



Parody Facebook Accounts as Facilitators of Fake News: Perceptions of South Africa

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to examine the use of Facebook as a platform for reporting fake news. Researchers investigated the following problem: Facebook users tend to disseminate fake news, adversely affecting the credibility of content posted on Facebook as factual information. Facebook is misused by individuals who post fake news fabricated to degrade the integrity and credibility of others. However, organizations and other community groups are also drawn to the platform because it connects them to the public in valuable ways. This occurs as participation increases and the amount of data generated improves the platform's ability to advise, recommend, and share information among all parties. Therefore, the study was underpinned by practice theories. An exploratory research design was implemented to provide a strong and robust connection between a cause and an outcome. This exploration represents how Facebook users tend to use this platform to address social problems and their attitudes toward each other, as it was originally meant for socialization, entertainment, and education. Hence, the need to inquire about the use of Facebook for fake news was qualitatively researched. For the data collection process, semi-structured interviews were conducted with Facebook users. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data and develop themes. The key conclusion of the study is that there has been an increase in the quantity of fake news on Facebook across the country. This study aims to theoretically contribute to the existing body of knowledge in media and communication studies. It indicates that in the future, researchers will discover current knowledge regarding parody Facebook profiles as facilitators of fake news perceptions from Polokwane Municipality, Limpopo South, in the field of media and communication studies.

Keywords: Parody, Facebook, Fake news, Perception and Facilitator Fake News, Social Media, Media Credibility, Online Misinformation

1. Introduction

Facebook was made in 2004. By 2007, Facebook was reported to have more than 21 million registered members generating 1.6 billion page views each day (Needham & Company, 2007). The site is closely integrated with the daily media practices of its users: The average user spends around 20 minutes per day on the site, and two-thirds of users log in at least once per day (Cassidy, 2006). Building on its success among college students, Facebook launched a high school version in early September 2005. In 2006, the company introduced networks for business organizations; by November 2006, almost 22,000 organizations had Facebook directories (Cassidy, 2006). In 2006, Facebook was used in more than 2,000 US schools and was the seventh most popular website on the Internet in terms of total online visits (Cassidy, 2006).

Other early studies on Facebook research examined student perceptions of instructor presence and self-disclosure (Hewitt & Forte, 2006; Maser, Murphy, & Simonds, 2007), and the relationship between profile structure and friendship articulation (Ellison, Lampe, & Steinfield, 2007). Contrary to popular press coverage, which has primarily focused on negative outcomes of Facebook use stemming from users' misunderstandings about the nature of their online audience, these studies are interested in circumstances where the intended audience for the profile (e.g., well-meaning friends and acquaintances) and the actual audience align.

1.1 The Emergence of Fake News in South Africa

The rise of the Internet and online media has profoundly changed media coverage and perception. Understanding contemporary concerns about fake news requires considering the novel social dynamics introduced by new media technologies. Allcott (2019) posits that platforms have been used by marginalized groups seeking opportunity, but these are also influenced by extremist groups aiming to manipulate, deceive, and pursue varied goals with locals engaging with specific activists. Silverman (2017) also emphasized that new media can contribute to fake news by taking a step in analyzing the news. The use of online technologies has immense benefits for various aspects such as political campaigns, organizational purposes, and as sources of information for society. Moreover, online media has been adopted for different political purposes.

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Gentzkow and Shapiro (2011) raised the point that these new media innovations both increase the volume of news while allowing niche marketing on an unprecedented scale, often presenting ideologically segmented readers and viewers with entirely different worlds of discourse, which has fueled political polarization. According to Mongiello (2016), Facebook has also increased the likelihood of reporting factual errors or passing along promotional material as news without fully verifying it for bias or mistakes. Newspapers increasingly rely on Internet ad revenue, leading to increased pressure for hyperbolic or sensational headlines and stories.

1.2. The Origin of the Term Fake News

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2018), the term "fake news" has roots back to the 1890s. Fake news has existed for more than a century and has been used to indicate falsehoods printed as news. Merriam-Webster Dictionary cites newspapers such as the Cincinnati Commercial, The Kearney Daily Hub, and The Buffalo Commercial, which used the term fake news in articles from 1890 and 1891 in connection with false information. These phenomena appeared even earlier, and historians Solo-Anaeto and Jacob(2016) trace its origin back to Johannes Gutenberg's invention of the press in 1439.

The concepts of journalistic ethics and objectivity were still not developed because fake stories have historically been produced to sell newspapers (Wardle, 2017). These accounts indicate how the historic evolution of fake news has been suggested in recent years to better reflect the challenges posed by new communication technologies. As stated by Marwick and Lewis (2017), fake news is a contested term but generally refers to a wide range of disinformation and misinformation circulating online and in the media. Allcott and Gentzkow (2017) have defined fake news as news articles that are intentionally and verifiably false and could mislead readers on social networking sites. However, fake news can be in the form of fabricated news stories, manipulation of photos on Facebook, and propaganda.

According to Khaldarov and Marvi (2016), when news stories are created by a political entity to influence or mislead public perception, it is often described as propaganda. The overt purpose is to benefit a public figure, organization, or government. There can be an overlap between propaganda and advertising. Like advertising, propaganda is often based on facts but includes bias to promote a particular side or perspective. The goal is to persuade rather than to inform, and, differing from advertising, the emphasis is not on financial gain but on political influence, such as the Russian Channel One, which is found to have published factually untrue news stories to influence public perception of Russia's actions (Khaldarov & Marvi, 2016). Nevertheless, there are many problems with the term fake news on social networking sites, and one of them is the close connection to news (Silverman, 2016). Silverman (2016) describes fake news as false information that was created for financial gain, such as sensational clickbait articles attempting to lure readers to click and share the content on Facebook.

Lastly, identifying the creator of Facebook's fake news as well as their motivation has been a major concern in recent media reports and academic articles about the phenomenon. Often it can be unclear who has produced the fake news, but actors ranging from governments, organizations, companies, and individuals have been identified as creators of fake news; some push fake news to make money, and others do it to spread their worldviews. Warwick and Lewis (2017) suggested that understanding the motivation behind fake news is crucial to combat it and identifying the motivation or intention behind fake news production is thus of crucial importance.

One of the most infamous recent examples of fake news produced for financial gain involves the teenagers who churned out sensationalist stories about the American presidential candidates in 2016 to earn cash from advertising (Khaldarov & Marvi, 2016). They were seeking money rather than political influence and figured out that publishing pro-Trump content generated more advertising revenue than pro-Clinton content (Warwick & Lewis, 2017).

1.3. Circulation and Distribution of Fake News

Social media has proved to be an effective distribution channel for false information (Warwick & Lewis, 2017). Some studies have shown that fake news stories were more shared on social media than articles from edited news media (Silverman, 2016). The power of fake news and disinformation lies in how well it can penetrate social spheres. Two aspects are crucial to comprehend the circulation of false information: technology and trust.

Social and digital communication technologies such as social networks and blogs are powerful tools for users to publish, distribute, and consume information—decentralized compared to previous mass media technologies. It thus seems easier for false or misleading information to enter the public sphere in many countries through digital, social media. The democratization of online content production has greatly diminished the news media's traditional grip on information (Nielsen, 2017). Reaching a global audience through digital media is possible. While editors and publishers were the main gatekeepers of information in the time of mass media, tech platforms, and algorithms are the new gatekeepers (Lewis, 2018).

Particularly, Facebook has a unique role in amplifying information. Social media, especially Facebook, has become an important entrance point for news in many countries: more than half of online users, or 54%, across 36 countries say they use social media as a source of news each week (Newman, Fletcher, Kalogeropoulos, Levy, & Nielsen, 2017). Furthermore, in a study that examined the exposure to misinformation during the American election campaign in 2016, the researchers found that Facebook was a key vector of exposure to fake news (Guess, Nyhan, & Reifler, 2020).

According to Kalsnes (2017), a study analyzed 14 million messages with 400,000 claims and found evidence of how social media bots played a disproportionate role in spreading and repeating misinformation during the American election (Shao, Ciampaglia, Varol, Flammini, & Menczer, 2016). Bots target users with many followers through replies and mentions and may disguise their geographic locations. Studies have also shown how Facebook's algorithm periodically trends fake news after the company fired its human editors (Dewey, 2016).

The biggest online platforms have deployed several attempts to combat the spread of false information on their platforms. Facebook has attempted to reduce financial incentives to create fake news websites, to flag fake news circulating in the newsfeed by cooperating with professional fact-checkers, and to mark trusted news sources (Solon, 2016; Mosseri, 2017).

1.4. Ethical news reporting

The rise of social media, especially Facebook, in news reporting is another factor shaping journalism. Hermida (2010) states that "social media technologies like Twitter are part of a range of Internet technologies enabling the disintermediation of news and undermining the gatekeeping function of journalists." This also shifts journalism to more two-way and participatory multimedia journalism. Nip (2006) defines participatory journalism as the process of news production through public participation in both newsgathering and the distribution process.

The spread of technology and internet access has paved the way for any member of the general public to describe an event as it unfolds in an informative and timely manner, leading to the notion that anyone and everyone can report the news. Jarvis (2006) expanded on this notion with the idea of "networked journalism," which entails the collaboration of professional and amateur journalists working together to share facts, questions, answers, ideas, and perspectives to produce stories.

This means that sometimes media companies do not even do their investigation to reach their conclusions. This is one of the reasons certain fake news reports spread so quickly, and it is the context for the infamous Pizzagate fake news case (Wiggins, 2016).

However, it is not only the spread of fake news reports but also the degeneration of standards of accuracy followed by news companies that claim to be committed to good journalism (Borge & Gambarato, 2019). Thus, the main issue is the publishing of news articles written without observation of the facts being reported. The real causal connection between the sign and its object is key for accuracy. Although Borge and Gambarato (2019) mentioned that a causal connection between our ideas and the things they represent is necessary to reach real knowledge, they also admit that there is a causal connection among different ideas in the mind. Hence, the researcher may understand a causal connection as containing both a connection of ideas with external events and internal causation among ideas in the mind. In the case of fake news, it is necessary to consider both the relation to the external event and the internal causation, for both can modify the way the story is told and interpreted.

Borges (2019) stated that for Facebook to comprehend the relationship between a news report and the external event represented in it, it is necessary to obtain a certain level of direct or collateral experience with the event in question. The ability to acquire this experience is what gives the news media its authority: They can access documents, places, and people that very few individuals can. Because we are generally provided with little information about the methods journalists use to conduct specific investigations, we cannot assess the validity or thoroughness of their methods. Although there are several journalistic techniques and principles supposed to guide the inquiries of news reporters (Borges and Gambarato, 2019), rarely are such procedures presented to the reader, and their weaknesses considered and frankly stated. Another issue is the use of anonymous sources and off-the-record or confidential information.

According to Wiggins (2016), the difficulty of fake news is intrinsically intertwined with the logic of the algorithms behind social networks such as Facebook. The mechanisms of personalization and tailored content play a special role in this context, possibly creating filter bubbles in which intellectual isolation is caused by digital algorithms that selectively assume what kind of information the user would like to see and echo chambers, in which closed media systems reinforce beliefs.

Wiggins (2016) postulates the sophistication of the algorithmic constitution of Facebook concerning users' news feeds, highlighting that "nearly every interaction with content on Facebook informs the algorithm to accommodate accordingly." Previously, Facebook used the Edge Rank algorithm to determine what content should be displayed in a user's news feed (Bakir & McStay, 2018). In 2013, however, Facebook changed to a machine-learning algorithm that considers more than 100,000 weight factors when producing news feeds (Wiggins, 2016). Everything counts not just Facebook's agenda, which informed the 2018 decision to prioritize news feed content from family and friends over that from brands and media organizations (Chaykowski, 2018), but also whatever a user likes, loves, shares; whatever groups a user belongs to; who a user follows or unfollows; how often a user accesses Facebook; from which device it is accessed; with which friends a user interacts most; and so forth.

Taking another factor into consideration, Tandoc et al. (2015) indicate that receiving information from socially proximate sources can help to legitimate the veracity of the information that is shared on social networks. Proximity can thus also contribute to and influence the dissemination of fake news when users trust those who made the information available to them, even if that information is not true. This factor can be intensified by the

dynamics of Facebook's decision to prioritize the content generated by a user's friends and family, and by the tendency of people to share information that conforms to their opinions (Sunstein, Hastie, & Schkade, 2007).

Moreover, "Facebook favours emotional content that hits people whether or not it is true" (El-Sharawy, Bakir & McStay, 2018). In the fixation on belief, Borges and Gambarato (2019) claim that beliefs originate in sentiment and that there is an inevitable emotional factor in the formation of our beliefs: the irritation of doubt. As the irritation of doubt causes a struggle to reach a state of belief, the researcher prefers to avoid it. On Facebook, this disposition leads us to privilege content, situations, and interactions that confirm our state of belief. A recent quantitative study by Vosoughi, Roy, and Aral (2018) on the spreading of true and false news online demonstrates that false news spreads faster and reaches more people than true news. They suggest that the degree of novelty and the emotional reactions of recipients may be the reasons behind this discrepancy. Hence, whether the content on Facebook is true or false seems less relevant than whether it reinforces our soothing, satisfactory, and comfortable fixed beliefs (Vosoughi, Roy, & Aral, 2018).

2. Theoretical Framework

This study draws on Practice theory. This theory seeks to explain what people do with the media. In other words, the Theory analyzes different practices through the media and by the media. According to Couldry (2015), Practice Theory argues that media research should start with what people are practically doing with the media across a whole range of situations and contexts instead of starting with media texts or institutions.

The theory further states that people believe that they live in a media-saturated world, where the media penetrate, perpetrate, and infiltrate education and socialization processes. Practice Theory is utilized to analyze how individuals use Facebook as a stage to spread fake news in news reporting and how individuals utilize the media in their everyday lives. It also considers how people use Facebook to tarnish the credibility of others and report news that is not factual.

The virtuous circle of easy access to computers, related skills, and social support entails a vicious circle for those who lack these advantages, extending into the world of social networking sites. The practical convergence of older habits of media consumption allows users to assume others are doing much the same on social networking sites. Media reports based on the latest offers of media technology regularly mislead users to change their pace because those who have adapted to social networking sites underplay the inertia of habit: habit is not news reporting. More people are now multitasking between multiple media because they can communicate socially and with loved ones across multiple platforms, creating a bias for the rich and poor. Our media habits change only because media technologies within everyday contexts merge with our wider habit of posting information that misleads the majority.

The habits of media use of Facebook change in line with the wider bundles of habits from which our daily practice is made. Much is made of the use of social media (Facebook) in terms of protest or political campaigns. However, disadvantaged areas are guided by the misinformation that comes across social media because they start to follow social networking sites since they are exceptionally accessible.

3. Methodology

This study deployed a qualitative research approach because the researcher has analyzed qualitative research and evaluated the phenomenon as it is and how Facebook users generate fake news. The participants of this study were sampled through the purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling whereby units to be observed are selected based on a researcher's prerogative about their relevance (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

In this study, non-probability sampling was used in terms of the selection of participants, whereas purposive sampling was used to select people who are active Facebook users. The non-probability sampling method was employed because not all members of the population were granted an opportunity to partake in the study (Vehovah, Malatji, 2019). This method is productive because it allows the researcher to observe the respondents closely and also get a human element attached to the responses.

Moreover, data saturation was used to determine the exact participants of this study. The researcher approached the participants and requested to interview them, further making appointment arrangements for the actual interview session. The research aim and objectives were explained to the respondents before the actual interview began. This was to enable the respondents to understand the study and the context in which the questions are asked and should be responded to.

The researcher used a cellphone as a recording device to record the information from the interviews. The researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with five South African journalists. Personal interviews were used to gather the information because they are useful when informants can be directly observed and when informants provide historical information. This also allows the researcher to have control over the order of questions and follow-up discussions. Although this might be challenging at times because some participants are likely to be reserved during the interviews.

4. Discussion of Findings

The findings of this paper were derived from reflexive thematic analysis. This is because, with this type of thematic analysis, researchers amend, remove, and add codes as they work through the data derived from the themes and sub-themes developed through the key findings of the study, present conclusions from the findings, and provide recommendations. This paper endeavoured to examine Parody's Facebook accounts as facilitators of fake news. This segment outlined the overview and the aim of this study. The research paper used an explorative method in terms of finding credible findings that are needed below.

During the 2016 US presidential election, fake news spread due to the lack of gatekeeping procedures on social media and the internet. Fake news poses a significant threat to democracy as it has the potential to influence discourse. More research is needed to link these theories and impacts to false news, but the correlations are evident.

4.1. The journalist's perception of how Facebook supports the development of the world of social media platform

4.1.1. Facebook updates

Journalist 001 says that there is a need for the new development of Facebook upgrades where some other features, such as software, and also journalist 005 suggested that Facebook needs to develop applications that can be able to help us as journalists to be able to identify the Facebook account or the users identification and the location of the person as well to help us find whether the person is always reporting credible stories on Facebook or not. Journalist 002 suggested the following.

'No, Facebook should develop itself into an environment that does not allow people to spread fake news to bully other users, which is cyberbullying, or use forms of communication that are not allowed into society.'

Furthermore, Facebook was developed to allow people to share their own stories and opinions with their peers. Nowadays it has turned into a room of gossip, where the majority of people are using it to benefit themselves. However, journalist 003 outlined what follows:

'No, it's not at all, first of all, today people tend to use Facebook to make money by scamming others, so the platform itself was developed so socialisation with each other.'

Journalist 004 said that Facebook provides support because it can notify when posting pictures that violate their standards. Facebook is also able to remind the user of the day they met with friends and connected.

4.2. Perception of journalists about the impact of Facebook's fake account on Facebook users and the organisation.

4.2.1. Wrong impression

Journalists believe that fake accounts give a wrong impression to users, hence raising the main concern. The journalist outlined that many Facebook users post threats to an individual who is spreading fake news on the platform and it ruins the integrity of Facebook users. Journalists 001 revealed that:

'Facebook's fake account drags the holder's name into the mud because most organisations use Facebook to update the public about what is happening around the world, and it is also very easy to advertise some of the products or ideas that could be put on the market.'

Journalists 002 emphasised that a fake account always means fraud and defamation of one character or organisation's image the moment one tries to create a fake account there is no good intention. Journalist 003 remarked that:

'It has a bad reputation for the user because a fake account ruins the lives of other people and exposes them with lies.'

Journalist 004 said that Facebook's fake accounts are tarnishing the good name of social networks. Users are in most cases vulnerable to fake account users who at some point use social media for all the wrong reasons.

However, this suggests that Facebook's fake accounts are not good at all; there are some irregularities that it postulates to users and therefore there must be legal action against fake accounts on Facebook.

4.3. Since Facebook is used in South Africa and is not invented in South Africa, what can be done to protect South African users in terms of defamation of character on Facebook?

4.3.1. Implement government rules and regulations for online communication.

The South African government should implement its policies on the issue of online communication with its residents to ask permission to administrator their registration or users. Journalist 001 suggested that the government of the country needs to work with the SAPS and the Department of Communication together to formulate the legislation that would govern their users so that they can be protected not to bringing the perpetrators of fake news reporting on social media and also invent the cyber link that will put them on the database before creating the account.

Journalist 002 supported the following statement: *'I think the government needs to amend the country's communication policies, add a reputation or clause that protects citizens from defamation of characters on Facebook'.*

Journalist 003 revealed that people should be educated to use *Facebook* without any intensity over other people's boundaries people must know how to communicate. Moreover, journalist 004 found that everyone has the right and that any defamation can be brought to a court of law by the injured person. Journalist 005 argued that:

'It doesn't matter where Facebook was invented because every country sets its rules and laws that control how people should behave.'

4.4. Facebook has a negative or positive use on journalists in terms of news reporting.

4.4.1. Negative and positive impact

Journalists 001, 002, 003, and 005 believe that *Facebook* has both a negative and positive impact. However, 002 journalists said that it provides news updates and that some culprits use it to report fake news. Journalist 004 suggested that

'Facebook is positively helping journalists because ordinary people post what they see and they are easily picked up by journalists and do their own follow-ups.'

4.5. How can South African journalists be assisted to verify fake news and fake accounts on Facebook from factual news.?

4.5.1. List of contact sources

As a journalist, you need to make sure you have a list of contact sources that might help you in some cases of verifying the facts and the issues of authenticating pages that can journalists identify news and real news. Journalist 002 suggested the following.

'South African journalists must always verify stories and journalists must always find who is the owner of the account to find out what is written on their wall is factual and follow-up journalists must always verify stories before they publish them is their duty to find out what is written is credible and have a source of the story'

Journalist 003 supported the statement by saying that they must do thorough research, have a source contact list, verify their facts, and try to check other media companies toward their headlines. You might get the lead of information. Journalist 004 revealed that:

"Always check and verify the sources of news you want to follow. Check again with some of your colleagues, and for example, if it involves crime, you must check with the police to verify."

4.6. Can journalists avoid relying on the stories posted on Facebook without verifying their credibility?

4.6.1. Tharra investigation

They should go back to the deep-rooted way of getting information, by contacting the primary sources and doing the interview themselves, and they must verify everything that is posted on *Facebook* together with other posts from other media companies. Journalist 002 suggested the following.

'A journalist can conduct as many acts as possible so that he can have sources looking at people or organisations that publish stories on Facebook always look for publicity.'

Journalist 003 said that as a journalist we are not going anyway with this fake news reporting, because you are on a deadline you have to write a story you go to *Facebook* and check what is trending, and then you grab it to make a story that is not verified. Journalist 005 said: *'I think like a journalist we avoid being under pressure, we must have a list of contacts for different media companies that will help us verify the credibility of the story before we publish them.'* Journalist 004 indicated that:

"Well-researched news stories make it easier for a journalist to avoid spreading fake news. Journalists should never share a news story without verifying the source."

As a journalist, you must check the site that published the story, and you will be able to notice if they publish for the number of likes or if the story is real.

4.7. Does citizen journalism assist in terms of information to avoid misinformation?

4.7.1. Create the lead of the story

The journalists emphasised that citizen journalists are important in terms of providing background information on what was trending at the event or scene. Journalist 001 suggested that:

'Yes, it does because it lays the foundation of the story and again it makes us reach the areas that we are not aware of to get the real facts of the matter.'

Journalist 002 said:

'Yes, a journalist should use Facebook and report news if factual news can concentrate Facebook accounts of fake news on the Facebook site and it may not have space.'

Journalist 004 said: *'I can say yes it helps sometimes, but not always, because some information is not valid and I never rely on them all the time, I can say they can lead the story.'* Journalist 005 indicated that:

'Citizen journalism in most cases helps because they want to be recognised as good informers, but it is important to always verify before publishing.'

4.8. Are there penalties that can be assessed to the journalist if found guilty of reporting false news?

4.8.1. Be against a lawsuit

Journalist 001 said: *'Yes, normally they tell you to retract the story and it is not adequate, there should be a penalty like suspending them from their journalist's post for a certain period.'*

Journalist 002 revealed, *'Yes, a journalist might be sued or told to retrieve his report to apologise publicly.'*

Journalist 003 said that they are penalties because fair report privilege may not be the best legal approach in defending us as journalists, they may be lawsuits. Journalist 004 suggested that

'Yes, a journalist is not above the law and he can be arrested. In December 2019, more than 30 journalists from all over the world were arrested for spreading fake news.'

4.9. Can journalists differentiate between factual news and misinformation on Facebook?

4.9.1. Factual news is sourced from

Journalists outlined that they should follow the news on influencers or authenticated pages and then do their investigation by interviewing the sources rather than depending on Facebook information. Journalist 002 said that:

"Factual news has a lot of sources and the facts are verified. However, misinformation is not interesting to the audience, and no sources are available."

The apparent factual news comes with more sources of information and is verified before it can reach the editorial room. Journalist 005 found that Journalists can always differentiate by following legitimate news sources to be able to check with them if they also have the same information posted by Facebook users.

4.10. Do you think Facebook can benefit journalists in terms of their news reporting to avoid fake news?

4.10.1. Credibility

Journalists should avoid rushing to post the information without any verification, office-based journalism, they should go out to the field, do interviews, and gather real information. Journalist 001 suggested that:

'Yes, a journalist should use Facebook and report news if factual news can concentrate Facebook accounts of fake news on the Facebook site and it may not have space.'

As much as Facebook can be upgraded in a way that many organisations or media companies are subscribed to the page before opening their account, and given their licences where Facebook can assist because we will have fewer fake accounts. However, journalist 003 said: *'Yes, because Facebook can benefit journalists if they can detect pictures that are against their standards, and also they must improve noticing what is being posted.'*

5. Conclusion And Recommendations

The study revealed that the best way for Facebook to help journalists is by teaching them how to separate their social interactions from their news activities. Facebook was not originally created as a news platform; it evolved into one. It is impractical to remove all users and reserve news reporting solely for journalists, as this would not prevent fake news due to the lack of verification. Instead, accounts should specify their purpose. Journalists should conduct proper research and not rely solely on stories published on Facebook.

The study suggests that Facebook developers must create software that can assist in encrypting or filtering wrongful information and verify the accounts of those disseminating fake news. This study also highlights the need for Facebook to implement more stringent regulations on its platform, as it is less regulated compared to others. Currently, users can only report others to post threats. Stricter regulation could help reduce fake news. As the user base grows, Facebook will continue to develop, and people will likely recommend it to their friends, fostering growth without hesitation or fear.

Facebook must implement new policy measures on fake news reporting. In South Africa, ensuring access to country-specific administrators could help guide users according to local policies. More research is needed to address Facebook's fake news reporting issues. Fake news is problematic for users, as the number of fake accounts on social media increases daily. Further research could help fill gaps in understanding and address areas of concern.

Facebook plays an important role in news reporting, renovating communication practices, creating new spaces for socialisation, and impacting traditional and social structures. This chapter outlines the summary of the findings and how Facebook can be enhanced to protect users from bullying. It also addresses how Facebook is used, the

challenges it presents, and provides recommendations. Facebook plays a vital role for both users and journalists in terms of news reporting.

6. Implications for Research

There are numerous approaches to combating fake news. Initially, Mark Zuckerberg, CEO of Facebook, claimed that false news did not impact the 2016 US presidential election (Mantzaris, 2017). Facebook subsequently addressed the issue. In 2016, Robertson reported that Facebook began asking users to judge the truthfulness of information. Google labels search results and includes fact-checking metadata, unlike Facebook (Mantzaris, 2017). Both implementations appear to be successful, as they rely on external sources for fact-checking and do not eliminate bogus news.

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