



Sharing is Not Caring: Examining Intention of Sharing Misinformation Moderated by New Media Literacy

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Abstract

As the disruption era grows more and more apparent, so does the spread of misinformation. This research examines the intention to share misinformation moderated with New Media Literacy (NML). With data from 100 undergraduate students via online survey and analyzed using SmartPLS4, the study reveals that information-seeking significantly influences the intention to share misinformation, even when moderated by New Media Literacy. In contrast, status-seeking and entertainment demonstrate little impact on misinformation-sharing intent, also when moderated by New Media Literacy. Socializing, on the other hand, yields a significant but negative correlation with the intention to share misinformation, suggesting the need to share factually correct information firsthand. The finding suggests that cultivating clarity when sharing information on social media is crucial, especially when one's intent is to seek information. This study contributes to the understanding of the factors influencing the spread of misinformation and highlights the importance of new media literacy in mitigating its effects.

Keywords: *misinformation, new media literacy, sharing intention, short-form videos, misinformation sharing intention*

Paper type: *Research paper*

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INTRODUCTION

The disruption era, as coined early on by Christensen and Bower (1995), is increasingly evident as technology innovations accelerate rapidly every day. The rapid growth of technology is also the driving force behind the rapid information flow nowadays. Unfortunately, rapid information flow is also indicated by the lightning-fast spread of misinformation, as demonstrated by J. Lee, Britt, and Kanthawala (2022). The significance of this can be seen in past events during the COVID-19 pandemic, with bizarre instances of infodemic and the sheer amount of misinformation (Singh and Banga 2022). A study found that in Indonesia, demographics such as age, gender, and education are trivial when it comes to sharing misinformation on social media (The Conversation 2019). This kind of misinformation spread is amplified by the interconnectedness of humans through the internet, particularly social media platforms. Rubin (2019) added that multiple culprits of misinformation spread are information overload, time-pressed users who lack media literacy skills, and poor regulation of social media platforms to combat misinformation spread.

Defining the term misinformation and the differences between misinformation and disinformation is requisite, as both concepts are used interchangeably most times. Misinformation and disinformation both refer to fake or misleading information, with the key delineation of both being their intention (Wu et al. 2019). While misinformation is fake information that spreads unintentionally, on the other hand, disinformation is being spread intentionally, more often than not, for malicious intent. The intent itself is unknown, with everyone sharing the given information, making it impossible to differentiate each new information. Misinformation sharing is also a complex behavior that influenced by many factors, including but not limited to contextual cues, individual human characteristics, and involvement & emotional valence (Xiao and Yang 2023; Liu et al. 2023).

The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) is initially a mass communication theory that tries to understand why people use media rather than what media does to people. It highlights the motivations and experiences of media consumers, claiming that consumers need to be satisfied by utilizing media. The

hypothesis has been applied to many forms of media consumption, including online news media, social media, and online live streaming (Leung 2016). Perceived gratification also impacts positively to continuous content contribution behavior (Liu, Qi, and Han 2019).

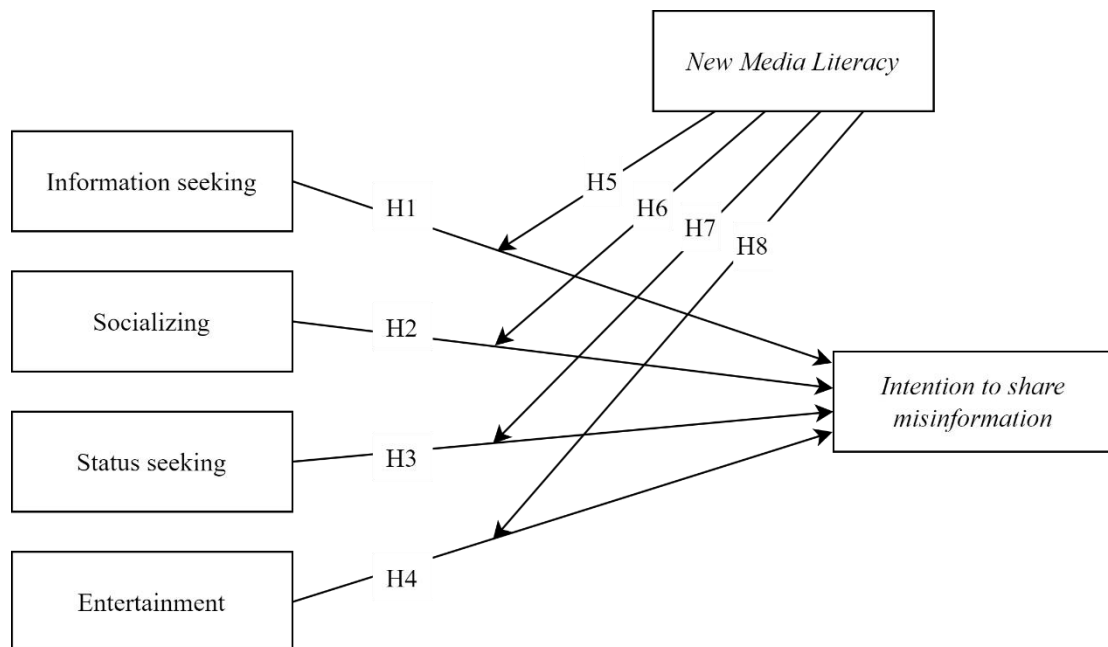
H1: Information seeking corresponds with the intention to share misinformation

H2: Socializing corresponds to the intention to share misinformation

H3: Status seeking corresponds with the intention to share misinformation

H4: Entertainment corresponds with the intention to share misinformation

Figure 1.
Proposed Research Model



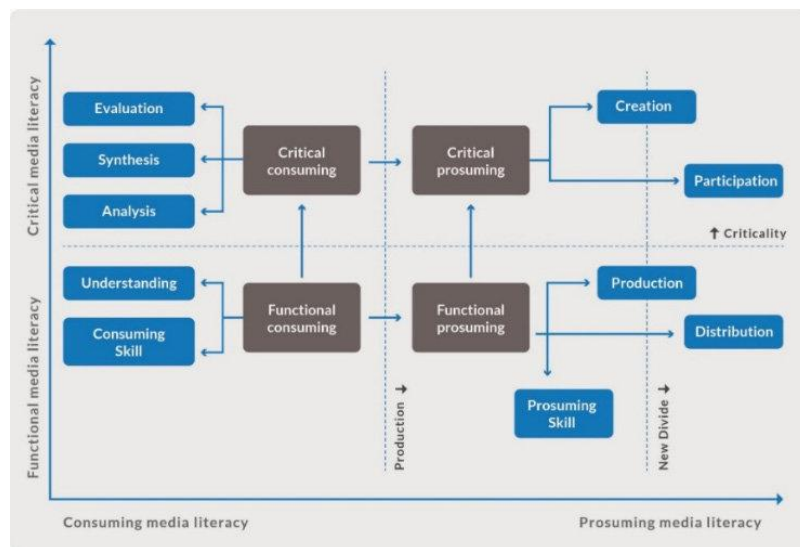
New Media Literacy

Media literacy, according to Potter (2021), is the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create messages across a variety of media. Media literacy empowers individuals to be aware and active participants in the media landscape, enabling them to navigate and critically engage with the information and messages they encounter in various media formats. In this disruption era, however, the emergence of new media has given rise to a form of literacy called "new media literacy" (NML). Traditionally, media literacy concentrated on educating individuals on how to access and comprehend media material. Currently, the term has developed to cover not only consuming but also generating and sharing media

material. In today's digital age, individuals engage with information and each other through both consuming and producing media messages. It also helps, if not necessary, to enhance one's proficiency in comprehending and critically evaluating new media, as it can serve as an intervention to mitigate the spread of misinformation (Xiao, Su, and Lee 2021; Xie, Gai, and Zhou 2019).

Figure. 2

New Media Literacy graph



Source: (Lin et al. 2013)

The definition of New Media Literacy can be seen integrated into Figure 2. The x axis represents consuming and *prosuming* (producing and consuming) media, while the y axis is functional and critical media literacy. It can be concluded that not only do we need to consume and be knowledgeable functionally in media literacy, but critical media literacy and the act of production and consumption are also much needed.

H5: New Media Literacy moderates the correspondence between information seeking and intention to share misinformation

H6: New Media Literacy moderates the correspondence between socializing and the intention to share misinformation

H7: New Media Literacy moderates the correspondence between status-seeking and the intention to share misinformation

H8: New Media Literacy moderates the correspondence between entertainment and the intention to share misinformation

This research study offers novelty in the context of misinformation-sharing intent with New Media Literacy. While misinformation sharing is already an established research point, the intent of it and the moderating role of New Media Literacy (NML) is the extension of current disruption era dynamics. E. H. Lee, Lee, and Lee (2022) also noted that the spread of misinformation is a phenomenon that should be embraced in the current disruption era. As seen in the case of Ukraine-Russia, applying precaution to misinformation sharing is in direct proportion to New Media Literacy skills (Karanfiloglu 2022). Even though the potential effects of misinformation have been much discussed, the roots of the problem have shown little evidence over the years (Allcott, Gentzkow, and Yu 2019). To fully understand this phenomenon, we are conducting an online survey and adapting the uses and gratifications theory for the independent variable of our research, adopting from various prior research (Liu, Qi, and Han 2019; Lei et al. 2023), a scale developed by Koç and Barut (2016) that's being used as the moderating effect of the hypothesis, and ultimately building the construct primarily off of Wei et al. (2023) with the integration of necessary construct.

METHODS

Data collection. A minimum sample size of 91 was determined using G*Power version 3.1.9.7, with a statistical power of .95, an alpha level of .05, and an effect size of .17. Thus, we gathered a total of 115 undergraduate students to serve as the sample for this research, in accordance with the minimum sample size recommendation of 100 put forth by Anderson and Gerbing (1984). The use of undergraduate students as the sample is a striking move, since they are the primary users of social media and online news in general (Xiao and Su 2022). A survey was done using Google Forms in compliance with the informed consent obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of Padjadjaran University (KEP Unpad) from November 17, 2023, to November 24, 2023. After removing 15 samples by way of filter questions and similarities, we were left with exactly 100 samples to analyze.

Data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS version 4.0.9.6 (Ringle et al. 2022) as the latest advancements in PLS-SEM software. The most recent version

of SmartPLS allows us to mark the endogenous variable as a binary variable, with Bodofo and Ho (2016) addressing in lengthy detail this phenomenon of the usage of the binary yes-no questions as an endogenous variable, concluding that it is achievable in specific cases.

Measurement Model

Table. 1
Discriminant Validity (HTMT)

	Entertainment	Information-seeking	Intention to share misinformation	New Media Literacy	Socializing	Status-seeking
Entertainment						
Information-seeking	0.443					
Intention to share misinformation	0.109	0.141				
New Media Literacy	0.390	0.671	0.328			
Socializing	0.304	0.732	0.292	0.554		
Status-seeking	0.418	0.416	0.142	0.214	0.463	

Table 1 analyzes discriminant validity through the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio, a relatively new criterion proposed by Hamid, Sami, and Sidek (2017) for discriminant validity assessment in the structural equation model (SEM). Discriminant validity is critical to ensure that the assessment methods used in the study capture the distinct across multiple different constructs. The table presents HTMT ratios between pairs of constructs, with values derived by evaluating the off-diagonal features below the generally accepted threshold of 0.9 (Hair & Alamer 2022).

Table. 2
Reliability

	Dimension	Item	Mean	SD	Loading	CA	CR	AVE
New Media Literacy	Functional consumption (FC)	FC1	4.780	0.416	0.601	0.842	0.867	0.338
		FC2	4.150	0.770	0.413			
		FC3	4.270	0.694	0.671			
		FC4	4.550	0.609	0.612			
	Critical consumption (CC)	CC1	4.700	0.482	0.675			
		CC2	4.150	0.702	0.653			
		CC3	4.290	0.743	0.646			
	Functional prosumption (FP)	FP1	3.960	0.984	0.620			
		FP2	3.700	1.000	0.598			
		FP3	4.020	0.985	<i>Excluded</i>			
		FP4	4.270	0.723	0.493			
	Critical prosumption (CP)	CP1	3.700	1.059	0.463			
		CP2	2.900	1.068	<i>Excluded</i>			
		CP3	3.820	0.957	0.485			
		CP4	4.520	0.659	0.550			
	Information seeking	INFO1	4.480	0.731	0.872	0.813	0.890	0.729
		INFO2	4.440	0.641	0.870			
		INFO3	4.480	0.674	0.817			
	Socializing	SOC1	4.110	0.875	0.847	0.829	0.895	0.739
		SOC2	3.930	1.018	0.856			
		SOC3	3.980	0.932	0.876			
	Entertainment	ENT1	4.380	0.826	0.556	0.701	0.782	0.560
		ENT2	4.550	0.626	0.982			
		ENT3	3.800	0.943	0.637			
	Status-seeking	STAT1	3.320	1.062	0.895	0.908	0.941	0.842
		STAT2	3.220	1.097	0.974			
		STAT3	3.340	1.112	0.882			
	Intention to share misinformation	SHARE1	0.750	0.435	0.947	0.903	0.953	0.911
		SHARE2	0.720	0.451	0.962			

N = 100. SD = Standard Deviation; CA = Cronbach Alpha; CR = Composite Reliability; AVE = Average Variance Extracted.

Reliability is another crucial insight into the measurement quality construct and is shown in Table 2. Reliability reflects the consistency and repeatability of measurements, assessed using Cronbach's Alpha (CA) and Composite Reliability (CR). Cronbach's Alpha serves as a measure of internal consistency reliability, reflecting the extent to which items within a construct reliably measure the same underlying concept. For this dataset, CA values are all above the threshold of 0.7, as proposed by Van Griethuijsen et al. (2014), to indicate generally high internal consistency across the various constructs. Composite Reliability (CR), an alternative reliability measure, complements CA and demonstrates robust internal consistency. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) assesses the extent to which a construct captures variance beyond measurement error, with higher values indicating stronger convergent validity. Fornell and Larcker (1981) denote that AVE is a conservative estimate, and if most of the items are reliable, then the researcher could proceed to the next step.

Hypothesis Testing

Table. 3
Direct Effect Hypothesis

		Beta	P values	f ²	Decision
H1	Information seeking -> Intention to share misinformation	0.109	0.033	0.034	Accepted
H2	Socializing -> Intention to share misinformation	-0.091	0.023	0.028	Rejected
H3	Status-seeking -> Intention to share misinformation	-0.013	0.402	0.001	Rejected
H4	Entertainment -> Intention to share misinformation	-0.007	0.456	0.000	Rejected

Table. 4
Moderating Effects Hypothesis

		Beta	P values	Decision
H5	New Media Literacy*Information seeking -> Intention to share misinformation	0.124	0.031	Accepted
H6	New Media Literacy*Soci alizing -> Intention to share misinformation	-0.061	0.113	Rejected
H7	New Media Literacy*Status-seeking -> Intention to share misinformation	-0.004	0.472	Rejected
H8	New Media Literacy*Entertainment -> Intention to share misinformation	-0.034	0.293	Rejected

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Upon conducting hypothesis testing, the results proved to be intriguing. Table 3 shows the direct effect hypothesis testing result, with only Information-seeking significantly influencing the intention to share misinformation, as proved by the P value result (<0.05). Even though Socializing has a P value of under 0.05, the beta coefficient is negative. The negative beta coefficient, in this case, means the significant negative relationship between Socializing and the intention to share misinformation, rendering it a rejected H2. Table 3 shows that information seeking is accepted, and only information seeking. Including the moderating effects hypothesis into the discourse, as shown in Table 5, Information seeking is shown to be significant even when moderated by New Media Literacy. Therefore, only H1 & H5 are supported.

Information seeking has proven to be a significant part of one intent when sharing something, even with New Media Literacy as the moderator. This is in line with Wei et al. (2023) as they found the same link between Information seeking and the spread of misinformation. The inclination to share information as they come across it has a higher impact on the intention to share misinformation. In this disruption era when everyone is having FOMO (fear of missing out), people would likely want to be the first one to share it without much thought to put into it. New Media Literacy as the moderator is also solid proof that, in fact,

only information seeking and a higher level of new media literacy could be the culprit for the intent to share misinformation.

As with H2, Socializing is proven to be significant with a negative beta coefficient value, which renders it significantly negative. As people have the intention to socialize, they might become even more aware of what they share. Socializing could be initiated by starting a discourse, and by that logic, bringing something new to the table that's fact-checked and a definite correct is proven to be important, rather than Status-seeking and Entertainment. Status-seeking and Entertainment have also proven to not be the main causality of the intent to share misinformation. We could say that status-seeking and entertainment are superficial in the context of information-seeking and socializing. While the latter offers genuine and thoughtful care and discourse, the former seems to smother the human experience. Status-seeking or social recognition has the sole purpose of accumulating peer status and approval for the satisfaction of oneself (Trekels et al. 2024). While status and approval are welcome, the thought of projecting a lack of intelligence as the cause of sharing misinformation is not a welcome phenomenon. As with Entertainment, Stamenković and Mitrović (2023) stated that the Uses and Gratifications theory explains individuals' motivations for utilizing social media platforms, where people engage with these technologies to obtain specific gratifications. Among them, gratification is entertainment, with the current study not proving any significance in pursuit of Entertainment gratification to the intention to share misinformation.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the results provide insightful findings into factors influencing individuals' intentions to share misinformation. Information seeking is underscored as the main causality of the intent to share misinformation, even when moderated by the current relevant literacy of the disruption era, New Media Literacy (NML). Shaping and cultivating clarity when sharing information on social media is important, especially when one's intent is to seek information. This research study is also not without limitations. The bare minimum sample size is relatively small, which might restrict the findings. Self-reported data through

online surveys might also run into unwanted biases, with difficulties in the data analysis process to ensure the data is as close to pristine as possible to proceed. While New Media Literacy is a relevant phenomenon, further studies could introduce and explore possible alternative constructs to better capture all nuances or even specific ones.

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