



The role of social media and confirmation bias in victimization: Information consumption and opinion polarization

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Abstract

Technological advancement has contributed to the smooth and fast communication system where social media remain the top priority for human kind. Confirmation bias is a cognitive bias of human tendency to deducting information. Therefore, getting biased through unconfirmed media stories became a disease to the modern society. This article aims to explore and analyse the phenomenon of confirmation bias in cyber media, focusing on its impact on information consumption and polarization of opinions within online environments. Drawing upon existing literature and theoretical frameworks, namely Social Identity Theory, Cognitive Dissonance Theory, Selective Exposure Theory, and Agenda Setting Theory, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of the underlying mechanisms and effects of confirmation bias in the digital age. The research design combines qualitative analysis of selected scholarly articles and quantitative analysis of user data from social media platforms. The analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of the impact of confirmation biases in cyber media by synthesizing insights from scholarly literature and analysing user data. It helps identify the mechanisms through which confirmation biases manifest in online environments, sheds light on the potential consequences of such biases, and informs strategies for addressing and mitigating their effects.

Keywords:

Communication
Confirmation bias
Crime
Social media
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1. Introduction

According to Merriam-Webster (2023) media is a means of communication that reach and influence a large audience. It refers to the channel of communication including printed paper to digital data. And social media means any online communication standard that grasps masses including but not limited to Facebook, twitter, Instagram, what's app, you tube, blogs, email, and web sites (Law Insider, n.d). It is a communication intermediate based on the internet. Our interpersonal connection has become easier than ever because of social

media as it acts as a mode of communication and global socialization. It also breaks the boundary of topography, detachment, language, ethos, and borders. In our communal lives, social media play more part than social part in this digital era (Starinsky, 2021). The author used the Facebook portion of social media to cognize the upshot of social media in this article.

Confirmation bias is a cognitive bias of human tendency to deducting information contradictory to past judgment (Kappes, Harvey, Lohrenz, Montague, & Sharot, 2020). Human decisions, from higher-level planning to lower-level perceptual decisions, are known to be systematically biased (Nickerson, 1998a; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). We sometimes face systematic error in thinking that affects our decision making and judgment can be referred as cognitive bias. Wason's rule discovery task is an experiment conducted by Peter Wason where he illustrated that people's information seeking tendency is related to their existing belief.

The elucidation of evidence based on prevailing beliefs or expectations or hypothesis in hand partially is called confirmation bias (Nickerson, 1998b). From the list of items humans tend to recall the first item. In psychology this tendency is known as primacy effect. Also, in case of remembering facts individuals are more likely to recall facts from the end of a presentation which is known as recency effect. Existing literature shows that, in most of the cases confirmation bias develops from the primacy effect (tendency to recall information presented at the beginning of a presentation) and the recency effect (tendency to remember the most recent information) (Lange, Chattoraj, Beck, Yates, & Haefner, 2021). I have used confirmation bias in this article as a cognitive bias that influence people in believing information by putting weight in their pre-existing believe.

News sharing in online is a common phenomenon in our daily life. Where social media is a vast source for news now a days it is crucial to understand its effect in our society. In this day and age, the amount of real news is less than fake news on social media (Antino Kim & Dennis, 2019; Silverman, 2015). Gabelkov, Ramachandran, Chaintreau, and Legout (2016) found that rather than critically thinking about the topic reading, people are partaking news on twitter without even understanding and the amount of this shared articles are more than half of the total articles shared. The discrepancy between fake news and real news becoming blurry gradually. On the other hand, human psychology is biased in a way that, people tend to believe information that matches their own ideology. So, news shared on Facebook or any other social media site, affects our understanding towards a misinterpretation of any particular fact or phenomenon. Misinterpretation if information can lead us to make our decision biased and can potentially leads towards victimization. Sülflow, Schäfer, and Winter (2019) found a positive correlation between confirmation bias behaviour and polarization and social media platform like Facebook.

A new dimension of defamation has evolved through the mushrooming of the internet over the passage of time (Placid & Wynekoop, 2011). Garner (2009) defined defamation as the act of damaging another person's reputation by creating a false statement. According to Kelly, Schwartz, and Partlett (2020) "Defamation is a "Tort" and is derived from the Latin term "Tortus", which means twisted". A recent study conducted by Himma-Kadakas and Ojamets (2022) revealed that journalists possesses the skills and competencies necessary to verify information, but still have the potential to spread misinformation through their reporting. And mess people tends to rely on social media site for acquire information faster than the traditional media which results attempting to fill the information gap with rumours (Andrews, Fichet, Ding, Spiro, & Starbird, 2016). Then the rumours circle around the social media world. Social media site such as Facebook have some specific algorithms that can selectively filter news and information to individuals, which may contribute to confirmation bias by promoting preferred content (Bakshy, Messing, & Adamic, 2015; Spohr, 2017). Marwick and Lewis (2017) suggested that media manipulation can have negative consequences such as reduced trust on mainstream media, increased dissemination of misinformation and further polarization and radicalization of individuals.

No other internet platform is as influential as social media site in our social life. Development in information and communication technology has turned the world as a global village where everyone gets to know each other via social media platform. Thus, it has become much easier to foster information about anyone. Information can become a curse if it is spread with malice. A better understanding is needed to analyse the role of social media and confirmation bias play, in news sharing. This paper attempts to describe the role of social media and confirmation bias in the victimization process.

2. Literature Review

Social media is a popular means for mass people in the arena of news allocation and consumption and this development in technology act as a double edged sword (Purba & Can, 2016; Shu, Mahudeswaran, Wang, Lee, & Liu, 2020). Users are allowed to share content freely that resulting dissemination of fake news, hoaxes, and misinformation (Shu et al., 2020; Tacchini, Ballarin, Della Vedova, Moret, & de Alfaro, 2017). Vicario et al. (2016) has found that user generative contents are extensively available in cyber space and aggregation of similar minded people is the motivation behind it. Marwick and Lewis (2017) explores how online media contribute creating distrust of mainstream media.

Tripathi (2017) and Holt, Shehata, Strömbäck, and Ljungberg (2013) found that specially young people are vulnerable in social media. Their frequent use of social media makes it harder for them to distinguish between real and reel. Their emotion nudges the spread of misinformation. True and Morales (2019) states

that, Platforms like Facebook allows users to learn about their friend's engagement in a content through comment section. The content circle around the news feed creating a loop. Spohr (2017) discussed about how philosophical divergence occur and how filter bubble act as a catalyst regarding this phenomenon. To analyse news sharing phenomena Laato, Islam, Islam, and Whelan (2020) and Wong and Burkell (2017) found that the trust in online information act as a catalyst for online news sharing.

According to Zimmer, Scheibe, Stock, and Stock (2019) reading fake news can reinforce confirmation bias as individual prefer news as it aligns with their existing opinions. Nickerson (1998a) provides a wide range of view regarding confirmation bias. He also reviewed evidence for this bias in several practical context and provided explanations. Antino Kim and Dennis (2019) found that confirmation bias is wild because users tends to believe articles similar to their belief. Sikder, Smith, Vivo, and Livan (2020) demonstrated that online social networks allow individuals to choose the narratives they are exposed to, which can reinforce confirmation bias. Del Vicario, Scala, Caldarelli, Stanley, and Quattrociochi (2017) provides empirical evidence on how people focus only on their preferred opinion and confirm their claim based on their previous belief. Kahneman (2011) provides more scientific insight into how our neural system can rapidly and automatically process information that confirms our prior belief, in less than one second. Kappes et al. (2020) suggested that confirmation bias can reduce neural sensitivity to the strenghts of others opinions in the posterior medial prefrontal cortex particularly those opinions are disconfirming. Furthermore he added that individuals may be less inclined to change their opinions when faced with conflicting information, as preexisting judgments can alter the neural representation of the strength of that information. And Koriat, Lichtenstein, and Fischhoff (1980) emphasised that an individuals level of confidence in their answer is heavily influenced by the amount and strength of the evidence supporting that answer.

Ling (2020); Duffy and Ling (2020); Del Vicario et al. (2016) and Del Vicario et al. (2017) have demonstrated the significant impact of confirmation bias in the spread of fake news and viral phenomena. Alsaad, Taamneh, and Al-Jedaiah (2018) states that social media uses algorithms that provide information according to our thoughts and believes by analysing our personal activities. Moreover, in limiting to exposure to cross-cutting content individual choice also plays stronger role compared to algorithm ranking (Bakshy et al., 2015). Trolling in social media is a growing concern. Lumsden and Morgan (2017) found that in online media rape threats, death threats, and body shaming occupying social media in the form of trolling. He also found that victims are facing "symbolic violence" through trolling. Not only symbolic violence but also direct violence is the result of social network i.e. Facebook. Minar and Naher (2018) found that certain incidents in Bangladesh had their origins in social media activities, particularly on platforms like Facebook. He also found that technology are behind those violent incidents.

Nickerson (1998b) in his seminal work on "Confirmation Bias: A Ubiquitous Phenomenon in Many Guises" provided a comprehensive overview of confirmation bias, a cognitive bias wherein individuals tend to interpret and favour information that confirms their existing beliefs while disregarding or discounting contradictory evidence. Although not specific to cyber media, the article explores the general manifestations of confirmation bias in various domains, including information processing, decision-making, and belief perseverance. While not directly related to social media, this work establishes a foundational understanding of confirmation bias, which can be applied to its impact in online environments. Confirmation bias in the context of information search and processing is examined by the author in another article titled "Confirmation Bias in Information Search and Processing: A Review of the Literature" (Nickerson, 1998a). It gives a summary of studies that look into how people favour information that supports their pre-existing views and theories. The article explores the cognitive mechanisms underpinning confirmation bias and highlights its ramifications for decision-making and belief formation, even though it is not specifically about cyber media. The review provides psychological insights into confirmation bias that may be used to analyse its effects in relation to how people consume information online.

The article "The role of confirmation bias in the acquisition of social media skills" by Boyd and Ellison (2007) examines the function of confirmation bias during the learning of social media skills. It addresses how people look for material that supports their opinions and preconceptions when figuring out how to use social media sites. According to the study, confirmation bias may have an impact on how users interact with social media, forming their preferences and affecting the content they consume. The study sheds light on how confirmation bias affects the development of social media skills by drawing on qualitative interviews with college students.

The article "The Role of Social Media in the Arab Spring" by Howard and Hussain (2013) explores the function of social media in the context of the Arab Spring, a series of revolutions and protests in the Middle East and North Africa. They examine how social media sites like Twitter and Facebook aided in the mobilisation of activists and the distribution of information during this time. As people tended to seek out and share content that supported their political ideas and goals, the research emphasises the existence of confirmation bias in social media usage. To demonstrate how social media affected the Arab Spring, the article uses data from Twitter and other sources. While world politics were more akin to create balance between security and other values (Talukder, 2023) people tended to mobilise people using social media.

The research article "The Role of Social Media in the Formation and Maintenance of Social Networks" by Roosen and Fischbach (2014) examines the function of social media in the creation and upkeep of social

networks. They look explore how people's confirmation biases affect the connections they choose to make and the content they come across in their social networks on websites like Facebook. According to the study, confirmation bias has an impact on the dynamics and makeup of social networks, causing homophily and the reinforcement of pre-existing beliefs and attitudes. The study examines the connection between social media and confirmation bias in the context of social network creation using survey data and network analysis methodologies.

In "The Echo Chamber Effect: The Influence of Social Media on Identity and Political Polarisation," [González-Bailón \(2017\)](#) examines the echo chamber effect, which is the process by which pre-existing ideas are reinforced and self-reinforcing online communities are developed. He looks at how the echo chamber effect is affected by confirmation bias, which arises from people's propensity to associate with others who share their opinions and to read materials that support those beliefs. The study explores the mechanisms underlying the echo chamber effect and examines the effects of social media on political polarisation. The paper bases its conclusions on network analysis and empirical data.

The paper "Social media and confirmation bias: How Facebook contributes to selective exposure" by [Lee, Lee, and Kim \(2018\)](#) explores the effects of confirmation bias on social media platforms, concentrating on Facebook. They investigate how users' pre-existing attitudes and views affect the information they choose to access on Facebook, which reinforces their pre-existing ideas. According to the research, social media platforms frequently exhibit confirmation bias, which can lead to echo chambers and the polarisation of viewpoints. The study uses data from a Facebook user survey and statistical analysis to back up its conclusions.

On the other side, [Stroud \(2019\)](#) looks into how social media plays a part in the spiral of silence theory, which contends that people are less likely to voice their thoughts if they believe they are in the minority. In her article "Social Media and the Spiral of Silence: The Case of Brett Kavanaugh," she focuses on Brett Kavanaugh's nomination to the Supreme Court of the United States, which has been controversial, and explores how social media sites like Twitter and Facebook affected people's willingness to express their opinions on the subject. Confirmation bias is investigated in the study as a factor that influences engagement and opinion expression on social media during highly polarised events.

2.1. Theoretical Frameworks

[Tajfel and Turner \(1979\)](#) Social Identity Theory examines how a person's self-concept is influenced by their affiliation with social groupings. Social identity theory contends that people seek out and interact with information that strengthens their sense of group identity and belonging in the context of confirmation bias in cyberspace. Online groups may become divided in opinion as a result, creating echo chambers.

[Festinger \(1957\)](#) first suggested the concept of cognitive dissonance, which examines how people attempt to maintain consistency between their attitudes and actions. According to the cognitive dissonance theory, people are motivated to look for knowledge that supports their pre-existing ideas in order to lessen cognitive dissonance and preserve internal consistency. This may lead to the deliberate avoidance of opposing perspectives and the deliberate introduction to material that supports pre-existing beliefs.

According to the Selective Exposure Theory, people actively seek out information that supports their current ideas and reject information that challenges them ([Zillmann, 2000](#)). It implies that people are driven to preserve cognitive equilibrium and support their ingrained beliefs. The selective exposure theory explains how people deliberately choose sources, venues, and material that support their prejudices, which creates echo chambers and reinforces confirmation biases in the context of cyber media.

The Agenda Setting Theory ([McCombs & Shaw, 1972](#)) looks at how the media shape public opinion and affects the importance of problems. According to agenda setting theory, in the context of confirmation bias at cyber media, the media's selection and emphasis on particular themes and narratives can affect how much information people are exposed to that supports their already ideas. People are more likely to be exposed to and engage with content that is congruent with their pre-existing views, which can further strengthen confirmation biases.

The causes and effects of confirmation biases in the context of cyber media are better understood thanks to these theoretical frameworks. They contribute to the understanding of why people tend to selectively expose themselves to information that supports their preconceptions, reinforcing their confirmation biases and potentially polarising viewpoints in online environments.

3. Methodology

The study utilizes a mixed-methods approach to examine the impact of confirmation biases in cyber media. The research design combines qualitative analysis of selected scholarly articles and quantitative analysis of user data from social media platforms.

3.1. Data Collection

Qualitative Analysis: To find pertinent academic publications that address the effect of confirmation biases in cyber media, a systematic review of the literature is done. Along with additional papers from renowned

databases like Google Scholar, JSTOR, and the ACM Digital Library, the articles listed in the initial query are included. Key conclusions, theories, and empirical data linked to confirmation biases are examined in the chosen publications.

Quantitative Analysis: APIs (Application Programming Interface) or authorised access are used to get user information from social media networks. The data covers user interactions with posts about divisive topics or contentious issues, such as likes, shares, and comments. To protect privacy, the data is aggregated and anonymized. In order to add public opinion an online survey was conducted using google form where 89 university students participated voluntarily.

3.2. Data Analysis

Thematic analysis is used to conduct a qualitative examination of the chosen academic papers. The main themes surrounding confirmation biases are identified, including the function of social media, cognitive functions, and the development of echo chambers. Based on the research from the literature, the analysis seeks to give a broad overview of the influence of confirmation biases in online media.

Quantitative Analysis: Statistical methods are used to analyse the user data that has been gathered. In order to determine the frequency of confirmation biases in user interactions, descriptive statistics like frequencies and proportions are used. To investigate relationships between user factors (such as demographics, online behaviour), inferential statistics, such as chi-square tests, or regression analysis may be used.

The study is aware of some drawbacks, such as its reliance on published research, potential biases in the article selection process, and the generalizability of its conclusions given the particular user data that was gathered. The study also considers the evolving user behaviour and platform algorithms as well as the dynamic nature of digital media.

4. Analysis and Discussion

4.1. Social Media in News Sharing

News production and distribution procedures have been changed by the rejuvenation of communication expertise (Wong & Burkell, 2017). Mass people accepted social media widely as a new medium for news consumption and share (Shu et al., 2020). Sharing of news is an inherent human propensity and digital technology ameliorate news sharing process by social media, adding 'Share' and 'Retweet' button in Facebook and Twitter web pages (Canter, 2012). Kumpel, Karnowski, and Keyling (2015) defines online news sharing as, a practice of posting or recommending news content via online media platforms to a defined set of people with access to those news content.

People use social media for social purpose like maintain close bonding among friends and families, and use twitter for breaking news in general (Anderson & Caumont, 2014). SMPERTH (2022) found that 88% Facebook users practice social media platform for sustaining contact among familiar's. Goffman (2016) found that the principle performance of social media users can be seen as news sharing. Wong and Burkell (2017) provides a widely accepted view regarding sharing motivation as follows,

"When you screen this, you say yes, this interests my friend, it interests, you just send, and start a conversation, so you just, that is a form of maintaining friendship, keep each other in contact."

Social media connects people around the globe by breaking physical barrier (Caled & Silva, 2022). Existing literature provides evidence for the fact that social media is becoming more influential than traditional media. In 2020, Pew research centre conducted a social media survey and found that Facebook is the most used platform among online news consumer with 36% of United States adult getting their news from it (Pengue, 2022).

Traditional media is considered in the world as one-way communication or as a closed system (Uddin & Naz, 2017). Social media not only provides news to the individual, but also, creates a space for communication. In social media, individuals can access information and add their opinion through the comment box, which provides flexibility in social media. The factors which had significantly impacted social media are networking and its high flexibility (Roos, 2013). For mass people, it has become a well-furnished medium for consuming and sharing the news (Shu et al., 2020). Sismeiro and Mahmood (2018) found that reduction of visiting traditional media have a correlation with Facebook outage. In recent decades journalistic content has lost human trust (Lewandowsky, Ecker, & Cook, 2017).

Social media produce real-time news that fills the gap in traditional media's asynchronous news production (Caled & Silva, 2022). Social media satisfy the urge to get informed in real time with millions of people producing information on this platform which turns to be a form of journalism called citizen journalism. Millions of people views this act of creating media content that includes information as an alternative, authentic news (Holton, Coddington, & Dezūñiga, 2013). Radsch (2012) defines citizen journalism as,

"An alternative and activist form of news gathering and reporting that functions outside mainstream media institutions, often as a response to shortcomings in the professional journalistic field, which uses similar journalistic practices but is driven by different objectives and ideals and relies on alternative sources of legitimacy than traditional or mainstream journalism."

News is inextricably related to the positive civic behaviour form and so, citizen journalism in the last few decade gradually becoming a widely accepted term (Wall, 2015). The workings of the professional news media and citizen journalism in now so intertwined, and it is not soon disappearing (Wall, 2015). It unfolds the domain of free access to information and eases political and economic constraints (Caled & Silva, 2022). These advanced features significantly affect the media users of all media components that have drifted to the internet in a brief period, which caused the transition of traditional media (Uddin & Naz, 2017). A research conducted by Ren, Dong, Popovic, Sabnis, and Nickerson (2022) depicts that, social media have an immense stimulation for the viewership of traditional media. It attracts and reflects to topics and that attraction translate as highly viewed news articles in the same topic. News users by enormous online platforms, can indicated how much they like the news by sharing, reading and leaving comments, ranging from online media sites to various news websites (Lee & Tandoc Jr, 2017). People share the contents they enjoy or want others to know about it.

4.2. News Quality in Social Media

People around the world are becoming more and more dependent on internet. Facebook possess 2.91 billion active users monthly as of April, 2022 (SMPERTH, 2022). From business to politics, social media produces an indisputable role within our society. People depends on the internet for their daily necessity. Social media and internet provides people an increased access to information than the past (Lewandowsky et al., 2017; Munger, 2019). This bulk number of information roaming around the social media includes both information and misinformation. Of course, all types of shared news on social media is not phatic (Duffy & Ling, 2020). But reason behind this misinformation or fake news issues in social media are vague and complex in nature.

People use social media for hedonistic purposes, not utilitarian purposes (Kim & Dennis, 2018). Even though using social media for hedonistic purpose, not utilitarian purpose, news consumption in social media is a basic phenomenon now a days. When people use social media just for entertainment, they do not give much thought to the news they are reading or check the news source (Kim & Dennis, 2018). A huge amount of time occupied by the people who are young in age on news sharing on social media platform. These young people do not think critically while sharing news. Pew research centre in their study found that 23% of American admitted about their made up story sharing incident where 14% shared the news knowing forged and 16% later realized about the bogus news sharing instance (Barthel, Mitchell, & Holcomb, 2016). Sometimes information is sensationalized to achieve a more significant impact and increase audience share (Lazo & Batlle, 2019). Sometimes any discursive story may get viral on social media intentionally or unintentionally.

A social media post can quickly transform into a widely spread news article within a matter of minutes or hours (Silverman, 2015). It is crucial to analyse the social and cognitive impacts of sharing news through digital media (Ling, 2020). Deception is not always the motivating factor for spreading misinformation. News which is shared on social media can have various motivation such as alarming informing and offering guidance (Duffy & Ling, 2020).

Regardless of the intention behind sharing news on social media the problem of disseminating false or misleading information plays a significant role in our society. Misinformation can be associated with lack of information, misunderstanding or distortion of information for humorous purpose (Caled & Silva, 2022). When audience has little access to trusted evidence during crisis situation a domain for production of unverified stories unfolds (Allport & Postman, 1945). In case of crisis coverage, citizen often focuses on sharing emotion in their content rather than providing facts or information that is helpful (Nip, 2009). According to Clarke, Chen, Du, and Hu (2020) article, fake news spreads at a faster pace than real news which is due to the fact that fake news tends to generate more interest as it often conveys stronger emotion. The team lead by Menczer at Indiana University found that the quantity of valid information was considerably lower compared to the quantity of misinformation or fake news (Lazo & Batlle, 2019).

Media have a tendency to disguise itself as neutral (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013), but it purposefully package and publish fake news as if they were genuine (DiFranzo & Gloria-Garcia, 2017). The absence of fact-checking practices in social media news articles creates a challenge in differentiating what is false and what is true. Sometimes, people share the news only based on its popularity or only for the number of views or share it poses.

“Most viewed” flag produces an influential voice to put more weight to the news (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013). social media platforms often utilize popular tags to highlight the credibility of information being shared. Repetition of a story by many sources effects belief of readers (Caled & Silva, 2022). And when people find news that matches their prior hypothesis, they without putting much attention put their belief on it. Sharing news on social media purely based on its popularity can compromise the quality of the news being share. They further share the news with their contacts assuming that the news is authentic.

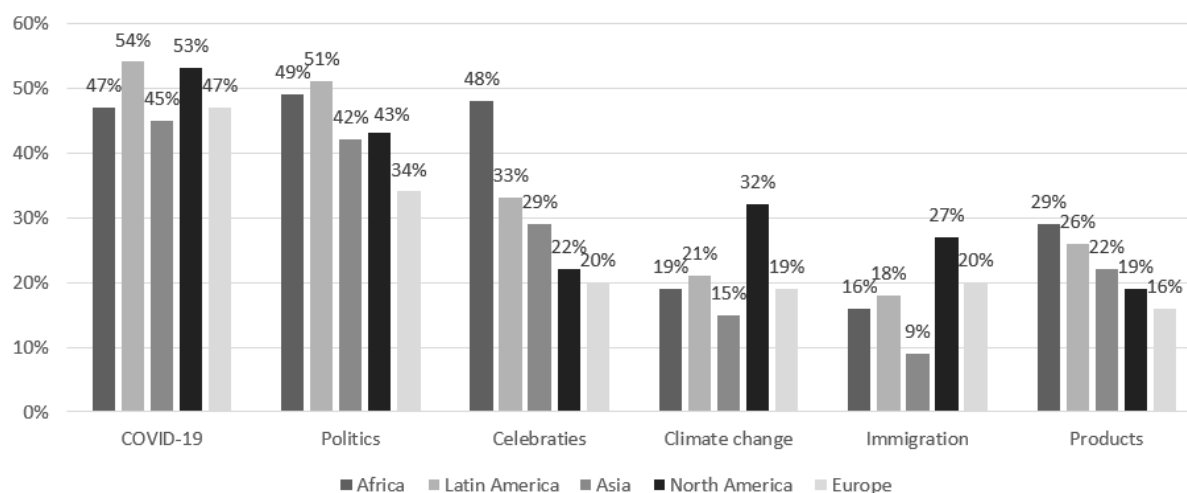


Figure 1. Number of news consumers faced fake or misleading information on social media from January to February, 2022.

Source: Statista (2022).

Figure 1 illustrates a comparative picture of fake or misleading information spread about different contemporary issues throughout the world. COVID-19 and Political issues remained the major area of concern for spreading misleading information through social media specially the use of Facebook is increasing rapidly in this regard. The guardian reported that Facebook is reportedly contemplating the hiring of editors to curate “high-quality news” for its users in an attempt to combat the spread of misinformation (The Guardian, 2019).

4.3. Infodemic Role of Social Media and Confirmation Bias in News Sharing

An “Infodemic” is a large amount of information which can consist of both accurate and inaccurate information that spreads rapidly and widely through both physical and digital environment, potentially causing an outbreak (Rubinelli et al., 2022). Social media can create an outbreak by releasing misinformation in society powerful enough to engulf any sensitive situation. Research into social judgment has shown that individuals tends to give more importance to positive confirmatory evidence while giving less importance to negative disconfirmatory evidence (Nickerson, 1998a). Similarity between articles and readers pre-existing opinion increase cognitive activity and readers become more prone to believe them than articles that challenge their opinion (Moravec, Minas, & Dennis, 2019). Sperlich (1976) put forth the idea that individuals may feel content with a satisfactory explanation for an event and may not feel compelled to explore all other possibilities and this notion was further supported by Nisbett and Ross (1980). In a social experiment Kappes et al. (2020) found that, Confirmation bias is observed both when the partner is correct and incorrect. People are more influenced by the judgments expressed with high confidence (Pulford, Colman, Buabang, & Krockow, 2018). It can be said on the basis of this findings that it does not matter whether the person sharing news in correct or not, confirmation bias nudges the person receiving information, in believing. It appears that people often believe information that puts weight to their existing belief (Koriat et al., 1980).

Another reason for believing the fake news most of the time is that people often believe what they wants to believe (Moravec et al., 2019). the more social media platforms generate content related to a particular news topic the more attention that topic tends to receive from viewers (Ren et al., 2022). They simply do not try to think for an alternate hypothesis (Nickerson, 1998b). Sharing similar divergent beliefs with one another can lead people to become more confident in those beliefs (Hills, 2019). Social media can create a filter bubble by using algorithms that encourage users to view content and post that align with their pre-existing beliefs. This can further reinforce confirmation bias by limiting exposure to diverse perspective and opinions (Pariser, 2011). When people have a pre-existing belief or hypothesis about any fact, they tend to believe any confirmatory information or evidence which puts weight to their existent belief. When readers encounter a topic on social media that they are familiar with they often search for related fundamental information to learn more about the topic (Ren et al., 2022). As Nickerson (1998a) states,

“An incorrect hypothesis can be sufficiently close to being correct that it receives a considerable amount of positive reinforcement, which may be taken as further evidence of the correctness of the hypothesis in hand and inhibit continued search for an alternative.”

Study conducted by Morgan, Lampe, and Shafiq (2013) found that there was a positive association between news sharing on social media and the use of oppositional sources as well as increased ideological diversity. While investigating extreme groups Wojcieszak (2008) noted that extreme group tends to belong to the same social network dimension, which leads to a self-sustaining biased news or information monoculture. Cognitive bias influence social media to accelerate the proliferation of information, foster spread of misinformation that stimulate extremism (DiFranzo & Gloria-Garcia, 2017; Hills, 2019). As people increasingly rely on interpersonal news sharing rather than traditional news outlets, the problem of confirmation bias becomes more pressing (Duffy & Ling, 2020). A prominent behavioural theory suggest that

negative information captures attention in a higher rate than positive information as human brain is wired to be more attentive to negative stimuli (Jha & Shah, 2019).

Confirmation bias, without a doubt, acting as a catalyst in viral phenomena (Del Vicario et al., 2017). Without fact checking propensity, accessing thousands of news sources increases peoples exposure to partial and misleading information that can create a bias public concurrence about any fact (Moravec et al., 2019).

4.4. Role of Social Media in Victimization

Social media has become one of the most prominent platforms for information exchange in our society. People from all spheres of the society now a days glean information about diverse incidents happening around the world through social media. The information we gather from social media plays a crucial part in shaping our understanding and choices. As Slater (2007) pointed out that Social media can confirm, stabilize and enhance our attitude. A widely disseminated news can induce fear, hate, destruction of property by influencing mass people's perception and understanding of an event (Liu, Nourbakhsh, Li, Fang, & Shah, 2015; Zubiaga, Liakata, Procter, Wong Sak Hoi, & Tolmie, 2016).

social media has become a means for spreading false information to global audience (Liu, Fraustino, & Jin, 2015; Tacchini et al., 2017). The emergence of participatory journalism or citizen journalism where news is produced by non-professionals, has led to a significant shift in the way news is consumed and produced (Lee & Tandoc Jr, 2017). Information produced by nonprofessional's emphasis emotional properties regarding an incident rather than facts (Nip, 2009). Biased information in social media can shape our perception in a more divert way of interpretation. For example, a fake news claiming that pop fancies endorsed Donald Trump was shared over one million times on social media, with the majority of the shares coming from feeds that supported trump during the election (DiFranzo & Gloria-Garcia, 2017). Misinformation roaming around the social media can divert our perception about a fact by providing only those information which we wants to believe rather than delivering actual fact (Nip, 2009). Social media provides information to the individual by analysing their personal data and activities. Research conducted by Caled and Silva (2022) found that based on the data social media collect from individual users' attention, likings, collaborations is automatically filtered and prioritized. Individuals have a tendency to seek out information sources that align with their existing beliefs rather than those that contradict them (Eldersveld, 1961; Festinger, 1957). According to Mathioudakis, Koudas, and Marbach (2010) social media platforms provide a large amount of information about emerging event, breaking news, and other topics which attracts a significant number of people and this attention is often demonstrated through comments and tags on the content. This is how people are getting only information they want to belief.

Deshmukh (2021) after analysis of news articles relating communal violence found that media acts as an echo chamber for Hindutva and Islam phobia that instigates communal violence between Hindus and Muslims. Derek Thomson who is the head of France 24 observers and reported on the attacks in the Tamil Nadu state, compared the rumours that were spreading on WhatsApp in the state to the actual events that occurred. He expressed shock and fear at the fact that such mob mentalities could lead to lynching and mob attacks on people and stated that he had reported on similar situations in other countries but never imagined it could happen in Europe.

According to Agnès Callamard, who is the Secretary General of Amnesty International, the recent allegations are a clear indication of how Facebook's platform is responsible for the proliferation of harmful and abusive content around the world (Amnesty International, 2021).

Following incidents can be an example of how social media by spreading misinformation acts as a catalyst for communal violence.

In 2021, 23 people died from communal violence in Bangladesh for misinformation or fake news or rumours transmitted by social media (Rahman, 2021).

On October 20, 2019, in Borhanuddin, a town in Bangladesh's Bhola district, hundreds of Muslims gathered to protest against a derogatory Facebook post about Islam's Prophet Muhammad that was allegedly written by a Hindu man. The protest turned violent, resulting in clashes between protesters and police, and leading to the deaths of four people. According to the police, the Facebook account of the alleged perpetrator had been hacked and the hackers had intended to incite violence between the two communities (Rafe, 2019).

There have been numerous cases of public lynching in India as a result of rumours that were spread on WhatsApp, leading to the deaths of many individuals (Dixit & Mac, 2018).

According to news media reports, an attack took place on the evening of 1 November 2020 in Korbanpur village, of 4 no Purbo Dhair Union, Bangra Police Station, Muradnagar Upazila, Cumilla. About nine to ten houses were attacked and ransacked based on an individual's Facebook post (Ain-O-Salish-Kendra(ASK), 2020).

4.5. Role of Confirmation Bias in Victimization

According to Guilbeault, Becker, and Centola (2018) the dynamic nature of confirmation bias implies that exposure to politically diverse messages can potentially moderate biased understandings, according to their observations.. The relationship between the sharer and the person who receives it with other intangibles in common-attitudes, beliefs, values have an impact on news sharing (Duffy & Ling, 2020). This statement

suggests that people tend to see patterns or information that confirm their pre-existing beliefs, even if the evidence is not actually supporting them. It also suggests that once someone takes a stance on an issue, their focus shifts towards defending and justifying that position, rather than being open to new information or perspectives (Nickerson, 1998a). One of the most significant factor in believing social media news is confirmation bias (Moravec et al., 2019). Users are inclined to search for information that aligns with their existing beliefs (Koriat et al., 1980; Nickerson, 1998a). It is embedded as an essential nature of our awareness (Kahneman, 2011).

To understand confirmation bias in social media context I have used two brain system calls, system 1 and system 2 proposed by Kahneman (2011). Absence of voluntary control cause system 1 habitual and swift where system 2 operate under deliberate control and enthusiastic mental activities with much more concentration (Kahneman, 2011). System 1, a group of subsystem which is activated by the information if human lack voluntary control (De Castro Bellini-Leite, 2013; Evans, 2014; Thompson, 2013). And if system 1 find matching result with the information received it produce a, "Feeling of Rightness" (FOR) to the individual that leads to a conclusion (Bago & De Neys, 2017; De Neys, 2014; Thompson, Turner, & Pennycook, 2011). After being exposed to information, System 1 automatically generates a response that draws from our long-term memory to provide confirming evidence in less than one second (Bargh & Ferguson, 2000; Carlston & Skowronski, 1994; Fazio, Sanbonmatsu, Powell, & Kardes, 1986). This phenomenon of confirmation bias is a natural tendency of the human brain, and it cannot be entirely eliminated or prevented (Evans & Stanovich, 2013; Kahneman, 2011).

Keegan (2016) states that social media news is often biased because it allows users to choose their preferred news and later deliberately repeat articles matching their previous choice. The use of social media in a hedonistic way tends to activate system 1 instead of system 2, as system 2 requires cognitive effort while system 1 is automatic and quick (Moravec et al., 2019). The moment users encounters new information; if it matches with prior knowledge and views system 1, nudges them to believe it and if not, it nudges them to decline information as trustworthy (Kahneman, 2011).

As system 1 is quick and effortless, people are more likely accept its conclusion and trust information matching pre-existing perception that leads to the acceptance of biased conclusion (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017; Moravec et al., 2019). It delivers assessment without asking (De Castro Bellini-Leite, 2013; Kahneman, 2011; Thompson, 2013). Without producing much thought we accept the conclusion derived from system 1 ; the result is confirmation bias (Kahneman, 2011; Nickerson, 1998a). And in social media it is so prominent that users do not pay heed to the information they do not prefer (Moravec et al., 2019). Most of the humans try to reduce their cognitive effort which Taylor and Fiske (1978) referred as "Cognitive Misers". Moravec et al. (2019) found that because of confirmation bias participants were not only more inclined to believe the news headline when it matched their belief but also mark true headlines that do not match their prior belief as less credible. They also suggest that confirmation bias foster our belief. Due to confirmation bias, even if the information social media users receive are fabricated, they will trust as it confirms their existing values and beliefs.

The quantity of fake news articles exceeds the quantity of real news articles (Silverman, 2015). People are getting information only that matches their own belief. When people are getting more and more information repeatedly, it puts weight to their own belief, and they believe more quickly rather than thinking for an alternative source. As an instance, an individual who is against vaccination tends to become more firmly fixed in their stance as they read more articles supporting the anti-vaccination movement (Ling, 2020).

Confirmation bias thus influencing mass peoples believe. A study conducted recently has revealed that a significant number of people, regardless of their political ideology or level of education, are unable to distinguish between fake and real news on social media. According to the results, in just 44% of the cases Facebook users will correctly identify fake headlines (Djordjevic, 2021). Confirmation bias can have a substantial impact on a wide range of domains, including politics, science, and education (Kappes et al., 2020). We all human being have some individual belief, assumption, knowledge about life and this world. We shape our own decisions in our life based on our existing knowledge. But this knowledge, assumption, belief is dynamic in nature.

The human behavioural inclination to dismiss or ignore disconfirming information can lead to polarization and make it easier to maintain false beliefs, which can have significant impacts on individuals and society (Nickerson, 1998a; Quattrociocchi, Scala, & Sunstein, 2016). Public opinion can be influenced by confirmation bias and social influence leading polarization of communities (Del Vicario et al., 2017). Slater (2007) discovered that groups such as those formed around religious or lifestyle identities tend to make us concentrate on specific kinds of information, leading to a reduction in the quality of information and the proliferation of biased narratives. This selective focus on information comes at the expense of substantiation and may promote unfounded rumours, suspicion, and paranoia.

A survey conducted by this author has confirmed that only in few cases social media defamatory content have no effect on user's belief system. But in vast number of cases provide evidence for having an effect on user's belief system when they saw any defamatory content on social media (Figure 2).

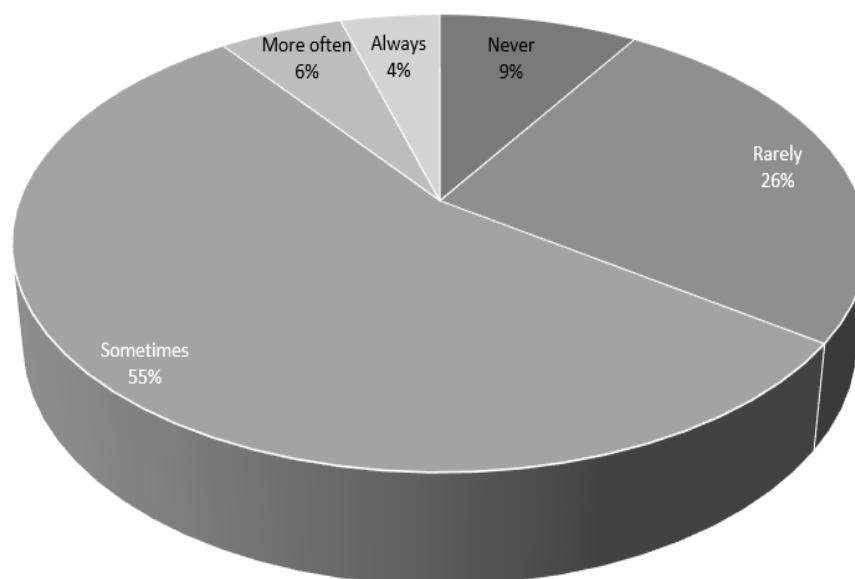


Figure 2. Social media affecting belief through defamatory content.

Users tend to believe information found on social media sites. When any news containing defamatory content via misinformation, disinformation or fake news, people showed a propensity for believing the information. Thus, the person against whom the news has been published falls a victim of collective victimization.

Social media networks are a blessing and curse at the same time. People around the whole world are feeling a lot more connected with one another by the blessing of social networking sites. It broke down the physical barrier between its users. It has created a sense of conscience. This feeling of connectivity and conscience nudges the users to feel responsible for one another. Users often share news and content on social media out of a sense of responsibility or desire to please others.

However, this tendency to share information has resulted in a large amount of both accurate and inaccurate information being spread on social media platforms. In addition to these characteristics, people use social media for hedonistic purposes not from a utilitarian perspective. As a result, it becomes challenging to discriminate misinformation from information. Confirmation bias has become a bane. It is a cognitive bias where humans unknowingly trust misinformation when more and more supporting evidence is found in favour of it. Facebook's algorithm also put fire in this issue. In Facebook, users only see contents that match their personal preferences. This social networking site analyses its user's personal information and only presents content that one would like to see. But people do not think or examine the source of the news most of the time. As a result, polarization in cyberspace has become a common phenomenon. This polarization in cyberspace later shifts to the physical space. Polarization unfolds victim blaming, direct violence such as communal violence, mob killing.

5. Conclusion

The pattern of information stream has changed with modernization of information technology. Platforms like Facebook offer a sense of bond between consumers and maximum consumers share news just to make their friends and family vigilant. It is more flexible than traditional media and created a two-way communication between news producers and consumers. These two ways of communication work as a double-edged sword.

The generation of social media has had a profound effect on news production, dissemination, and consumption. People now frequently share news among themselves through social media sites like Facebook and Twitter. Maintaining social ties and staying up to date on breaking news are two of the many incentives behind news sharing on social media. Social media has also made it easier for people to connect globally, eradicating geographical barriers and enabling them to get news from all over the world. The interactive aspect of social media, which enables users to interact with news information and express their ideas, has put traditional media, which is seen of as a one-way communication system, under pressure.

Because of the prevalence of false information, the quality of news published on social media is an issue. Social media not only increases access to information but also facilitates the spread of reliable and false news. Fake news is circulated on social media because people frequently share it without analysing its veracity. Misinformation is spread because fact-checking procedures are lacking, and popularity is valued more than

accuracy. Even without sufficient verification, news shared on social media can spread swiftly and have a big impact on society. Misinformation is especially dangerous when a crisis is present because people are more likely to share emotional content than reliable information.

News sharing on social media heavily relies on confirmation bias. Filter bubbles are created when people only accept and spread information that supports their previous thoughts and attitudes. Social media algorithms encourage confirmation bias by displaying to users' content that is consistent with their views and interests. Additionally, people have a propensity to place greater value on affirmative evidence and less emphasis on opposing data. This bias has an impact on how news is shared and digested on social media platforms, which reinforces pre-existing ideas and encourages the spread of false information.

Social media has an impact that extends beyond just disseminating news; it may also help victimize people. False information can cause fear, hostility, and even destructive behaviour by influencing people's views and attitudes through social media platforms. The development of citizen journalism has changed how news is produced and consumed, with amateurs now contributing to the dissemination of biased information that prioritises feelings over facts. Biased information on social media might distort our perspective of reality and alter how we interpret events.

In conclusion, social media has transformed how news is shared by enabling increased connectivity and information accessibility. It does present certain difficulties, though, including the dissemination of false information, confirmation bias, and the possibility of victimisation. To reduce the negative consequences and ensure responsible news consumption and sharing in the digital age, it is essential to critically assess the news published on social media platforms and to advance media literacy.

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