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The Moderating Effect of Gender on Instant News Sharing and Fake News Sharing Linkages

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Abstract

The way individuals use the internet and social media is gradually changing. The pace at which information travels on social media is astounding and it has been found that social media disseminating accurate or misleading information to the public about the COVID-19 epidemic. This quantitative study was done among Pahang citizens using the non-probability sampling approach, and data was obtained from as many as 130 respondents. The purpose of this study is to determine the influence of gender variables in moderating the association between instant news sharing and false news spreading in Pahang during the pandemic. Covid-19. The result shows that gender does not moderate the relationship between instant news sharing and fake news sharing.

Keyword: Fake News Sharing, Gender, Moderating Variable, Covid-19, Pahang

Introduction

A persistent case of an unidentified acute respiratory tract infection has been reported in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China, as of late December 2019 (Elengoe, 2020). According to WHO (2020), the COVID-19 epidemic was accompanied by a significant volume of incorrect and misleading information on the virus, particularly on social media. This ongoing deception about the COVID-19 was referred to as an "infodemic." The spread of "fake news" is a global phenomenon, particularly after COVID-19 rose to prominence on the international agenda at the start of 2020.

According to some, the government's activities, corrective measures, suggestions, etc. are to blame for a great deal of frequently inaccurate information (Fernández-Torres et al., 2021). Social media sites have given people globally an unprecedented chance to start sharing knowledge and information, but they have also created a situation in which false information can be propagated just as quickly (Alkhateri et al., 2021). Several research have been

conducted related to fake news sharing and Pundir et al., (2021) suggested that demographics and cultural variations can be used as moderator factors in future study to better understand false news spreading behaviour.

Therefore, this study aims to

a) Identify the role of gender variables in moderating the relationship between instant news sharing and fake news sharing in Pahang during Covid-19 pandemic.

Literature review

Fake news

According to Tandoc et al (2018), fake news is typically described as viral posts based on false accounts that pass for news reporting, particularly in media coverage. The two main sources of fake news are online media and mainstream media, with online-produced fake news accounting for 94.4 percent of all fake news (Al-Zaman, 2021).

Baptista and Gradim (2020) conducted a study to determine why fake news is widely spread on social media and why so many people believe it. The way it is presented (from the graphics to the format of the headings and the language used in the text) may explain why it went viral and what elements are associated with the belief in false news. This analysis reveals that fake news is still widely disseminated and consumed because that is the primary goal of those who create it. Despite other studies that contradict these findings, it appears that conservatives, right-wingers, the elderly, and those with less education are more likely to believe and spread fake news (Baptista & Gradim, 2020). Moscadelli et al (2020) are conducting research to determine the amount of "fake news" and related verified news that was disseminated in Italy between December 31, 2019 and April 30, 2020, as well as to assess the quality of informal and formal communication. Fake news links were shared 2,352,585 times across 2102 articles, accounting for 23.1 percent of total shares across all articles reviewed.

There are several studies that related to fake news sharing. Several variables such as i) news-find-me perception, ii) information overload, iii) trust in online information, iv) status seeking, v) self-expression, vi) information sharing, vii) socialization, viii) online trust, ix) self-disclosure, x) fear of missing out (FoMO), xi) social media fatigue, xii) ignorance, xiii) entertainment have been found related to fake news sharing about Covid-19 (Adnan et al., n.d.; Apuke & Omar, 2020, 2021a; Balakrishnan et al., 2021; Talwar et al., 2019).

Instant news sharing occurs when someone communicates information without first validating its accuracy. Several studies have been conducted to address the issue of rapid news dissemination. Apuke & Omar (2021b) discovered that instant news sharing is the second most important predictor of fake news. Wang et al (2017) found that instant information sharing on microblogs is vital for lifting social awareness, changing customer sentiments, and obtaining political and economic advantages.

Gender as Moderator Variable

Several studies have been conducted using gender as variables such as in management, technology acceptance and communication.

Al-Azawei (2019) discovered that gender differences had only a little moderating influence on the connection between e-learning self-efficacy and LMS adoption. Park et al., (2019) investigate the use of multimedia technologies for online and blended learning in this study and found that gender differences in the adoption of multimedia technologies for learning had a moderating influence. According to the findings of this study by Maria (2022), gender variations in students affect the association between financial literacy and financial behaviour, as well as the relationship between financial literacy and entrepreneurial desire. Another findings by (Pal et al., n.d.) indicate that entrepreneurial resourcefulness is highly connected to entrepreneurial conduct, and gender does function as a moderator in the connection.

In a study by Mensah et al., (2018), it has been found that the association between work-family conflict (FIW) and family satisfaction is moderated by gender. Goyanes & Lavin, (2018) discovered predictor variables influencing the dissemination of political false news online, such as demographics (age, gender, political inclination, and income), and situational factors. According to the findings from (Pundir et al., 2021), gender differences in attitudes are significant with female are more likely than males to check information before sharing it.

Nevertheless, gender does not play a role as a moderator in certain researches. Gender as a moderator went in the other direction and found an insignificant range in the study by Akbar et al (2021), indicating that gender did not moderate the link between independent and dependent variables. The results in a study by Xue et al (2020), it shows that perceived warmth influences only female consumers and not male customers, implying that gender moderates the link between perceived warmth and purchase intention. Gender, on the other hand, has no effect on the influence of perceived skill on purchase intention. In a study by Almenar et al., (2021) aim to look at the impact of demography and culture on the spread of fake news on social media. According to the study, culture has the greatest influence on the dissemination of fake news. Also, age rather than gender or education, has a stronger effect on the acceptability of fake news in specific cultures. In a study by (Razak et al., 2018), it is found that there is a link between service quality and e-government acceptability, however, gender doesn't really play a role in moderating.

Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis

H1: The relationship between instant news sharing and fake news sharing will be moderated by gender.

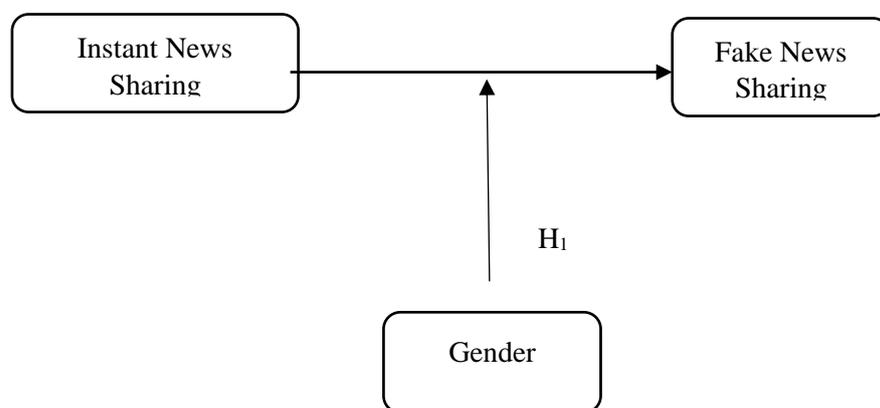


Figure 1: Research model

Methodology

The objective of this study is to identify the role of gender in moderating the relationship between self-promotion and fake news sharing. The instrument used in this study was adapted from previous studies. The scale used is a Likert scale starting from 1 'strongly disagree' up to 5 'strongly agree'. We chose this scale based on the norms used by social science researchers as can be seen in the study of Lallmahomed et al (2017); Almazroa & Gulliver (2018); Tan (2013) and others. The sampling technique used is non-probability sampling which is specifically known as convenient sampling. The computation in the G power programme indicates that the minimum number of participants in this study is 92. This research is cross-sectional in nature. We discovered that face-to-face procedures could not be employed for data collecting because this study was carried out during the MCO. So, we made the decision to utilise an internet platform. We were able to collect 130 data for further analysis. The people that are included in this study are from the state of Pahang.

Data Analysis

The data collected successfully in the Google form is then sent to an Excel worksheet for filtering. Information related to the study is entered into the SPSS programme. The hypothesis is tested using hierarchical regression. Three models of regression are used in the analytical procedure.

The results of the analysis have proven that gender does not play a significant role as a moderator of the relationship between instant news sharing and fake news sharing. The hierarchical multiple regression revealed that at stage one, instant news sharing contributed significantly to the regression model, $F(1,128) = 23.726, p < .05$) and accounted for 39.5% of the variation in instant news sharing. Introducing the gender variables explained an additional 39.8% of variation in instant news sharing and this change in R^2 however, was not significant, $F(2,127) = 11.939, p > 0.05$. Adding interaction term instant news sharing and gender to the regression model explained an additional 40.2% of the variation in instant news sharing and this change in R^2 was not significant, $F(3,126) = 8.082, p > .05$.

Table 1
Change Statistic

Model	R	Adjusted R Square	Change Statistics						
			Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F	df1	df2	Sig.	
1	.395 ^a	.156	.150	.95521	.156	23.726	1	128	.000
2	.398 ^b	.158	.145	.95789	.002	.284	1	127	.595
3	.402 ^c	.161	.141	.95990	.003	.468	1	126	.495

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	21.648	1	21.648	23.726	.000 ^b
	Residual	116.790	128	.912		
	Total	138.438	129			
2	Regression	21.909	2	10.954	11.939	.000 ^c
	Residual	116.529	127	.918		
	Total	138.438	129			
3	Regression	22.340	3	7.447	8.082	.000 ^d
	Residual	116.098	126	.921		
	Total	138.438	129			

a. Dependent Variable: Fakenewssharing

b. Predictors: (Constant), Instantnewssharing

c. Predictors: (Constant), Instantnewssharing, Jantina 1) Jantina

d. Predictors: (Constant), Instantnewssharing, Jantina 1) Jantina, Gen_INS

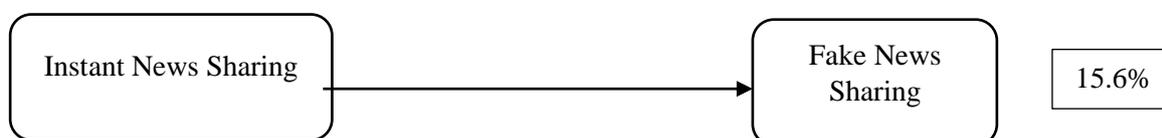


Figure 2: Direct Effect Model

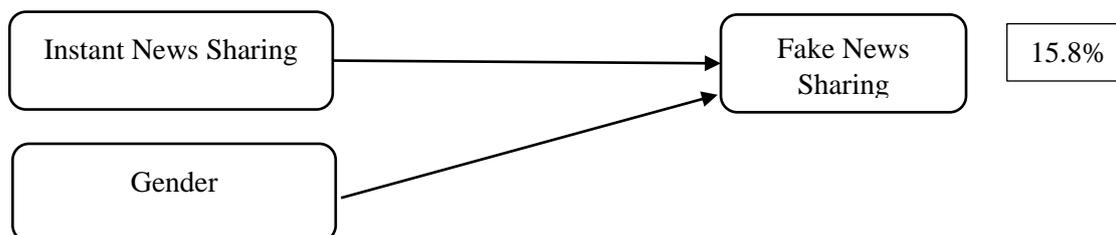


Figure 3: Model with Gender as Predictor

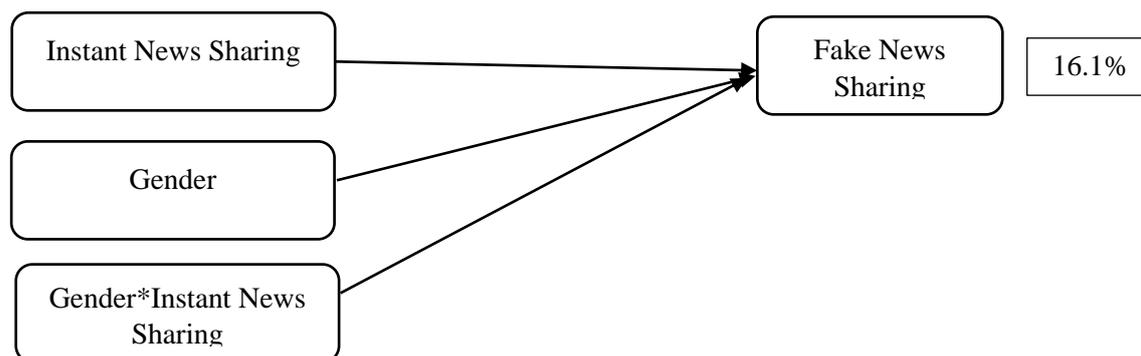


Figure 4: Model with Interaction Effect

Discussion

As explained in the literature review section, there are several previous studies that also examined the role of gender as moderator. The findings of this study have proven that gender does not moderating the relationship between instant news sharing and fake news sharing in Pahang during pandemic Covid-19. These findings also prove that even though gender plays a vital role as moderator variable in several researches, yet it does not play significant role as moderator related to fake news sharing. The findings of this study are in line with the cross-sectional study conducted by (Almenar et al., 2021; Rampersad & Althiyabi, 2020) which found that gender does not moderating the relationship related to fake news sharing studies. This findings however need to be examined carefully because there are some areas that need to be improved especially from the point of view of sampling. Since this sampling uses non-probability sampling, then the findings of this study cannot be generalized to the entire population

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