah & Faber, 2012; Houston, Hansen & Nisbett, 2011). The content includes photo, audio, photo and text, photo and video, text and video, and text and photo. (Al-Zaman, 2021; Kanozia, Arya, Singh, Ganghariya & Narula, 2021). The context covers the period of outbreak of COVID-19 and consequent one year during which the fake news was at its peak. Several people are acquiring information through online mode, deeming it fruitful which has also led to fake news sharing and consumption in unprecedented manner (Huynh, 2020). Since the emergence of the pandemic, there was tremendous proliferation of fake news, suggesting tips and cure to overcome the deadly virus (Pennycook, Mcphetres, Zhang & Lu, 2020).

The abundance of misinformation has led people to consider that the disease could be treated by consuming salty water, bleach and oregano (Lampos, Moura, Yom-Tov, Cox, McKendry & Edelstein, 2020). Lampos (2020) also discussed that fake information led many to believe that China created the virus whereas some mistook that virus was created by the US to lower the power of China. Hou, Du, Jiang, Zhou and Lin found out that individuals explored social media to acquire the information about the severity of the virus (2020). The study also concluded that Vietnamese supposed the fake news pertaining to the disease more as compared to the official info conveyed by the government (Huynh, 2020). Pennycook (2020) found that many people shared the news about COVID-19 as they could not ascertain the reliability of that news. He also suggested in his research that people should validate the information before sharing it with the other members of their group (2020). Ahmadi and Wohn (2018) suggested that people invest casual attention to social media. People are attracted towards the news which is more interesting in nature and explore such news websites (Mc. Kerlich, Ives & McGreal, 2013). They also conclude that when people are in a positive frame of mind, they spend more time on such websites. As such, both the context and content were found to play a significant role in dissemination of fake news. Based on prior literature, the present study hypothesizes that

there will be significant relationships between content and context with both motivation and intention of sharing fake news:

H1a: There will be an affirmative significant relationship between news context and fake news sharing motivation on social media.

H1b: There will be an affirmative significant relationship between news context and fake news sharing intention of on social media.

H2a: There will be an affirmative significant relationship between news content and fake news sharing motivation on social media.

H2b: There will be an affirmative significant relationship between news content and fake news sharing intention on social media.

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2.3 Sharing based on Fear of Missing Out (FoMO)

FoMO is perceived as the anxiety that others may be enjoying, rewarding experiences that one is missing on account of something (Przybylski, Murayama, DeHaan & Gladwell, 2013). The generation Z believes in checking their social networking sites very frequently (Billieux, Maurage, Lopez-Fernandez, Kuss & Griffiths, 2015). FoMO derives from unfulfilled social needs, and is proliferated from anxiety and depression (Oberst, Wegmann, Stodt, Brand & Chamarro, 2017; Wegmann et al., 2017). Unfulfilled social needs promote the use of internet (Wegmann & Brand, 2016). Lately, few studies claimed that FoMO is connected with the use of social networking sites (Błachnio & Przepiórka, 2018; Blackwell, Leaman, Tramposch, Osborne & Liss, 2017; Dhir et al., 2018a). Based on extant literature, the hypotheses formulated are:

H3a: There will be an affirmative significant relationship between Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) and fake news sharing motivation on social media.

H3b: There will be an affirmative significant relationship between fear of missing out (FoMO) and fake news sharing intention on social media.

2.4 Sharing based on news verification

Many researches have been conducted in an effort to combat disinformation during COVID-19. A major portion of the research has stressed on the true analysis of various types of information which is circulated on the social media (Cinelli, Quattrociocchi & Galeazzi, 2020; Ferrara, 2020; Singh et al., 2020). Vraga, Bode, and Tully have recommended interventions for improvement in science literacy which can help people identify and share good information (2020). All researches indicate towards indecision as the prime factor which instigates the quest for information. Vraga suggests that news literacy coupled with practiced corrections is necessary to dispel misinformation (2020). Trandoc (2019) believes that a large number of

people ignore proof and cling to their preconceived notions even after knowing the truth. Psychologist Soler Sarrío (2020) recommends verifying fake news through Google and advocates using common sense. He also says that the primary aim of such fake news is to create panic amongst people. Borondo (2020) declares that fake news can even put the lives of people in danger. Newtral (2019) suggests emotional manipulation as the primary purpose of sharing fake news. Vincent (2020) opines that the basic purpose of sharing fake news is to confuse masses and create panic amongst them. The present study hypothesizes:

H4a: There will be an affirmative significant relationship between news verification and fake news sharing motivation on social media.

H4b: There will be an affirmative significant relationship between news verification and fake news sharing intention on social media.

2.5 Sharing based on news sharing gratification

People achieve gratification when they cling to social media, engage in entertainment as well as look for an escape from their mundane lives. Social media serves the purpose of easing emotional anxiety as well as assists in amusing oneself (Lee & Ma, 2002). The purpose of sharing fake news on social media is to derive enjoyment, relaxation and entertainment (Baek, Holton, Harp & Yaschur, 2011). It has been stated that there is a link between usage of Facebook and entertainment (Kim, Lee & Elias, 2015). People do not derive any pleasure from sharing news online (Lee, Ma & Goh, 2011). Undoubtedly, individuals share information online as they wish to share news and information with other people in a social setting (Anspach & Carlson, 2018). Users of social media share information to entertain themselves and to kill time (Ha, Yoon & Zhang, 2013). Research suggests that social media users also share the things as a part of their hobbies which helps them in getting more vital information to be shared with other members of online community (Lin & Lu, 2011). Chen and Pain says that there are various kinds of news interaction with social media like quoting, commenting, sharing, liking, rating, and ranking (2019). Chan Olm-Sted and Wolter infer that the content which promotes interaction amongst people also attracts and engages the readers (2018). The more interaction a news video upholds, the more are the chances of its popularity (Ksizek, Peer & Lessard, 2016). It can be undoubtedly inferred from the research that many people share unverified news on social media for entertainment.

Kim, Kim and Nam (2010) have detailed on social and non- social motivations in sharing fake news. Communication with family and friends has been put in the category of social motivation whereas non-social motivation entails professional development, passing time and entertainment. Nov, Naaman and Ye have categorised motivation in intrinsic and extrinsic category where intrinsic stands for enjoyment and commitment and extrinsic is for self-development and reputation (2009).

H5a: There will be an affirmative significant relationship between news sharing gratification and fake news sharing motivation for on social media.

H5b: There will be an affirmative significant relationship between news sharing gratification and fake news sharing intention on social media.

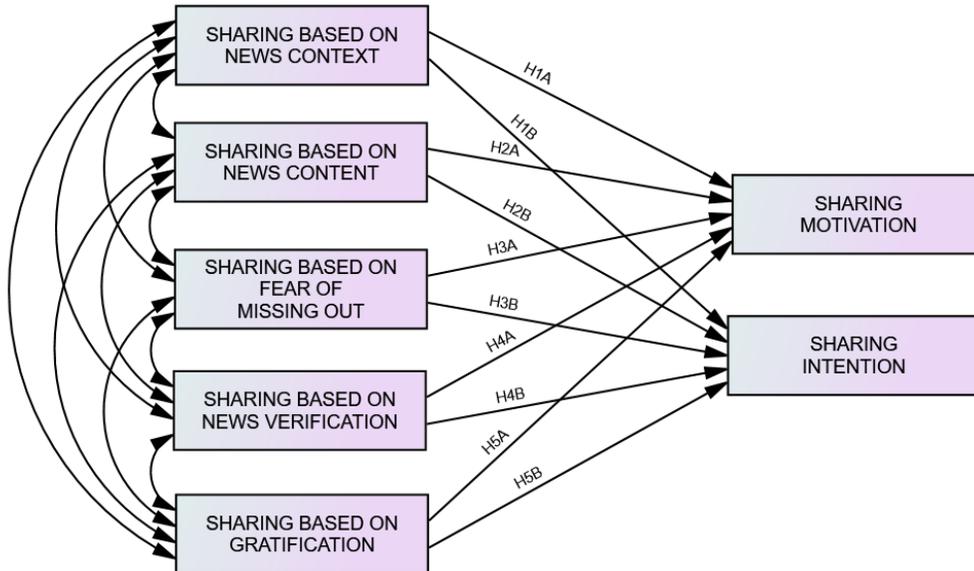


Figure 1. Conceptual model.

The Model has seven constructs; Five exogenous variables (sharing based on news context, content, FOMO, news verification and gratification), and two endogenous variables (sharing motivation and intention). The constructs were based on prior studies. Moreover, the conceptual model outlines ten paths to be verified. These paths were hypothesized as positive relations.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research design and pilot study

The design for research chosen for the current investigation is an exploratory examination configuration to distinguish the respondents' perception towards factors affecting fake news sharing motivation and intention. The design is likewise a descriptive research plan. A small sample comprising 30 respondents with comparable characteristics to the target sample are utilized for pilot study. They completed the survey in around 20 minutes. The reliability

Cronbach's alpha values for the select components were assessed. The outcomes showed the instruments enjoyed high dependability estimate and was hence considered proper for the study purpose. The pilot study showed that the time needed for completing the questionnaire was roughly 20 minutes.

3.2 Sample

The data for validating the proposed research model was collected using an online questionnaire in English language during July, 2020. The participants were recruited using social media/ WhatsApp to reach widely dispersed population of social media users in India. The online survey was preferred as it is cost effective. The method was considered suitable as the purpose of the investigation was to scrutinize the respondents' points of view and to explore differences, if any, in their perception of effect of select variables on their motivation and intention for fake news sharing. No incentive was given to the respondents for participating in the study. Data was analysed using structural equation model with AMOS, so sample size may significantly affect the outcomes, like in any other quantitative exploration. The impact of sample size is seen most legitimately in the statistical significance of testing and the generalizability of the outcomes. Sample size is also a significant consideration for the internal consistency of items utilized in the scales. It depends on the number of items used in the entire latent variables, as such the number of samples should be equivalent to the number of items multiplied by 5 -10 (Ferdinand, 2002). Referring to this opinion, the number of samples was 140 respondents. Given these contemplations, a sample size of 243 was viewed as satisfactory for the present study, considering the average size of samples utilized by different researchers in comparative and similar investigations. Convenience sampling technique was utilized to for selecting the sample. The sample consisted of 185 male (76.1%), and 57 female (23.5 %), the average age was approximately 20.404 years of age, with SD 3.524.

3.3 Research instrument

Surveys utilized in this investigation comprised two sections. Section one was about the demographics of respondents, which asked them about their gender, age, etc. The next section comprised 30 items regarding research variables under consideration, which was a subset of a larger data set. Prior scales were adopted/adapted/modified to quantify the select variables, as indicated in the Table 1. News context (e.g. the information I share these days on social media is mostly related to COVID-19) and sharing intention (e.g. I share information related to COVID-19 on social media) were drafted by the authors. These two single-item constructs were utilized for concepts which required more thinking than the other multiple-item concepts in the study (Fuchs and Diamantopoulos, 2009); they were used for assessing relatively simple concepts (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2009). These measures were used based on their advantages for investigation in detailed settings, particularly long and complicated surveys (Wanous & Reichers, 1996; Drolet & Morrison, 2001; Bergkvist & Rossiter, 2007). Bergkvist and Rossiter (2007) also confirm single-item measure is as valid as multiple-item measure and empirical tests using such item are the same as those with multiple-item measure. Each one of the items used for

the present study was based on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree.

3.4 Data analysis

The information gathered for the study was examined for normality with the assistance of appropriate statistical methods. The skewness and the kurtosis for the variables were within the acceptable range. The analysis investigation utilized two significant statistical strategies - confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation model (SEM) for exploration. SEM involves CFA and path analysis. In the case of less priori information, CFA is done (Ruscio & Roche, 2012). Subsequently, path analysis was applied for analyzing the hypothesis formulated for the study and for evaluating the model.

3.4.1 Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

AMOS application was used for CFA of the measurement and path investigation of the Structure model. CFA was utilized to approve and validate the factors and data. The investigation indicated reliability and validity existed for continuing with further analyses. The model fit indices were also examined. CFA of the measurement model was conducted using ten items. The validity both convergent and discriminant were also tested. Table 1 presents the results for factor-loadings, average variances extracted (AVE), and Cronbach's alpha values. Factor loadings and average variance extracted were utilized for evaluating the convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The findings indicate that all values were above 0.5 which guaranteed convergent validity and legitimacy (Hair, William, Barry & Rolph, 2010). Discriminant validity was also checked by observing square-root of variances among a variable and its items, which should be higher than the correlation values among variables (Fornell & Larckers, 1981). For testing the internal consistency in the data collected, Cronbach's alpha values were determined. The values ranged from 0.872 to 0.921, which were considered appropriate. Table 1 represents the validity and reliability for the constructs.

Table 1

Validity and Reliability of the Constructs in the Structural Model (N = 243)

CONSTRUCTS	FACTOR S	LOADING	CA	CR	AVE	Adopted/adapted/modified from Source
NEWS VERIFICATION	A1	0.863	0.807	0.812	0.525	Griffin et al., 2002; Vishwanath et al., 2011; Alvi and Saraswat (2020)
	A2	0.767				
	A3	0.577				
	A4	0.658				
CONTENT	C1	0.711	0.892	0.892	0.545	Chen, 2016; Alvi and Saraswat (2020)
	C2	0.841				
	C3	0.840				
	C4	0.567				
	C5	0.707				
	C6	0.754				
	C7	0.713				
GRATIFICATION	GF1	0.777	0.849	0.849	0.584	Gratification needs (Lee & Ma, 2012); Alvi and Saraswat (2020)
	GF2	0.741				
	GF3	0.732				
	GF4	0.806				
FOMO	FOMO1	0.913	0.888	0.887	0.724	Przybylski et al., 2013; Alvi and Saraswat (2020)
	FOMO3	0.816				
	FOMO4	0.820				
MOTIVATION	SM1	0.603	0.900	0.900	0.477	Chen, 2016; Alvi and Saraswat (2020)
	SM10	0.712				
	SM11	0.810				
	SM2	0.628				
	SM3	0.611				
	SM4	0.624				
	SM6	0.685				
	SM7	0.734				
	SM8	0.710				
SM9	0.758					
CONTEXT	CON	1	1	1	1	Authors' Own
INTENTION	INT	1	1	1	1	Authors' Own

Table 1 also displays the estimation of standardized factor loadings ≥ 0.60 , and AVE ≥ 0.50 for all except motivation, as such one item SM 5 was deleted. Cronbach alpha and composite reliability values are all above 0.8. Accordingly, each construct was considered

substantially reliable and valid. Table 2 shows the discriminant validity where the diagonal values are all higher than the correlations with other variables.

Table 2

Discriminant Validity

	Authenticatio n	Conten t	Contex t	FOM O	Gratificatio n	Intentio n	Motivatio n
Authenticatio n	0.7243						
Content	0.5722	0.7384					
Context	0.467	0.5763	1				
FOMO	0.3327	0.5275	0.337	0.8509			
Gratification	0.4727	0.6805	0.5016	0.6795	0.7642		
Intention	0.1949	0.6394	0.4747	0.5801	0.5765	1	
Motivation	0.645	0.691	0.6536	0.4704	0.8232	0.4369	0.6906

The main part of confirmatory factor analysis is analyzing the goodness of fit of the model. General fit was estimated utilizing the χ^2 test. The value lower or equivalent to 3, in case of χ^2/df guarantees a satisfactory fit (Carmines & McIver, 1981). Table 3 depicts the fit indices for the model. In the current examination, the inferred estimations of NFI= 0.998, IFI=0.999, TLI=0.988, and CFI= 0.999 fall within the adequate range which is in concurrence with the recommended values (Hair et al., 2010). NFI, TLI above 0.9 are usually considered as acceptable, and 0.95 as superior fit (Bentler, 1992; Byrne, 2010; Hu & Bentler, 1999). As such, the model fit indices were considered as acceptable. This examination determined RMSEA as 0.036 which demonstrated a mediocre fit. The CMIN= 1.317; Degrees of freedom =1; P = 0.251 was achieved using AMOS 24. The results of the exploration of Overall Model Fit measures of the model (SEM) indicated a good fit (Table 3).

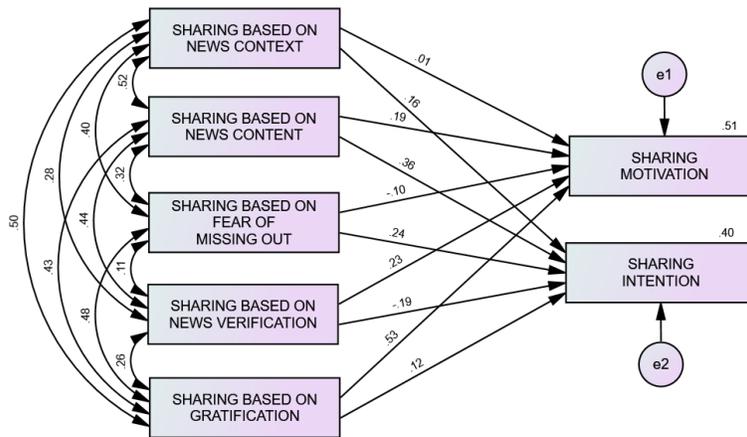


Figure 2. Structural equation model.

Next, AMOS 24 was used for path analysis. The model fit test is verified using the goodness of fit index. Figure 2 Structural Equation Model as indicated above shows the standardized path diagram. The results of the exploration of overall model fit measures of the model (SEM) indicate a good fit (Table 3)..

Table 3

Results of Structural Model

Goodness of Fit	Criteria	Value	Results
χ^2	Small value	1.317, p=.251	Good Fit
χ^2/DF	$\chi^2/DF < 5$	1317	Reasonable
GFI	$GFI \geq 0.90$	0.998	Good Fit
AGFI	$AGFI \geq 0.90$	0.957	Good Fit
TLI	$TLI \geq 0.90$	0.988	Good Fit
NFI	$NFI \geq 0.90$	0.998	Good Fit
CFI	$CFI \geq 0.90$	0.999	Good Fit
RMSEA	$0.08 \leq RMSEA \leq 0.10$	0.036	Mediocre fit

3.5 Hypotheses testing

The structure model was checked for the significance of the coefficients. AMOS application yielded the estimation values of coefficient and standard errors. A relation is considered significant at 95% level with critical ratio (CR) ≥ 1.96 or $p \leq 0.05$. Subsequently, the hypothesis formulated can be acknowledged if $CR \geq 1.96$ or $p \leq 0.05$, otherwise the hypothesis is dismissed, that is if the estimation of $CR < 1.96$ or $p > 0.05$. As indicated in table 5 all hypotheses, except H1A and H3A were accepted, while H4B was accepted partially.

Table 4

Hypotheses Testing

H	Relationship	B	S.E.	C.R.	P	Results
H1A	Sharing Motivation<---News Context	0.108	0.447	0.241	0.809	Rejected
H1B	Sharing Intention<---News Context	0.191	0.074	2.570	0.010	Accepted
H2A	Sharing Motivation<---News Content	0.274	0.085	3.221	0.001	Accepted
H2B	Sharing Intention<---News Content	0.079	0.014	5.575	0.000	Accepted
H3A	Sharing Motivation<---FOMO	-0.186	0.102	-1.823	0.068	Rejected
H3B	Sharing Intention<---FOMO	0.071	0.017	4.194	0.000	Accepted
H4A	Sharing Motivation<---News Verification	0.604	0.135	4.463	0.000	Accepted
H4B	Sharing Intention<---News Verification	-0.078	0.023	-3.471	0.000	Partially accepted
H5A	Sharing Motivation<---Gratification	1.108	0.118	9.367	0.000	Accepted
H5B	Sharing Intention<---Gratification	0.039	0.02	1.995	0.046	Accepted

The hypotheses formulated were tried by applying SEM method to gauge the relationships between the endogenous and exogenous variables. The method used was maximum likelihood (ML) to assess the coefficients of the structural model. Founded on the significance of β (standardized coefficients), the hypothesis may be accepted. As such, the unstandardized evaluations of structural paths and loadings of the items for each variable were verified for statistical significance. Table 5 shows the regression weights, CR statistics and results for hypotheses verification. According to the model, it can be inferred that the model is valid as eight hypotheses are accepted (one partially as the relationship is significant but negative) while only two are rejected. Results indicate positive and significant standardized values between sharing intention<---news context, sharing motivation<---news content, sharing intention<---news content, sharing intention<---FOMO, sharing motivation<---news verification, sharing motivation<---gratification, and sharing intention<---gratification (0.191, 0.274, 0.079, 0.071, 0.604, 1.108 and 0.039) respectively. However, hypothesis H4B sharing intention<---news verification was only partially valid as the relationship was significant -0.078 ($p < 0.05$), but it was found to be negative. Regarding H1A and H3A, the weaker and lower than 0.5 standardized

values resulted in the hypotheses sharing motivation<---FOMO and sharing motivation<---news context being rejected ($p>0.05$). Overall, Hypotheses H1B, H2A, H2B, H3B H4A, H4B, H5A, and H5B indicated in the proposed model were accepted.

4. Conclusion and Limitations

The present study was conducted with the aim to understand the role of digital media in networked Asian society and the relationship between the select variables and the motives and intention of sharing fake news on social media, which can enable tackling this growing menace. The lack of understanding of the users' intentions and motivations behind proliferation and dissemination of fake news on social media is a research gap that the current study addresses, by providing an insight into some of the select factors and their relationships with motivation and intention which are responsible for wide dissemination of fake news through a proposed SEM model. While the current research contributes to the body of knowledge, it is not without its limitations. To begin, this study focused on COVID-19 epidemic and concentrated only on the perceptions of Indians. It is possible that the findings do not apply to all instances of fake news dissemination. However, the findings can be generalized to countries with values/cultures comparable to those of Indians. Secondly, further researchers could investigate additional factors such as social media openness, self-disclosure, etc. The study did not examine the influence of cultural background, age, income, or gender on sharing fake news. Future researchers may aggregate these demographic variables to determine whether they influence findings. Moreover, the study didn't contain any control variables; future research could replicate the findings by including suitable control variables like cultural background, age, or gender. Lastly, the sample size was small, which may have had an effect on the extrapolative power of the proposed model; however, the results confirm it was acceptable and substantial. Further researches may increase the sample size in order to obtain a more robust statistical result.

The findings demonstrated influences that envisage sharing of fake news. According to the study's findings, it was observed that in order to reflect affinity with updated and well-informed social network, people share fake news on social media. Most of the people share news in their circle without verifying the authenticity of it. Sometimes people share fake news at a fast pace and that is the primary reason of non-authentication of fake news. Sharing of fake news is not involved with any ill-will rather it stems from a motivation for belongingness and connectivity. Based on the statistical and empirical results, it was affirmed that news content, news verification, and news sharing gratification have a direct and positive relationship with sharing motivation. Individuals consider the content and context of fake news as important for others; hence it works as a prime intent for sharing fake news. Intention to grab sensational, emotional and shocking information also drives social media users to share fake news. News sharing gratification plays an important role as the users derive satisfaction from sharing news with others on social media.

The results demonstrated that news context and content, FOMO and news sharing gratification have a positive significant relationship with sharing intention; when any one of them increases, the other also increases. Whereas, news context, that is the pandemic in the case

of the present study and FoMO were not identified as determinant variables for sharing motivation in the present study. Likewise, it was discovered that news verification will decrease sharing intention. The results are significant and indicate that the proposed model is acceptable.

5. Practical Implications

The current study has several practical implications. First, it has successfully elaborated the relationships between fake news sharing intention and motivation on social media and the wide impact which fake news casts on human psyche. The study also details the role of intent and motivation in sharing fake news on social media. In the era of ‘infodemic’ where the governments are struggling with the menace of fake news as compared to the COVID-19 pandemic itself, the study explores and details some of the prime factors responsible for proliferation of fake news. The research is significant for government bodies as well as psychologists and policymakers as they can understand and evaluate the role of intention and motivation in sharing fake news online. The study also sensitizes social media users as they can restrain the misinformation and stop sharing it on online platforms. Thus, it promotes self-reflection.

The study also necessitates the need of creating some WhatsApp groups which can sense the existing plight and foster the awareness amongst masses about the implications of fake news. The study also posits that the need for gratification may affect the dissemination of fake news positively. Social media users can denounce fake news and sensitize their close-knit group not to rely on fake news. They may also prefer validating the news before sharing it with public at large. The study also validates that Gratification and FoMO have a positive relationship with sharing intention on social media and hence policymakers can devise some strategies to caution people against the vicious circle of sharing fake news on social media. People can be awakened and educated about the intention and motivation of sharing fake news which may promote validation of news and ultimately assist society in raising concerns against the growing menace of fake news. The empirical study will be beneficial to know about crisis management through social media handles in networked Asia.

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