

POST-TRUTH POLITICS IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA: HOW EMERGING NEWS SHARING PATTERNS ARE SHAPING POLITICAL AND MEDIA CYNICISM IN PAKISTAN

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Abstract

This paper will explore the relationship between the emerging news reporting patterns on the social media and how it is shaping the political and media cynicism in Pakistan. The study will attempt to analyze the interconnected concepts of post-truth politics, mis/disinformation, political polarization, lack of gatekeeping with respect to how people share political news on social media networks. The research paper will try to examine the consequences of such negative news coverage on social media undermining the public's trust both in the democratic processes and new media as a legitimate source of news consumption. Thematic analysis was conducted, and certain themes were extracted to answer the research questions so that underlying interpretations could be examined.

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INTRODUCTION

In the present age of social media, the patterns of news production and consumption are drastically changing especially with the introduction of powerful AI tools and its algorithms. This has created enormous power for the ordinary citizen who has been transformed from a passive recipient to an active content producer on social media. Informed citizens are considered an asset for any functioning democracy. They can help build the country's democratic institutions stronger through exercising political efficacy and engagement and media certainly has a big role to play for educating the public but various studies have revealed the opposite argument that traditional media due to its constant negative coverage of politics and politicians

have alienated the public from the democratic institutions and politics itself. (Robinson 1976) Most of the literature found has been concerned with the negative coverage of politics on the traditional media and its effects on the political trust and cynicism of the public (Robinson 1976). The present study, however, will look at the upsurge in the use of social media for news consumption and the changing patterns of political and media cynicism in the Pakistani perspective. The political landscape of Pakistan is marred with conflicts, scandals, corruption, and failures of the past and present governments which is reflected in the social media news every day.

In the era of post-truth politics, the lines between falsehood and truth have been blurred with subjective realities as compared to objective facts. In a post-truth world, facts can be dismissed, ignored, or manipulated in favor of emotional appeals or subjective narratives. The digital public sphere of social media provides the best environment for creating and sharing real, fabricated, scandalous, sensational, misleading, mis/disinforming type news which can fulfil certain ideological or political agendas of citizens. However, empirical investigations need to be conducted to examine how all this is shaping public opinion and affecting the level of cynicism in the public for political institutions, and new media as a legitimate source of news.

Rational for the Study

The researcher believes that studying social media is imperative as this is a growing source of information for younger generations. Therefore, it has a significant impact on shaping people's attitudes, beliefs, and opinions towards politics and government. By studying the relationship between social media news exposure and cynicism towards politics and new media, new strategies could be discovered to reduce polarization and improve the political discourse in the country.

Significance of Study

The study will be significant to the growing body of literature on new media and political cynicism. As there are not many studies which have empirically investigated the phenomenon. The rise of social media has presented scholars with a new set of challenges and questions and this study will be a contribution to theorizing and conceptualizing this communication phenomenon with respect to new media.

In depth interviews with media scholars and experts were chosen as the methodology to thematically analyze the various emerging patterns of news sharing and consumption among the users of social media, in particular Facebook. The rationale for using the in-depth interview method was that it provides detailed insights, experiences, and perspectives of the interviewees on the given subject. This will help in exploring the concept of social media cynicism and how it is being shaped and is shaping public opinion

further in future studies using quantitative investigation and descriptive analysis.

Literature Review

The literature review was conducted to touch upon the various themes that are relevant to the study and build the context for the research paper. This thematic literature review will discuss the emerging news sharing patterns and certain characteristics of social media, like polarization, absence of gatekeeping, and mis/disinformation, that will help the reader to position the debate within the specific context. The literature review will conclude with objectives and research questions to further guide the direction of the study.

Emerging news sharing patterns on social media

Social networking sites (SNS) like Facebook and Twitter, have changed the way people receive and share information and news with each other. People all over the globe are experiencing dramatic changes in the manner they receive political information. We have become dependent on social media for conveniently encountering news stories. This is evident from studies conducted across the globe which approximate that more than one third of the population from 27 countries use social media for their news consumption and sharing needs (Newman, Fletcher, Kalogeropoulos, Levy,&Nielsen, 2018).

As it is revealed by the studies conducted in the past that social media users not only use social media for consuming news, but they also have become active news and content producers, disseminating and debating news contents with their friends and also the general public (e.g., Lee & Song, 2017). This means that users of social media do not have to look for news intentionally rather the news comes to them without much effort of their own (Fletcher & Nielsen, 2018; Kim, Chen, & de Zúñiga, 2013).

As the people normally encounter news and other relevant political information on social media platforms without much effort of finding the news, they may also start to perceive that they are very well informed about the political scenario of their country (Gil de Zúñiga, Weeks, & Ardèvol-Abreu, 2017; also see Fletcher & Nielsen, 2018). However, there is a consensus of scholars that news on the social media is flooded with hate speech, fake news, fabricated news,

derogatory posts, ridiculing memes, and straight off insulting comments regarding the politics which has a strong influence on the public with respect to their level of trust for the politics. (Robinson, 1976).

Gatekeeping on social media

The concept of gatekeeping refers to the selection and shaping of the news messages that are disseminated through society (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996; Shoemaker and Vos, 2009). Social media daily covers huge number of events that happen each day, these events are selected and shaped and sometimes even go through modifications and fabrications to align the message with the desired propaganda to influence the public opinion. Certain institutions, organizations and people who control the flow of information on these online platforms and the processes and mechanisms of their control need to be understood. These different actors can be conceptualized as gatekeepers as they hold the power to decide which information may and may not pass through their channels.

It is argued that gatekeepers operate in a complex field, in which the gatekeeper and its environment must be considered as a collection of mutually dependent factors (Lewin, 1947, p. 338). With the increasing acceptance of social media as a prevalent platform for news distribution, complex networks of interdependent gatekeepers are evolving (Goode, 2009). Someone, maybe from any news organization, can post an item or a link to a news on Twitter or Facebook e.g., anyone who is connected with the original poster can see this post and can interact with the post. Other people who are connected to this person can now see interactions due to which the content can spread very easily. Consequently, this means that every actor who is exposed to the content becomes a potential gatekeeper however, with different levels of influence (Shoemaker and Vos, 2009). Generally, it has been observed, there is a lack or absence of gatekeeping on the social media platforms which permits virtually everyone to participate in online debates using any means.

Political Polarization

The menace of political polarization is increasingly damaging the fabric of democracy not only in the United States but also in many other parts of the

world (Arceneaux et al., 2013; Gidron et al., 2019). From the political elites and officials to ordinary citizens everybody seems to be polarized to the extent that they don't not want to even interact with people from the opposing camps (Heaney et al., 2012; Hare & Poole, 2014; Frimer et al., 2017).

There are two types of polarization as the literature has revealed, first being 'ideological polarization', which basically refers to the divergence of political opinions, beliefs, attitudes, and stances of political adversaries (Dalton, 1987). While the other one, 'affective polarization', is based on the role of identity in politics, which exacerbates out-group animosity (Mason, 2018). Affective polarization judges the extent to which people like their political allies and dislike their political opponents (Iyengar et al., 2012). Previous studies have also shown many interpersonal implications of polarization, including reluctance to interact with others (Frimer et al., 2017), and dehumanization towards (Mason, 2018) political opponents. Given that people are reluctant to engage in day-to-day interactions with their political rivals, many build their feelings of opponents via the media - meaning (social) media is increasingly modelling how we perceive the political environment. The more the social media has become partisan and fragmented (DellaVigna & Kaplan, 2007; Van Aelst et al., 2017), the more people have become polarized both ideologically and affectively. (Jones, 2002; Lau et al., 2017).

Post Truth Politics and social media

In a post-truth society, factual content is less important in shaping public opinion, which is usually shaped through an appeal based on their emotions and personal beliefs. In retrospect, it would not be untrue to say that political discourse is moving further and further away from its true foundations and that politics is in turmoil. Terms such as "post-factual politics" and "post-realistic politics" are self-explanatory. The devastating combination of the 24-hour news cycle, global media and fake news websites has made misinformation and disinformation an epidemic that cannot be dealt with. (Hivonen, 2018) In the current political scenario as discussed by many political scientists and journalists, populist movements have fared well enough to be called as "champions of building and propagating a narrative"

who managed to shape opinion of masses. Confusion, anger and disorientation are used as tools by politicians of post-truth era to hijack attention. The agencies responsible for producing facts and occluding misinformation and disinformation have increased exponentially which should curtail the spread of fake news but on the contrary, they are earnestly up for hire. Experts are willing to endorse a fact if you have a plethora of money or political thump (Davies, 2016). Abundance of sources and methods with a varying level of credibility depends upon who funded the given study and how the sizeable number was selected. In the opinion of the researcher, populist movements along with social media are mainly responsible for Post-truth Politics.

When Fake News transmits from one individual to another, the damage is limited. But when it is institutionalized, and even worse, when it is orchestrated by governments, its impact becomes disastrous”, Dr. Khalid Rahman (Chairman IPS) said at a two-day international media conference ‘Post-Truth Era: Trends in Media’, which was held at the University of Karachi on February 15-16, 2022 (‘Post-Truth Era: Trends in Media’, 2022). Now if you couple it with the ubiquity of social media, the rapidity, transmission, and scope of such dissemination is grown, these advances have not only augmented the likelihoods of causing detriment to the societies but are also taking the credibility away from the whole democratic process. Transmission of fake news through social media applications have given wheels to the spread of mis/disinformation.

In a country like Pakistan there are more own half a million of social media users and nearly 120 million of the population that owns smart phones, which is easily larger than the population of most of the European countries increasing at an annual rate of 7%. Post truth politics generates a lot of trends and information on social media. Distorting history, selling fear on people on the behest of one party or the other, periodic doses of cynicism and punch lines aimed at the stakeholders are the common trends on social media in our country (Naureen, 2019).

Mis/disinformation and social media

Although propaganda has always been associated with politics, spreading misleading information, scandals, and rumors to discredit your opponents has been

normal in the game of politics. But the recent rise of social media networks like Facebook, Twitter, etc. has taken this thing to a completely different level. Now everyone can share or create misleading or false information to serve their political or ideological objectives. Many scholars have tried to define and categorize mis/disinformation, which includes satire, false context, false content, misleading content, imposter content, fabrication, and manipulation. Although scholars use the term mis/disinformation interchangeably but the underlying difference between the two exists in the way that information is produced. Misinformation typically is categorized as wrong or fabricated information which is unintentionally shared while disinformation is classified as misleading or fabricated information which is created intentionally to fulfil a certain political purpose. Determining if someone intends to deceive others can be difficult unless the people creating or spreading information openly admit it (Tandoc et al., 2018b). Furthermore, certain types of information, like rumors, are not easily proven or disproven with solid evidence within a reasonable amount of time. Besides, different researchers (Egelhofer and Lecheler, 2019) point out that most research has focused on fake news as a genre (ie deliberately produced fake journalistic disinformation) but ignoring the term fake news as a label (i.e. instrumentalizing the term to delegitimize against partisan news). Regardless of the true-false evaluation, the audience or even political leaders use the term as a weapon to discredit any information to the contrary their own political programs (Hanitzsch et al., 2018; Molina et al., 2019). This view supports it the idea that the same information can be perceived as both news and fake news depending on the political or cognitive motivations of the users.

This article uses the term (both mis- and disinformation, not just one of them) because it is commonly used. It can be challenging for researchers and people responding to figure out the reason behind sharing false or misleading information without questioning the initial thoughts.

Political Cynicism

Political Cynicism is a concept, studied by many scholars over the years, to evaluate the public’s trust and confidence in the politics and government

institutions, which has implications for the smooth functioning of the overall democratic system, including civic engagement, political participation, voter turnout etc. Previous literature has suggested the impact of traditional media and how it activates or aggravates political cynicism in the public. (Hutchens, Hmielowski, Pinkleton, & Beam, [2016](#); Pinkleton & Austin, [2002](#))

Cappella and Jamieson (1997, 166) provided a definition for political cynicism as "distrust that extends from specific leaders or political groups to the entire political process - a process which is believed to make the people involved in it, corrupt and then select those corrupt individuals as participants." The cynical person tends to believe that the whole system is corrupt, and that people are acting based on their vested self-interests as some authors described that "its players are Machiavellian partisans uninterested in the public good, its process driven by a concern for winning, not governing" (Cappella and Jamieson (1997) p. 19).

Political Cynicism builds the annoying perception that politicians act out of personal interests, and they only care for their own future instead of the future of the state or the public. (Schuck et al., 2013). Scholars have examined the concept of political cynicism as a cause and also as a consequence with respect to many variables and dimensions e.g. political efficacy- which is defined as the individual's belief to understand and impact the political processes and outcomes- is considered to be indirectly proportional to political cynicism, the same is true for the variable trust in political institutions, the more the trust in political institutions the less the cynicism or vice versa. (Elenbaas and De Vreese, 2008).

This research paper has tried to qualitatively understand the conceptual link between political cynicism and social media news sharing patterns. The concept of political cynicism as induced by the negative coverage of political news has been well studied by scholars (Cappella and Jamieson, 1997; Schuck et al., 2013, Robinson, 1976). However, studying the emerging social media news patterns in the politically charged environment of Pakistan provides a good context to examine the level of cynicism in the public.

Social Media Cynicism

Cynicism refers to a general attitude marked by distrust and a lack of confidence in the public. Accordingly social media cynicism could be described as the public's distrustful attitude and behavior towards social media. As theorized by Robinson (1976), during his study on public television and political malaise, the television news organizations bombard the audience with interpretive, sensational, aggressive, and anti-institutional news stories. He believed that many of the audience members lack the political sophistication to cope with such kind of news. Additionally, the credibility of the networks also dismisses any notion of skepticism which then results in the symptoms of political malaise. Many studies have provided evidence for the traditional media's role in promoting political cynicism in the public (e.g., Cappella & Jamieson, [1996](#); De Vreese & Elenbaas, [2008](#)). Contrary to this argument, some researches also suggests that internet with its ability to grant access to websites of news organizations have increased trust towards political system (therefore may lower political cynicism: Bailard, [2014](#); Ceron, [2015](#)). The belief is that because of the information access due to the advancing technology people are better able to monitor the work of government and politicians and this will likely increase democratic satisfaction of the public (Bailard, [2014](#); Ceron, [2015](#)). The author of this paper, however, believes that social media e.g. Facebook with its current news sharing and consumption patterns marred by political polarization, mis/disinformation, subjective post truth realities, hate speech, combined with a lack of gatekeeping provides any citizen the power to create and share news or even ridicule politics and government institutions with derogatory posts and comments. Ambiguous knowledge about politics is dangerous and mostly understood negatively towards all politicians involved (Dancey, 2012). Keeping in line with the media malaise thesis which suggests the negativity of media induces cynicism and malaise that diminishes trust in political systems (Cappella and Jamieson, 1997; Mutz and Reeves, 2005) the author proposes that continuous derogatory, delegitimizing, and ridiculing social media coverage of politics, politicians and government institutions (mostly in the form of posts, memes, etc.) produced by ordinary citizens or by trained journalists is inducing in the

users of social media a kind of cynicism for the social media itself as a legitimate source of news. Social media like Facebook, provided a big hope for the digital media and web channel enthusiasts to break the monopoly of the traditional media giants and it is still believed that social media news pages would provide a kind of balance to the bourgeoisie and proletariat voices. However, the current political landscape in Pakistan which has almost transformed into a battlefield between political rivals and has definitely penetrated the political populism and narratives at the voter level seems to be shifting on the online public sphere as well. As Cappella and Jamieson, (1997), noted that public trust in this institution is declining and this might be due to the media's own sowing of the seeds of cynicism. As it is generally understood that social media content routinely bypasses any professional gatekeeping system, this makes it very susceptible to negatively charged information as well as uncivil comments which sometimes even provoke the user to engage with the social media in a negative and unconstructive manner, hence further exacerbating the political polarization in a vicious circle.

With this backdrop, the following research questions are posed.

RQ 1) Are the emerging news sharing patterns on social media inducing political cynicism in Pakistan?

RQ 2) Is there any link between emerging news sharing patterns on social media and social media cynicism in Pakistan?

Methodology

The aim of the present study was to explore the contextual, real-world knowledge about the behaviors, attitudes, opinions, and shared beliefs of people regarding social media and its emerging news sharing patterns. These news patterns, which are engulfed with derogatory, delegitimizing, and ridiculing posts, memes, and insulting comments are part and parcel of this era of post truth politics with its subjective realities. Adding to this, is the menace of mis/disinformation and the ability to create and share fabricated news to mislead people into believing certain political ideology. The objective of the study then becomes to understand the link between these emerging patterns and the resulting political and social media cynicism in the public. In-depth

interviews were conducted to gain deeper understanding of the shared beliefs of people regarding the level of cynicism regarding politics and social media as a news source. In-depth interview method was chosen because this gave a detailed description of the underlying semantic and latent information. The study is based in the qualitative perspective, but the underlying themes were explored using a deductive approach.

As the study was conducted for a term paper, the constraints of time limited the number of interview respondents to 3. The sample was drawn using convenient sample where three media experts were selected one from the academia, and two from the professional news industry. The interviews were based on semi-structured approach. The interview guide was emailed to the interviewees and responses were collected via email. The interviews were transcribed, and thematic analysis was conducted. This involved coding all the data before identifying and reviewing the key themes. Each theme was examined to gain deeper understandings of the perceptions and opinions of the respondents.

Data Analysis

The study used thematic analysis ([Braun and Clarke, 2006](#)), which is a technique to identify, analyze and interpret patterns of meaning in qualitative data. Its objective is to uncover in a systematic manner the experiences and opinions present in the data so that it can help in theory building and understanding phenomena. The objectives of the study were to explore the emerging news sharing patterns on the social media platforms and their link towards political and social media cynicism. The study was guided by two basic research questions regarding the role of emerging news sharing patterns on social media and how they are shaping media and political cynicism in Pakistan?

To answer the research questions in detail, qualitative data was collected in the form of in-depth interviews. The semi-structured interview questions were sent to the selected participants who sent the responses through the email. The interview transcripts were read and re-read to extract certain codes which were then further reduced to extract themes that were relevant to the research objectives and were guided by the research questions throughout the coding and theme

development process. The themes are presented in the results section with their interpretations.

Results

The analysis produced the following themes.

Prevalence of fake news and rumors

All the three participants responded that there was a widespread occurrence of fake news and rumors on the social media with respect to political news and politicians these days. Respondent 1 stated that “social media is full of fake news now a days, you can’t trust any news without double checking with a couple of other sources”. Respondent 2 highlighted that “one day you see a news, or a post and two days later there will be a correction by some that this news is from three years back”. The continuous encounters with fake news or an older news reposted, to achieve some political mileage or because of sheer lack of fact-checking, which gets contradicted in a couple days creates a sense of distrust in the public. Respondent 3, mentioning about the motives for sharing rumors, stated that “it is because of the ease of sharing for anyone, that the social media has become a breeding ground for fake news and rumors”. Fake news or any negative news has more chances of getting viral as explained by respondent 2 in his words “that there have been research conducted on fake news and mis/information that it can spread rapidly as compared to any positive news”.

Accessibility and widespread sharing for all

The biggest advantage of social media is its power, to let anyone, with a smartphone or a tablet to share information with the world. This accessibility towards technology has proved both good and evil as highlighted by Respondent 2 “social media has given accessibility and widespread sharing of information to anyone with a device but now people have started misusing it for fun”. A sub-category of this theme is having ‘diverse perspectives’ as highlighted by Respondent 1 “social media is used by people with diverse perspectives and agendas” adding to this further the respondent 1 said, “but this can sometimes lead to inaccurate information” Respondent 2, stated a different perspective, that “social media accessibility has lowered the barriers to enter politics through participation” Respondent 3, while talking about the

marginalized sections of the society said that “social media is a blessing because it has given voice to those marginalized people who had no alternative”.

Polarization

While commenting on the question regarding polarization the respondent 1 stated that “..one of the reasons for increased polarization are the algorithms and the AI which are producing these echo chambers which basically reinforces you existing beliefs” this would have negative consequences if one deprives oneself of listening to opposing viewpoints which are healthy for a democratic setting. Too much political polarization can lead the society to damaging effects as is evident in the words of Respondent 2 that “political polarization on social media very easily leads to misinformation”.

Self-interested politicians

Another important theme extracted, was regarding the level of trust that people have in politics and politicians. However, respondent 1 answered “that there are certain politicians who are only interested in their personal benefits and power, they least care about the public”. Similarly respondent 2 stated that “there seems no one (politician) in Pakistan who is not fighting or waiting for his own personal agenda to be fulfilled”.

Sharing negative news

Almost all three respondents admitted that negative news sharing trends are increasing in Pakistan. The political polarization that has gripped the entire nation and that shows in the comments section as respondent 1 stated “some individuals may indeed hold negative views towards politicians or party workers, and this is because of the ideological hatred that have been injected into the brains of the public”. Social media is one of the primary outlets of news consumption for many people, however, a consequence of a politically charged or derogatory news post is that people engage in negative manner in the comments, and this further creates polarization.

Social media as a news medium

Another important theme related to the study was the legitimacy of social media as a news consumption and news dissemination medium. In response to a

question the Respondent 2 stated that “social media has the potential to become a legitimate news source, but it has its problems, you cannot trust it without caution and critically examining the news post”. Social media has certain characteristics which were revealed during the interview, which are essential to discuss as sub-categories for this theme. It has the potential of sharing real time updates as evident from the statement of Respondent 3 “with social media now a days, one can see breaking news as soon as something happens, it keeps people informed and up to date” however Respondent 1 highlighted another equally important characteristic or an issue regarding a lack of fact-checking for news before sharing. He stated that “because of the absence of gatekeepers, anyone can share anything without digging into the truthfulness of the information” this makes it difficult to trust anything with closed eyes that is shared on social media.

Digital media literacy and awareness

This theme persisted in the responses of all three participants to provide a solution to the problem of misinformation circling on social media. As in the words of Respondent 1 “the only solution is to become digital media literate and have the skills to fact check something before believing it”. Respondent 2 mentioned that “social media platforms should work in collaboration with the local governments to create mechanisms which can control the fake news problem”.

Discussion

The study had two basic objectives to explore the link between emerging news sharing patterns on the social media and the political and media cynicism that people are developing in Pakistan. The study was based in the qualitative research perspective and followed a deductive approach using in-depth interviews and thematic analysis to explore the underlying latent and semantic meanings and interpretations of various themes to answer the two research questions:

RQ 1) Are the emerging news sharing patterns on social media inducing political cynicism in Pakistan?

The emerging news sharing patterns have been conceptualized by the constellation of various factors that come together to form the current patterns of

news consumption and dissemination on social media. These news patterns are stained with certain influences of the medium like e.g. lack of gatekeeping, political polarization, post truth politics, mis/disinformation etc. These characteristics make it difficult for the public to completely trust the social media news about politics or politicians. As our findings also align with this thesis e.g. in the words of Respondent 1 “this constant mocking of politicians, whichever party they belong to, creates a sort of feeling that no one is the right choice for our country”. Our findings are also in line with some of the previous studies on political cynicism that say misinformation breeds political cynics (Jones-Jang, Kim, & Kenski, 2020). This continuous derision of the political system and politicians on the social media by ordinary citizens will have negative consequences for the democratic setup of Pakistan in the long run.

RQ 2) Is there any link between emerging news sharing patterns on social media and social media cynicism in Pakistan?

Social media cynicism is conceptualized as deep distrust of people towards the social media to consider it a legitimate source of news. It creates a kind of distance or alienation in the public because of the constant negativity that is shared in the form of derogatory, delegitimizing, and belittling posts or information. Social media is still in its embryonic stage to be considered as a source which can compete with the trust level of newspapers or television. Social media news could be best defined as yellow journalism of the past tabloids. Our thematic analysis reveals that almost all the respondents believed that social media needs to be approached with caution when it comes to news consumption. Respondent 1 stated “I cannot say for sure, that I would trust any social media news without checking with other sources to confirm its truthfulness”. Respondent 3 reiterated that “it becomes really frustrating that you see a news one day and then next day you learn it was fabricated”. This answers our research questions that the current social media practices are inducing cynicism in the public regarding the politics and social media itself. Keeping in line with the media malaise literature, and the need to fulfil theorizing new concepts for the social media, the researcher believes that it's a presence of a new kind of malaise over the social media. This social media malaise concept could be conceptualized as the

emergence of negative news sharing patterns which endlessly belittles politics and politicians, which is engulfed with mis/disinformation, where people are so politically polarized and intolerant that they would routinely use hate speech and charged comments to discredit the opposing viewpoints but what all this is shaping is the cynicism in the public for the very medium itself. A time will come when people stop taking any social media news serious enough to believe it. The study has its limitations of time and financial constraints as it was conducted for a term project. However, further research could be carried out in the same area but with quantitative perspective using various methodological preferences.

Conclusion

This study was conducted to explore the concept of social media news sharing patterns and the cynicism it is creating in the public. The results align the findings with the previous literature about cynicism. The researcher believes that this study is adding to the literature of cynicism and media malaise. It will extend the theoretical framework of media malaise which is basically meant for traditional media towards the social media.

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