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The unchecked circulation of misleading content across social media platforms, and its widespread re-sharing by users without source verification, constitutes a pressing epistemological and ethical dilemma in the digital communication age.

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Abstract:

Fake news is a complex media phenomenon based on fabricating or distorting facts with the intent to manipulate public opinion through deception and misinformation. This phenomenon constructs false narratives that serve political, economic, or ideological agendas. Its danger has increased with the rapid advancement of media technologies, particularly social media platforms, which facilitate the circulation of information without verification. A descriptive analytical approach is best suited to understanding the mechanisms behind its spread. Research has shown that virality, algorithmic targeting, and phishing techniques contribute significantly to its proliferation. Combating fake news requires a professional media system committed to journalistic ethics, including source verification and critical fact-checking. Moreover, raising public awareness remains a fundamental component in addressing the escalating impact of misinformation in the digital age.

Keywords: *Fake news, social media, misinformation, algorithms, phishing.*

I. INTRODUCTION

We are currently living through the consequences of the information revolution, where the volume of information produced every hour has become impossible to follow. Consequently, it was only logical that this explosion of information would be accompanied by technological innovations to facilitate tracking, categorization, storage, retrieval, and dissemination of such large quantities of data among individuals.

Social media has become one of the most significant tools for the exchange of news and information across the globe. It has successfully broken the monopoly of traditional media institutions over the production and distribution of news content. Moreover, it has introduced a new type of journalist: the “citizen journalist,” a user who is no longer a mere recipient of information, but also an active participant in its creation, dissemination, and wide-scale circulation. This phenomenon has even led some formal and semi-formal media outlets to rely on such user-generated content, despite its often-substandard technical quality compensated for by the immediacy or importance of the events being covered.

Traditional media institutions have come to understand the critical role of social networks in the rapid distribution of information to audiences. As a result, they have developed content aligned with this new dynamic, where media outlets produce the content, and social media platforms circulate it. However, this same circulation often fosters a fertile environment for the spread of misinformation and fabricated news. The danger of such misinformation lies in its potential to damage individual reputations, disrupt public security or societal peace especially when sensitive issues of sect, race, or religion are manipulated and, in some cases, escalate into cross-border cyberconflicts between nations.

Several factors contribute to the spread of false information: limited access to reliable sources, a lack of journalistic ethics among a significant number of media professionals, or deliberate disinformation driven by political agendas and supported by powerful economic entities with vested interests.

The reasons for the spread of misinformation are numerous and varied. These include difficulties in accessing information and its sources, as well as the failure of a significant number of journalists to adhere to professional ethics. Political motives may also drive some media outlets, which operate according to specific agendas, funded by large economic companies pursuing political interests.

2. Problem of the Study:

Given the pervasiveness of social media networks as the primary source of news and information in various fields, and their accessibility at any time, they have become the most frequently accessed platforms. However, due to new technologies that alter how news is produced and presented, verifying the authenticity of such content has become increasingly difficult. As a result, media disinformation and fake news have proliferated widely.

This leads us to question: Is media disinformation always intentional on the part of the sender? And how can the recipient identify and interpret such misleading content?

2-1 Hypotheses:

1. False information is intentionally disseminated for the purposes of media manipulation, propaganda, creating chaos, achieving fame or financial gain, and advancing political or military agendas.
2. The public's reposting of information from social media without verifying its sources.
3. Traditional media uses misinformation with the intent to mislead public opinion and disseminates it on social media.
4. Media institutions bear a significant responsibility to society, requiring adherence to professional ethical standards and codes of conduct, especially in the face of technological developments that have made media control increasingly difficult.

3. Aims of the Study:

Given that content shared on social media platforms is largely unregulated, and can pose serious threats to individuals, societies, and even national security, this article seeks to achieve the following:

- Highlighting the aim of spreading misinformation in the media and its re-sharing on social networks.
- Clarify the concept of media disinformation and the dissemination of false or misleading content.
- Highlight the underlying causes of the spread of misinformation, particularly on social media.
- Explore the motives and goals that may drive professional journalists to share false content.
- Identify methods and strategies for avoiding the consumption or spread of misleading and deceptive information.

4. Research Methodology:

To provide a clear overall picture of the false and fake information widely spread on social media networks, where the receiving public often makes the mistake of reposting and being influenced by this information, which can lead to numerous problems and sometimes legal consequences. This can result in defamation, harm to individuals, and even affect the security of society and state institutions when awareness is lacking, and misuse occurs. Therefore, this article aims to clarify the correct understanding of the spread of such false news and information on social media platforms using the descriptive method.

The descriptive method aims to provide a comprehensive view of the phenomenon and the subject of research and study. It also seeks to understand its

nature, as the description involves studying an unknown phenomenon. (Mohamed Shalaby, 1997, p. 64).

It is defined as any investigation focusing on a phenomenon from educational or psychological perspectives as it exists in the present, aiming to diagnose it, uncover its strengths and weaknesses, and determine the relationships between its elements or between it and other educational, psychological, or social phenomena. (Al-Zoubi Al-Ghanam, 1992, p. 52).

5. Explanation of Common Terms:

Misleading Information: This term is used to describe inaccurate or fabricated news, often employed to diminish the value of true discourse by mixing it with false narratives. (Caroline FAILLET, 2016, 87)

False Information: This refers to incorrect information created without the intention of causing harm. The intent behind the creation of false information is the key factor in distinguishing it from misleading information. (Caroline FAILLET, 2016, 89)

Propaganda: The dissemination of true or false information with the aim of persuading the public, often with a political connotation, and typically related to information released by governments. (National Democratic Institute, 2018, P 3)

Algorithm: A set of fixed steps performed by a computer to solve a problem or complete a task. These algorithms are designed to present content to users based on their prior interactions and background on the platform. (National Democratic Institute, 2018, P4)

Automated Programs: Social media accounts fully managed by computer programs, designed to perform tasks such as creating posts or interacting with content on a specific platform.

Phishing: The act of intentionally posting offensive or provocative content directed at an online community with the goal of provoking readers or disrupting ongoing discussions. (National Democratic Institute, 2018, 3)

6. Media Ethics:

The documentation of media ethics, codes of honor, and professional codes of conduct began in the early 1920s. Currently, there are fewer than fifty countries out of two hundred worldwide that have developed systems in mass communication with established media ethics codes that effectively influence communicators or protect the free flow of media. (Abdul Razzaq Al-Dulaimi, 2019, 8).

6.1- Definition of Media Ethics:

Media ethics refers to a system of principles and standards that guide media professionals in their work covering events and help them make decisions that align with the public role of media institutions and their responsibilities in society. It ensures the fulfillment of the public's right to knowledge and the

management of free discourse, while minimizing harm to the public, individuals, or sources. It also guarantees the freedom and dignity of the profession and the integrity of journalists.

According to Hassaneh Rashid (2010), it is defined as: "The ethical standards followed by journalists and media outlets when dealing with societal issues." (Abdul Razzaq Al-Dulaimi, 2019,P). Those responsible for implementing ethics include message creators, media institutions, advertisers, and advertising institutions – essentially any team involved in media or advertising-related work. Alternatively, according to Saleh, it is a system of principles and standards that guide media professionals in covering events and help them make decisions consistent with the public role of media institutions and their societal duties, ensuring the public's right to knowledge, managing free discourse, minimizing harm to the public, individuals, or sources, and safeguarding the freedom, dignity, and integrity of journalists. (Abdul Razzaq Al-Dulaimi, 2019, P79).

6.2- Code of Ethics:

The ethics of the profession can be summarized as follows (Abdul Razzaq Al-Dulaimi, 2019,P 9)

1. Honesty: Truth is the driving force of the media, and reaching it is not done through shortcuts or methods that tarnish its integrity and reality. It can be reached through difficult but legitimate ways.
2. Respect for Human Dignity: It is prohibited to use deceptive methods, entrapment, blackmail, or manipulation of individuals (such as secret or illegal recording or photographing).
3. Integrity: This means presenting news and images with neutrality, avoiding confusion between news and commentary or advertising, and differentiating between the public good and private interests. It also entails working independently and resisting various pressures.
4. Responsibility: This refers to the accountability for the news and information presented by the media professional, ensuring accuracy in coverage and caution in publication.
5. Justice: Exercising wisdom when presenting news, avoiding exaggeration, sensationalism, or cheap provocative methods.

7. Theories of Mass Communication:

Scholars agree that mass communication plays a vital role in shaping society, influencing habits, and framing lifestyles. Over time, new communication theories emerged to regulate media production and ensure effective message delivery that elicits specific audience responses. These theories marked a shift from Aristotelian rhetoric, which had long guided media practices, especially before the advent of television.

Among the prominent theories:

- **Cultivation Theory** by George Gerbner, focused on the influence of television content.
- **Agenda-Setting Theory** for news media.
- **Spiral of Silence Theory** and **Media Ecology Theory**, among others.

Uses and Gratifications Theory, developed by Elihu Katz in the early 1960s and gaining prominence with the rise of the internet in the 1990s, stands out as it reverses the traditional assumption that media influence individuals. Instead, it posits that individuals influence the media by selecting content that suits their preferences. According to this theory, media content is treated as a consumer product that must align with audience tastes (Abdulrazzaq M. Al-Dulaimi, 2016, p.6).

Another foundational theory is **Agenda-Setting Theory**, based on the work of Walter Lippmann in *Public Opinion* (1922), which posits that media shapes public perception by constructing mental images and prioritizing issues of importance. The theory gained empirical support through research by Donald Shaw and Maxwell McCombs during the 1968 U.S. presidential campaign.

The theory maintains that media does not tell people what to think, but rather what to think about. There exists a strong correlation between the prominence of an issue in the media and its perceived importance among the public.

7.1. Media Functions

Media performs several core functions, outlined by theorists such as Lazarsfeld, Lasswell, Denis McQuail, and Leslie Moeller. These include news reporting, interpretation, public surveillance, and the promotion of social development—especially in light of recent technological advancements.

People today are continuously exposed to media, particularly television, allowing them to witness and compare events in real time. This constant exposure creates a clear line between awareness and ignorance (Tariq S. Al-Khalifi, 2005, p. 43).

8. Social Responsibility Theory:

8.1 Origins:

Emerging in response to the libertarian theory of the press in the 18th and 19th centuries, **Social Responsibility Theory** gained prominence in the United States through the 1947 Hutchins Commission Report. Led by Professor Robert Hutchins and including media critics such as Theodore Peterson and William Rivers, the report—funded by Encyclopedia Britannica and *Time* magazine—

advocated ethical guidelines for journalism. The objective was to reconcile press freedom with accountability, proposing professional standards based on truthfulness, objectivity, and fairness (Ali Abdel Fattah Kanaan, 2014, p.104).

The theory introduced two additional principles: (1) **self-regulation** by journalists through adherence to professional codes of ethics, and (2) **social commitment** to interpreting current events within meaningful contexts (Laith Badr Youssef, 2017, p.32).

8.2 Core Principles

As summarized by Mohamed Abdel Hamid and Mohamed Hossam El-Din (based on Denis McQuail), the theory holds that:

- Media institutions have obligations toward society.
- Fulfilling these obligations requires adherence to high professional standards, truth, accuracy, objectivity, and balance.
- These responsibilities must be implemented through institutional and legal frameworks and internal professional regulation.
- Media professionals must be accountable to the public, not just to media owners or advertisers. (Hossam El-Din, 2003, pp. 17–18)

Today, audiences are increasingly critical of top-down media messaging, especially with the rise of social media. Traditional media narratives now face counter-narratives emerging from civil society, challenging monopolistic control over discourse (Clément Sénéchal, 2014, p.112).

9. Social Media:

9.1- Social Media Definition:

Social media sites are among the most popular and widely used internet platforms today. Their use varies depending on the users: some use them to share details of their daily lives, photos, and videos with friends, while others use them to spread ideas, opinions, and calls to action with others. Some also use them as an effective marketing tool to promote goods and services.

These sites embody Web 2.0's philosophy, valuing users and supporting collaborative meaning-making. It is no longer just a singular producer of meaning, but rather a collaborative effort involving groups from various backgrounds. These platforms capitalize on social intelligence through the interaction of individuals and groups with one another. Some researchers define social media as "a complex fabric of websites, programs, and data platforms that allow communication between individuals from different nationalities." (Salma Ghorouba, 2019, P8).

The online persona represented by a user's account is often influenced by their real-life personality. For example, someone interested in sports will typically follow sports pages and groups, as well as athletes' pages on social media, and may even comment on and share news with friends. Someone passionate about politics would likely follow news websites and political pages that publish updates continuously across social media platforms. Among the most important of these platforms are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Google+. (Seraphin Alava, 2018, P23).

Recent studies show that young people often justify long hours on screens to pass time after school. The study found that this justification distances them from engaging in their surroundings, with the direct cause being the absence of their parents, i.e., the lack of family involvement. (Jocelyn Lachance, 2019, P102).

Undoubtedly, social media platforms are among the most important tools for disseminating information and news worldwide. They have broken the monopoly that official media institutions once had over news content. Additionally, they have introduced a new model of journalists, the "citizen journalist." This is a citizen who is no longer just a receiver of information but has become a producer and participant in it, using non-professional tools and limited skills to create, share, and spread news widely. As a result, some official or semi-official media institutions sometimes rely on this content, despite its lack of technical quality, as the significance of the event outweighs the aesthetics or precision of the image.

9.2- Strengths and Weaknesses:

Some researchers in the field of media believe that "social media" has made a significant leap in the speed at which information reaches people, and many have adopted it as a source of news. (René BLINT, Michael POOL, 2002, 47).

Social media has many strengths, but its weaknesses seem to outweigh its strengths. The strengths of "social media" are particularly evident at the speed at which information is transmitted, and it reaches a large audience who may not have the time to read newspapers or watch television. It also contributes to encouraging ordinary citizens to engage in journalistic work in places where professional journalists may struggle to reach. Another important strength is the ability of social media to bypass the strict censorship imposed by governments in some countries on traditional media outlets.

The rapid impact of social networks on social, political, and media movements exceeds the influence of traditional media, allowing for the free flow of information. These networks have provided vast amounts of recent information, not only in text but also in sound and images. (Nabila Jafari, 2016, P12).

The main issue, which has been addressed, was not only in the technical aspects but also in awareness of the professional and ethical aspects that must be adhered to when using these platforms. This has, in many cases, made social media a conducive environment for spreading rumors and fabricated news (Angélique Gozlan, 2016,P 37). The danger of this lies in the fact that it often tarnishes the reputation of individuals or disrupts public security or societal peace, especially when it plays on sectarian, ethnic, or religious tensions. In many cases, it goes beyond national borders and can ignite cyberwars between countries.

7. Media Disinformation:

7.1 Definition:

Disinformation does not necessarily equate to outright lies, which are the direct opposite of truth. Effective disinformation often includes partial truths or is built upon established facts that are distorted to mislead audiences. This selective presentation aims to conceal the manipulation and blur the line between reality and fabrication.

Dr. Abdulrazzaq Al-Dulaimi defines media disinformation as the intentional supply of false information, often mixing truth with lies in a way that makes it difficult for audiences to discern fact from fiction. The term *disinformation* was first used in English in the 1960s to denote the deliberate leaking of misleading information, while in France, it appeared in 1974 and entered common usage in the 1980s, primarily with political connotations. It implies a deliberate intention to mislead public opinion and obscure critical issues.

7.2 Objectives of Disinformation:

The goals of disinformation vary and may include:

- **Obscuring truth** to hide war crimes or divert attention from pressing issues.
- **Influencing public behavior** by promoting apathy and reducing civic engagement.
- **Cultural manipulation** through persistent exposure to curated narratives.
- **Altering public perceptions** by replacing indigenous cultural or religious values with manufactured alternatives.
- **Controlling discourse** by presenting a distorted reality that appears legitimate.

Maintaining the status quo by asserting that existing conditions cannot be improved, thereby legitimizing ruling systems. (Summarized from: Adi Qaqish, 2021, Sotor.com)

10. Definition of Information and Fake News:

10.1- Concept of Information:

If the characteristic of the knowledge society is the ability to achieve a multi-level technological revolution, it is natural for this to impact the flow of information in general and the media system in particular... It is no surprise that the core of the communication revolution is the rapid control of information and its use in the right time and context, fully benefiting from technological advancements in the media. (Paul A. DAVID, Dominique FORAY, 2002, 13)

The integrity of information is crucial for a healthy democracy. When information is false or inaccurate, it can negatively impact citizens' discussions on issues and their political decisions, leading to the collapse of civil discourse and discouraging the achievement of consensus solutions. It threatens democracy when false and misleading information is deliberately promoted to undermine public trust, increase polarization, and limit citizens' ability to act individually or collectively. (National Democratic Institute, 2018,P 4) It must be acknowledged that modern communication tools, whether television, radio, computers, or the internet, increase the volume of available information. However, it must also be recognized that "information" is very different from "truth."

Information is merely a piece of news passed from one person to another, where the first claims to describe the truth without it necessarily being correct. Spreading false information is a very old phenomenon, but in the age of television and the internet, it is much more dangerous... It seems that humans, remarkably, have a weakness when it comes to advanced technology, making them ready to believe whatever comes their way. (Amin Jalal, 2017, P158).

Technology has fundamentally changed the production and absorption of information in several ways. Billions of people can now share information more easily than ever before. This technological shift includes the development of social media, which has made the information shared across electronic networks public rather than private, with many large companies controlling it. The speed of information sharing has also increased with the growth in the number of mobile phones and the faster news cycle.

With the increased speed of information exchange among individuals, the accuracy of the shared information becomes less scrutinized. In other cases, the overwhelming flow of shared information makes the distinction between accurate and fake information an even greater challenge. A lack of questioning of the information has become a reality, especially with digital data that is increasingly personalized through algorithms that match content to users' tastes and preferences. These factors, which characterize the digital revolution, have increased the public's susceptibility to manipulation through inaccurate information. (Dominique ANNET, 2015,P 203).

Digitizing the information space is a complex process fraught with challenges as people face the rapid pace of technological transformation. There are psychological factors that shape how people process information, with different types of information eliciting either rational or emotional responses. Digital media environments, especially social media platforms, often promote

emotional processing of information rather than rational reactions based on careful examination. (Seraphin ALAVA, 2018,P 64).

While it is known that the manipulation of information in democracies is not a new phenomenon, digital technology has exacerbated this problem by allowing malicious actors to manipulate public opinion without revealing their identity, thus threatening the integrity of information. Social media amplifies these effects due to its relatively low cost and the speed with which information can be disseminated to a wide audience. This is often supported by automated systems such as bots, which push the desired content to users who can be targeted based on their personal preferences and demographic characteristics. (National Democratic Institute, 2018, P5).

10.2- Common Types of False Information and Misinformation:

There are many forms of false information and misinformation. Claire Wardle from the News Draft First organization differentiated between types of false information and misinformation by classifying them into seven categories to clarify the range of problematic content found online and, in the media,¹. Claire Wardle from "First Draft News" identified seven types of fake news (Claire WALDLE, 2019).

- Parody or Satire ("No intent to cause harm, but capable of deceiving")
- False Connection ("When headlines, visuals, or captions do not support the content")
- Misleading Content ("Misuse of information to frame an issue or individual")
- False Context ("When original content is shared with misleading contextual information")
- Imposter Content ("When original sources are impersonated with fake, manipulated sources")
- Manipulated Content ("When real information or images are manipulated to deceive," such as a "photoshopped" image)
- Fabricated Content ("Completely false new content designed to deceive and cause harm")

10.3- Concept of Fake News:

Fake news refers to information that is deliberately misleading or false, spread through traditional media (print and broadcast) or social media platforms. The term "fake news" is often used to describe fabricated stories. These stories, found in traditional media, social media, or fake news websites, have no basis, but are presented as if they are factual. (Allcott.H, Gentzkow.M, 2019).

Fake news is typically written and published with the intention of deceiving, causing harm to a person, entity, or organization, or achieving financial or political gain. It often uses sensational, misleading, or fabricated

headlines to attract more readers. Similarly, attention-grabbing story links and headlines generate advertising revenue from such activities. For instance, on February 4, 2011, the British newspaper "The Guardian" published a false report claiming that former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's wealth amounted to 72 billion dollars, only for the editor-in-chief to later apologize after the revolution, acknowledging that the false information contributed to societal tensions during that time. (Mustafa Bakri, 2014,P 255).

The importance of fake news has grown due to its ability to attract audiences to specific websites, which is essential for generating online advertising revenue. The ease of accessing ad revenue online, coupled with political polarization and the popularity of social media, especially Facebook, has contributed to the spread of fake news, competing with legitimate news outlets. The intention and purpose behind the news are crucial. In some cases, what appears to be fake news may be satirical, using exaggeration and unrealistic elements to entertain or clarify rather than deceive. Propaganda can also fall under fake news.

In November 2017, Claire Waldle stated that she rejected the term "fake news" and instead spoke of "information pollution," distinguishing between three types: "misinformation," "disinformation," and "information published with intent to harm":

1. **Misinformation:** False information spread without harmful intent.
2. **Disinformation:** Information created and shared by people with harmful intentions.
3. **Information Published with Intent to Harm:** Publishing "true" information with the intention of causing harm. (Claire WALDLE, 2019)

11.Using Misinformation on Social Media Platforms:

Social media platforms through which false and misleading information is shared include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, message boards, and increasingly popular mobile messaging apps. These apps slightly differ from social media platforms as they are designed for private conversations between contacts rather than being public facing multiple users. (Jean Samuel BEUSCART et al., 2019, P. 138).

While social media platforms are the primary means for disseminating misinformation, traditional global news sources have also been used in the past to spread misleading information, such as newspapers, TV channels, news websites, and radio.

Misinformation promoters use various tactics, especially on digital platforms. Many of these strategies are forms of "computational propaganda," which the Oxford Internet Institute defines as "the use of algorithms, automation, and human processing to deliberately spread misleading information on social media networks" (National Democratic Institute, 2018, P. 7). Computational

propaganda is a method by which misleading content is shared. Some examples of tactics include: (Jean Samuel BEUSCART 2019, 142).

11.1- Fake Personas and Phishing Operations:

Actors attempting to spread misleading information can rely on creating fake personal pages on social media with false names to provide a cover and credibility to the information being shared. However, phishers target specific actors, and phishing farms operate efficiently and effectively.

11.2- Algorithm Manipulation:

This strategy involves manipulating the trends on social media networks to make misleading information more widespread. Algorithm manipulation can be employed either to spread misinformation or to combat its spread.

11.3- Social Media Bots:

"Automated" accounts are designed to spread misleading information quickly or engage with people. A bot network can draw attention to misleading stories and create the illusion of public debate, thereby supporting the spread of misinformation.

11.4- Visual Imagery:

It can be used to deceive audiences, even experts, by manipulating images or video clips. A new trend called "deepfakes" involves creating fake videos using real people's images, collected from various audio and video sources. (National Democratic Institute, 2018, P. 7)

11.5- Countermeasures to Deter Misinformation:

Digital security is critical to protecting information from manipulation or sharing with actors intending to cause harm. This security includes strengthening passwords, using virtual private networks (VPNs), and large tech companies have started taking steps against misinformation.

11.6- Detecting Automated Bots:

Although not all bots are designed for deceptive purposes, understanding the context in which automated accounts are used to contaminate the digital information space is essential to identifying bots that spread misinformation and taking steps to stop their activity. (Chris DOTEN, 2018). Detecting automated accounts can help combat the spread of misinformation, especially on social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter.

11.7- Network Analysis:

Tracking patterns of automated accounts is a key method for understanding how misinformation campaigns work and how actors coordinate to amplify the reach of specific misleading information.

12. CONCLUSION:

The media does not just convey reality, but reshapes it. Positions are manufactured through the media, convincing people of what serves the powerful through repetition, exaggeration, distraction, and selectivity in reporting events, As expressed by American author « Noam Chomsky » in his book, « Consent ».

Disinformation is not a recent phenomenon; rather, it is inherent to the history of media practices. Media activities, being integral to human communication, have always carried the potential for manipulation and distortion. With the intensification of political and social dynamics in the Arab world and the media's growing role in shaping narratives and influencing the balance of power, disinformation has become a tool of strategic significance. So, why does fake news and disinformation spread so quickly?

The most important function of all media is to inform. Media is meant to keep individuals aware of the events happening around them, with accuracy and objectivity, so that they can make the right decisions about the issues they face, regardless of how big or small. Credibility is one of the most important elements of the news material that should be circulated. This is a challenge that social media platforms have not yet overcome, even though they have become significant players in disseminating information and news. Credibility is also a major factor that threatens the authority of these platforms, which initially gained a lot of attention from various social segments. However, if a survey were conducted on a sample of users of these platforms, it would be found that they have lost a significant portion of their audience due to a decline in credibility. Moreover, it has become difficult to verify the sources of information and their accuracy, especially with the ease of photo editing, audio manipulation, and video alteration.

The golden rule in the media says: "You may be able to deceive some people for a while, but you cannot deceive all people all the time." No doubt, what social media suffers from is the power of institutional or official media, and this is for two important reasons: First, media literature affirms that a person's use of a certain medium will drive them to use others. When they hear news on the radio, they may be inclined to follow it up with visuals through television or read detailed information in a newspaper. In cases where information is missing or unclear, people turn to official media institutions to verify its accuracy. This is something traditional media institutions must recognize they need to increase their performance, innovate ways to interact with their audience, move beyond top-down or one-way communication, and provide timely information. The absence of information creates an environment where rumors and fake news can thrive. It also opens the door for speculation and imagination, especially since, as media psychology explains, we add our own perspectives to events and view them through the lens of our experiences and cultural backgrounds.

For official media institutions to fulfill their role in providing their audiences with truthful information and meeting their needs, they must ensure their survival in the face of intense competition with new media, of which social media is a prominent manifestation.

On the other hand, we must approach rumors and fabricated news on these platforms with awareness. Before refuting them, it is essential to first assess their importance, their potential impact, and the level of belief people have in them. This helps avoid inadvertently promoting them by drawing attention to them. Since the abundance of knowledge sources has made it easy to verify news accuracy, many social media users now pause and critically assess the content shared on these platforms.

There should also be an effort to raise awareness about the importance of the positive use of these platforms, considering them as valuable tools for spreading constructive ideas, creative models, and raising awareness about many societal issues, alongside sharing accurate news and information to build public trust in these platforms.

Reliability and credibility are among the most important ethics in dealing with both traditional and new media. The responsibility of discovering misleading fake news and rumors lies with professional journalists, but every individual also plays a role in avoiding the re-sharing of unverified information on social media platform.

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