Real News vs Fake News: A Challenge for Pragmatic Media Ethics

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Abstract
Collecting authentic information has been a tough task for journalists since the start of their career lives. Either they confirm the news from their source or through the internet but lately due to the unrestrained flow of information on the internet; it's hard to check the authenticity of the news. We can also not deny that the dissemination of fake news is either for sensationalism or to create chaos among the masses. Different regulatory authorities are operating to keep a check and balance on different mediums, but social media has not been controlled yet by any authority which the aim of this research is to evaluate the clarity between fake news and real news under the perspective of media ethics. The main objective of this study is to analyze the consequences of fake and real news and its drawbacks and authenticity among the public. Media Information Literacy theory has been applied as theoretical support for this study.
The researchers used the purposive sampling technique for the collection of data from Pakistani journalists to make the research more evident and argumentative. The hypothesis of this study has been testified thus this research proved that the quantity of fake news is gradually increasing in the media, especially on social media platforms.

Keywords: Real News, Responsible Journalism, social media, Fake News, Media Ethics

Introduction:

Social media has increased the quantity of fake news due to the poor check and balance and free flow of information by social media and different other social networking sites. The misleading stories and wrong information make cause destruction in any way. (Zimdars M. 2016). Different social accounts like Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter provide all types of information instantly without any checks and balances and this platform is easily approachable for the public to upload the news or comment in the form of feedback. (Lukasik, et.al, 2016).

Different social networking sites are the more authentic and fastest way for getting information about politics, society, and geographic areas. Many of them are used to increase and develop their economic activities. Butthe problem over here is that all the networking sites are not fully analyzed nor there is a specific criterion to check the accuracy. (Vosoughi, et.al, 2018)

This type of widespread information always proves harmful to society through fake news and demoralizes the social values of a society. If we look back in history, we have come to know that in the United State of America during the election of 2016 there were almost more than 37 million pieces of news that were disseminated through social media and networking sites to attract the public and to change the opinion of the public. (Putte, et.al, 2018).

Consequently, that fake news changed the mind of the public and affected the results of the election. The increasing number of fake news misleads the public and detracts the community from their real path. Many researchers had claimed that during the US presidential elections, many propaganda techniques were used and misinformed the public to get the results. The widespread fake news changes the thinking and makes the situation unbalanced (Gao, & Wong, 2017).

All the misleading, wrong information-based events and stories, falsified facts, and supposed characters are fake news. The agenda behind the fake news is to damage the reputation of an organization or a famous personality or to make the money in the wrong way or might be a technique of advertising and to collect capital by creating hype through the fake news. A media scholar named Dr. Nolan Higdon has defined the term fake news as news that is based upon misleading content and presented in written, spoken, or printed form, or by digital communication. (Beck & Nisbet. 2019).

Fake news is most readily classified by a scientist as a sub-genre of disinformation literature, which is the most common classification. Fake news is a term used to describe disinformation that is packaged as news. While false news has its place, misinformation has surpassed it since it encompasses a variety of forms that cannot be compared to traditional news sources. When the news is presented improperly, misperceptions may develop. It is possible to generate rumors and conspiracy suspicions via the use of both appropriate and inappropriate material. (Gentzkow et al., 2017; Allcott et al., 2017).

Significance of the Study:

In this modern era, there are so many mediums used to disseminate information and persuade the public. People observe under different parameters and scenarios and make a judgment regarding the specific issue that might be some type of political, social, national, international, local, or economic. Researchers have chosen this social scientific phenomenon just to create awareness and to draw the attention of the journalists, authorities, and research scholars under some ethical considerations to play a responsible role in society and as well as the profession. This fact has also been observed several times with multiple types of research in different places within different timings that fake news are being a cause of moral destruction and scattered the public ideologically.

The advancement of technology creates new challenges for the authorities to take some actions regarding some issues that are creating problems very rapidly among the young generation that is habitual of the gadgets. Moreover, the journalists also remain in trouble on the base of the fake news that they read from several sources on daily basis. This is just a waste of time for them and they have to move through this scenario multiple times. This study also approaches making a strong strategy and makes some fundamental principles for the solution in this perspective

On the base of that when people make different news and disseminate it to the public in a falsified way, the specific channels and mediums always lose their credibility by temporary wrong actions and shortcuts. In such a way the credibility of the medium always lose and the public demand authenticity including some facts from a reliable channel and representative. This study investigates the fake news that demoralizes our state and puts an emphasis on the news through realistic approaches.

Rationale of the Study:

This study is based upon the comparative analysis of real and fake News including all those rumors that are moving around us. The Major agenda of this news is to examine the consequences of fake news among the public and make a comparative analysis between those professional journalists who use fake news for getting fame and value among the public.

The study also explored the situations and trends that are mostly adopted by the different professional and non-professional journalists under some specific reasons to get fame and ratings. Many journalists do the same activity just for getting temporary benefits under some personal interests.

Objectives of the Study:

- To find out whether social media is the main reason for increasing fake news trends.
- To check whether journalists use fake news just to get fame and popularity

Research Questions

RQ_1 Do professional journalists use fake news to get fame and to increase ratings?

RQ_2 Does fake news creates more hype and sensation among the public?

RQ_3 Does the Specific concerned Media lose their authenticity by disseminating fake news among the public?

RQ_4 Do the fake news is against journalistic ethics and professional values?

RQ_5 Do you think that real news always increases the reliability and consistency of the specified medium?

Hypotheses:

H_1 Journalists get fake news from social media for getting fame and popularity.

H_2 Increasing trends in the usage of social media create more fake news.

Literature Review:

Zhao et al. (2020) highlight that according to the recent attention gained by social media for the spread of fake issues in terms of social and political matters, it is significant to comprehend the way, and the viewer's interrelate with propaganda on social networks.

According to the study by Zellers et al. (2019), the media channels like the BBC and other media groups have set fact-checking sites for their

news. This is a positive development in media as it creates digital media literacy and enhances the skills for critical evaluation of navigating the internet. The huge network of information that is accessible online and the evolution of fake news signify the requirement for the acute thinking of the audience. Hence, it is essential to inspect the viewer's conduct of confirmation on the spot and kill the fake news on social networks (Shu et al. 2019). The techniques and tools utilized to recognize a fake story, along with the way they interrelate with it. It can be utilized to access valuable information regarding how viewers can react online against fake news on a social network.

Tandoc et al. (2021) added that the renowned media groups have invested expressively in creating and enhancing digital media, the content publication for their online network, and enhancing their group via the Internet and social media. Networking, communication, and information sharing are the main key inspirations for the utilization of social networks. In addition to this, social network is rising as one of the main key networks for information distribution.

Batailler et al. (2021) highlighted that, as an informed viewer is critical to any functioning democracy, misleading information is specifically unsafe in political news. As the number of entitlements has become viral and distributed broadly on social networks during the elections, the headline of "fake news" and actual means for exposing it has attained renewed attention.

Sadiq et al. (2021), explained that fake articles of news are different from the news article of real news. The title of fake news is longer and utilizes few words for stop and has lesser nouns but contains more proper nouns. Additionally, it has been observed that fake news is more like sarcasm as compared to real news. When fake news is dissimilar to sarcasm, the difference merely embellishes satire's alterations with real news. Fake news parcels the primary privilege of the article in the form of a title, which normally is regarding a precise person or an object. This permits the viewer to avoid article reading, which inclines to be small, dull, and less informative.

According to Egelhofer et al. (2021), in its ideal form, media criticism serves a democratic purpose by assessing media quality and judging whether the media is fulfilling its democratic duty. In this scenario, criticism is used to denounce violations of journalistic principles and separate them from excellent journalism, therefore maintaining journalism's overall reputation. Media criticism must contain a clear

reason for why the medium or journalistic product is critiquing to be democratic or legitimizing. Failure claims demand the identification of the criteria that have not been fulfilled.

According to Berg et al. (2021), Public relations professionals use earned, owned, and paid media to disseminate client information. Ethically, accountability is derived from the creation of correct information with honesty and good intent. However, like with native advertising, the duties of public relations, advertising, and marketing combine.

Molina et al. (2021) added that Journalism is exploding like never before. While news media can broadcast stories around the world in seconds and communications have the potential to build better, more informed, and more involved communities, the business models that sustained journalism in the past are broken and, in many cases, irreversible. Today's news industry is quicker, more frenetic, and immensely more complicated. The media has learned the hard way that, for all of its liberating aspects, the information revolution is a two-edged sword.

According to the study by Rass (2021), the fewer resources available to support public-interest journalism, the more difficult it is for newsrooms to preserve their ethical underpinning. Political prejudice, excessive corporate influence, stereotypes, and conflicts of interest are all long-standing concerns. As technology has changed the way people interact and the media industry functions, there has been a significant decline in news journalism during the previous decade. Most of us now get our news from mobile phones and internet platforms that have made a fortune by monetizing people's data while draining lucrative advertising from traditional media (Uskali et al. 2021).

Have et al. (2021) explained that fake news, corporate and political propaganda, and horrific internet abuse jeopardize democracy and create new battlegrounds for free-speech activists, legislators, and media professionals? A lethal cocktail of digital technology, murky politics, and commercial exploitation of the new communications landscape is generating stress fractures in the wider landscape of public knowledge. Of certainly, journalists should not be blamed. In the news business, there has always been deception and misinformation. Many rogue journalists in journalism fabricate news reports or manipulate facts and statements. However, there are rogue reporters who, when exposed, are disciplined, and fired (Fourie, 2021). Moreover, reputable editors will be

the first to concede that journalism is a rough and ready profession, and it is unavoidable that mistakes will be made in the frenzied process of news gathering and the race to meet deadlines.

Theoretical Framework

Media and Information Literacy (MIL) has been conceptualized as consisting of "the knowledge, the attitudes, and the sum of the skills needed to know when and what information is needed; where and how to obtain that information; how to evaluate it critically to make educated judgments about information and organize it once it is found; and how to use it in an ethical way"

Research Methodology

A Survey method was conducted with a close-ended questionnaire comprising 20 questions. 300 Pakistani journalists from Lahore were selected based on purposive sampling to find out whether social media is the main reason for increasing fake news trends and to check whether journalists use fake news just to get fame and popularity

Hypothesis Testing

Chi-square was applied to assess the results of the survey after inserting them into the SPSS. The following conclusion has been drawn. The hypotheses were evaluated to see the journalist's responses to the fake news. The hypotheses for this study were:

H1: Journalists get fake news from social media for getting fame and popularity.

Chi-Square Test of Independence:

As the contingency table obtained, the chi-square test of independence was the most suitable technique to see the association between the responses and the journalists. The findings provide the $\chi^2 = 15.580$.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.580^a	20	.742
N of Valid Cases	100		

a. 25 cells (83.3%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is .45.

The p = .742 > .05 which indicated the insignificant results. Hence, we conclude that the hypothesis Journalists get fake news from social media for getting fame and popularity.

H2: Increasing trends in the usage of social media create more fake news.

Chi-Square Test of Independence:

As the contingency table obtained, the chi-square test of independence was the most suitable technique to see the association between the responses and the journalists. The findings provide the $\chi^2 = 15.121$.

Chi-Square Tests:

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.121[a]	20	.769
N of Valid Cases	100		

a. 23 cells (76.7%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is .18.

The p = .769 > .05 which indicated the insignificant results. Hence, we conclude that the increasing trend in the usage of social media creates more fake news.

Findings & Conclusion:

There has been a considerable worry in recent years that disinformation on social media is harming communities and democratic institutions. As a result, social media sites have announced measures to restrict the dissemination of misleading material. Because of social media, the way we connect has changed drastically. In unique and profound ways, social media platforms have brought us closer together. Stories and opinions may travel at an unprecedented velocity, giving people all over the world near-real-time access to debate on both serious and trivial matters. With the growing popularity of internet-enabled gadgets and enhanced mobile internet speeds, an increasing number of individuals are becoming active in social networking. Indeed, over two-thirds of virtually every culture uses it, and many of us get our news from postings on social media

networks. Unfortunately, social media has a negative side effect: fake news. Misinformationcan influence users for political or economic advantage. Misinformation has flourished on social networks in the last few years. Whereas the information regarding the users, such as internet usage and demographics, is proposed to be used by advertisers, those seeking to disseminate disinformation may also use it. Social media fake news may be inescapable. You can help to stop the distribution by critical thinking and managing a healthy level of curiosity stage regarding what you read in your feed, understand how social media sites manage and what is viewed, and involve in analytical actions. When used with care and intention, social networks can be a fantastic tool for businesses and people. The emergence of fake news in the digital age demonstrates the weakening of long-standing institutional obstacles to misinformation. The problem has sparked widespread alarm throughout the world. However, much remains unknown about the vulnerability of people, organizations, and society to the influence of malicious actors.

This is the world of communication where every time, everyone strives for information that might be political, educational, religious, or based upon the ideas that can lead them toward the development in their concerned field. Real news in any field leads us towards morality and makes the nation valuable but on the other side, fake news put a negative impression on the public of all age and community.

There is a fact that fake news is against media ethics and the issue is that even professional journalists do not take this seriously. They are not playing a responsible professional role in the field of media just because of the temporary benefits that are against professional ethics and moral values. In such a sense, they are going to be a part of the group that is continuously busy spoiling the nation based on wrong information.

After doing a survey this fact has come to the knowledge that social media is such a platform where there is no check and balance nor any policy to regulate. Most people are going to be used even our young generation has easy access, but the problem is that there is no proper institution to check the misleading and inaccurate information.

There are so many websites, YouTube channels that are getting money by disseminating wrong information and increasing their subscribers. They have an agenda to deceive the public, create sensations and hype among the public, collect more viewers, and increase their money. They have even recruited different professional journalists who are working on the same agenda and looting the public through this process.

Consequently, there should be some checks and balances, legalities, and penalties to make them transparent, united, and productive.

There is an ultimate fact that media has become a powerful tool to make the agenda, get fame and popularity. There is also a fact that the world has become a global village due to the mass media and social media is one the major toll or a subpart. People are so engaging with this powerful tool through the internet that they have forgotten the relationship and value they gave to their family members.

A huge percentage of our country is engaged with social media from where they get the news even though most of them are being trusted and deceived in many ways. In such a situation, it is the fundamental and foremost responsibility of the journalists who deliver the information and highlight the fake news. There is a fact that fake news is an element of unity always reduces the public and the people scattered ideologically. A variety of new ideas comes into the market that leads the nation toward destruction and social media is making a cause of such falsifications.

Professional journalists never rely on the news on social media that come mostly from WhatsApp, Facebook, or Instagram. They prefer their own sources or reliable designated spokespersons that might be in the market or outside. They are always afraid of their professional dignity and career. So, in such a way they are always keeping themselves aware of every updated news, get follow up, discuss the events and news with their colleagues and update the public by using the authorized medium.

It is necessary to develop a new safety system. We are interested in the unsolved scientific problems raised by the propagation of fake news's most recent, politically driven form. Misinformation may be difficult to rectify and can have long-term ramifications even after it has been refuted. One reason for its longevity is the way people form causal inferences based on existing knowledge about a certain event or consequence. As a result, even after it has been debunked, erroneous information may continue to affect beliefs and attitudes if it is not replaced with an alternate causal explanation. Fake news is the dissemination of false news, information, and facts through various kinds of media. The emergence of fake news in the digital age demonstrates the weakening of long-standing institutional obstacles to misinformation. The problem has sparked widespread alarm throughout the world. However, many remain unknown about the vulnerabilities of people, organizations, and society to malevolent actors' manipulation. Instant messaging apps and social networking websites are accessible to

anybody with an internet connection. We are currently living in the digital era. We have high-speed internet connectivity. We now have cellphones with enormous computing capabilities. It is quite simple for someone to create fake information and disseminate it through messaging applications and social media websites. Furthermore, these platforms have what experts refer to as the ripple effect. Once the falsified information is posted, others who share the same interests share it. The wave becomes stronger as more people join in. It gradually progresses to the point when the post has been wide. Currently, any piece of content may become viral online. Pictures, charts, blog entries, and videos are all just a click away from being popular online. There is a sizable audience eager to receive this knowledge. They do not simply absorb knowledge; they also share and disseminate it. However, these identical platforms may be used to launch manufactured missiles. The Internet has transformed the face of mass media. Nowadays, we may all share our thoughts and opinions. Take, for example, YouTube. On this platform, we may simply express our thoughts and opinions. Similarly, we may communicate our thoughts and opinions through blogs, websites, and forums. Having access to such amazing platforms is content that can be found all over the internet.

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