



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

A Study On Message Forwarding Habits In Social Media

Ambika Sankar Mishra,

Associate Professor,

Rama Devi Women's University, Bhubaneswar Odisha
Nity,

Assistant Professor,

Rama Devi Women's University, Bhubaneswar Odisha

Gyanaranjan Mishra,

Assistant Professor,

Birla Global University, Bhubaneswar, Odisha

Abstract:

The journey of human civilization is the story of human communication. Man is involved in the process of communication from cradle to graveyard. To communicate, is a basic need of human beings. With the advent of new information technology, the new communication systems have emerged to change the communicative ecology. In present days man has gone acquainted with social media. Every day the social media users consume lots of time and space in forwarding and posting messages. They forward messages on various topics to express their thoughts on those topics or to agree with the content received by them. Thus, it is always important to understand the purpose behind forwarding a message and the perception of users about message forwarding. The study here is an attempt to find the perception of social media users relating to forwarding a message by conducting a survey among them using interview schedules.

Key Words - Communicate, message, idea, media, post

I. INTRODUCTION

Our lives are closely related to advancements technology and new innovations. These days such developments have become very fast and they have gone accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Now the human civilization has started moving towards the 5th industrial revolution (Prasetya, 2023). In the past few decades, social media has gone essential for society organizations, and government agencies to communicate among themselves (Atad, 2023). With portable mobile devices at hand, people in present times have started communicating in a different manner. Our radios are no more small boxes, our televisions do not need tables to sit or screws to hang themselves on the wall. They have changed to apps by convergence technology and communication has gone changed. We are communicating fewer words using our tongue and more by our fingertips. Most of us have our brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts as our friends in social media. Situations have reached to such a level that; in many cases we are communicating from one room to another using social media than visiting the other.

2. Review of literature

These days, the social media platforms are a popular, and accessible form of communication and they are widely accepted by the public due to their participatory nature in which they provide opportunity to the receiver to become the content creator also. This medium also provides wide opportunity to learners to from books and others (Davies, 2023). This medium has become more reliable and has gained more popularity as it offers the facility of two-way communication. For the same reason, it has become able to build trust (Lerouge, 2023). Educational institutions have started using social media groups for information exchange and corporates for planning and managing human resources. The all-powerful social media which has become the new

communication medium of the present generation, has created a new type of communication system which is highly fascinating than the previous one. People using this media, have gone so much addicted with it that the narcotizing effects of this medium can be well observed among the users of this media. In context of this media, maximum of the audience members must voluntarily choose to be members of the audience (Cavanah, 2023)

2.1. Characteristics of social media

As a powerful medium of modern communication it has gone able to satisfy the communication needs of people in an efficient manner through various ways and by character is quite different from the conventional media system. To speak in a nutshell, it is:

- An instant faster form of communication.
- Mostly participatory and the rate of involvement of audience is very high.
- Audience has maximum opportunity to play the role of communicator and receiver.
- A liberal and democratic form of communication with ample opportunities for freedom of expression
- It is a new and attractive form of communication
- Creates a virtual world to provide a better satisfaction in communication.
- Communicator and respondent are known to each other.
- Individual members of the audience are mostly linked with a similar cultural background which makes

the communication more effective.

The social media with above advantages has become the potential new medium of today and it has started satisfying the uses and gratification perspective (Gordon, 2022) of people in a powerful manner. It has gone associated with our lives in such a manner that it has started influencing our lives in almost all spheres.

Political Life and social media- During the American presidential elections it has proved this media to be a potential medium in building public opinion (Hong, 2012). Similarly in India, this medium has created the “Pappu image for Rahul Gandhi” (Dutta, 2018) Similarly, political parties are using the personal likes and dislikes data of people shared by them in social media to influence the public to create opinions in favor of them. It is also becoming a tool for information dissemination among people and has proved its usefulness for governance. During demonetization (Fouillet, 2021) and implementation of GST (Sharma, 2022) social media played a powerful persuasive role for building public opinion in favor of government.

Economic Life and social media: The social media has become an industry itself today. The YouTube channels are now new platforms of media business for creative people. Social media is promoting financial literacy among people these days and it is become a new platform to promote business and has proved its effectiveness. Using machine learning algorithms it has already become the place to promote business through advertisements according to the preference of people.

Cultural Life and social media: It has become the new platform for cultural exchange. By social media we are able to know the cultures of people at faraway places. We are knowing about traditions and rituals associated with different societies. Folk dances, musical forms and festivals are spreading among people through social media. Similarly, the media and entertainment industry has is using social media platforms to internationally highlight cultures of different people across the globe. In fact, new forms of culture are created, consumed and cultural diffusions are taking place through social media.

Social life and social media: Due to its wide presence social media has started influencing social life in a powerful manner. Campaigns like #Me too movement (Alaggia, 2020) through social media worked to develop a different type of gender consciousness among people. In regular intervals the social media is highlighting issues of social interest and at the same time it is also talking about different discriminations and disparities prevailing in different societies. It is becoming a tool to promote the fight against discriminations and disparities.

Educational Life and social media: social media has proved its usefulness through different programs, groups, and etc. It has also become a platform to share eBooks and other such things for educational development. Similarly the mixed use of different new technologies through social media is proving useful for teachers and learners in educational institutions for teaching and learning purpose and has gone popular (Al-Qaysi, 2023).

Legal life and social media: The social media in these days have started influencing the legal life of people because through social media different legal awareness forums have started creating legal awareness among people and at the same different information relating to legal life have started influencing people.

Religious life and social media: May it be Durgapuja, Ramzan or Christmas these days the this media has become an important medium to spread the messages relating to religion. Sometimes the social media is

responsible to create communal sentiments through its posts and those posts are also creating social disturbances.

2.2. Message forwarding

The social media which has now reached to almost all areas of our lives and is influencing our lives in a fascinating manner has really created a new communication revolution with a credible and potential communication medium. As a democratic platform of communication, it has provided ample opportunity to people to communicate. Without the option of gate-keeping, it has allowed free flow of information. The free flow of information has reached to such a level in this participatory communication medium that, people are not ready to cross check the credibility of the information or source. Thus, it has created a situation which is like freedom without responsibility. Thus it can be used as a tool for rumor dissemination and rumors are like wild fires. In such a situation it can be said that the effects of misinformation can be fatal towards different aspects of our lives (Chen, 2023). Thus, lack of gate keeping is always a problem in case of social media and such problem can be resolved through media literacy.

Talking about media literacy, we can say it is a concept which refers to the audience's ability of decoding, evaluating, analyzing, understanding and reproducing the received information in various media (Cheng, 2022) but if we look towards the media literacy rate of India, then the status of media literacy in India is also not very encouraging. Thus, the social media has become a new platform to forward any type of messages according to the mercy of the user. In fact, most of the messages in social media are forwarded messages and in maximum cases people are forwarding such messages without thinking about the consequences. Without proper verification if messages will be forwarded randomly, then anyone can easily create rumors through social networks (Tu, 2023). For example, the fake message relating to the demise of former Tamil Nadu Chief minister Sushree Jayalalitha. In this case, hours before the actual death of former Tamil Nadu chief minister Jayalalitha, rumors were there in social media that, she has died (Bhatnagar, 2016). To understand the consequences of such message forwarding the examples of few more incidents which had happened at different times in other states can be taken into consideration.

2.3. Case-I-Demonetization

On 8th November 2016, at 8:00pm a small portion of India's population was accessing the news channels and the demonetization declaration came in the television channels. Close to 9:00pm all cash deposit machines and ATM machines got jam packed with long queues in front of them. The reason is, the message of demonetization moved in such a rapid manner that it created a panic among people and people without going deep into the messages ran rapidly to cash deposit machines or ATMs.

2.4. Case-II-The Child lifting group

In the month of May 2018, in states like Odisha and Andhra Pradesh several video clips went viral in social media showing a few men getting beaten up by the locals for allegedly stealing children from the localities. Earlier a group of people roaming in different areas and those people were involved in child lifting. The situation became so worse in Odisha that the police had to intervene and it had to issue orders to people to not get involved in such activities.

The cases cited above are just one or 2 examples of message forwarding but WhatsApp has around 200 million of users in India. So the message forwarding situation can be more easily understood after looking towards the number of users. The company meanwhile has brought restriction that no user in India can forward a message more than five chats under individual or group category. It will also removal of quick forward button was also a part of the same decision. The company took such a step to reduce the circulation of fake messages on the platform. Similarly, the Bhadrak Ramanavami communal riots case (Mohanty, 2017) also is an example how message sharing on Facebook created a riot situation in Bhadrak. Thus, these days the messages coming in social media are really powerful as they are coming according to the taste of people. The messages are highly powerful as they are prepared using the content localization approach to directly catch the attentions of people (Pokorny, 2023).

The social media messages have gone so powerful in influencing public opinion that, looking towards such message forwarding habits of people and realizing the power of social media the Chennai high court provided its verdict against message forwarding it pronounced that "Forwarding a message is equal to accepting the message and endorsing the message (K.M, 2018)." Studies also show that faith in social media and status-seeking has a big effect on promoting fake news (Wei, 2023). Thus the society has started realizing the importance of message sharing in social media as such messages also have influence on mental health to influence the lives of people. The social media messages induce a lot of emotions into people. The ability to control emotions is essential to one's wellbeing, while failing in doing the same may have adverse

consequences for mental health (Malko, 2023). Thus message forwarding in social media may lead to chaotic situations affecting mental health of people.

However, at the same time, people have not stopped from forwarding messages and they are continuously doing it. As human beings we all communicate and without communication our lives will become miserable. Thus, communications will continue through social media but to understand communication through social media, we need to understand the process of message forwarding habits of people while using this media as a large portion of the messages in this media are the forwarded messages. It is nearly impossible to stop message forwarding habits of people. However steps can be taken to channelize this message forwarding habit for better purposes by increasing media literacy among people. For doing the same, the message forwarding habits of people needs to be understood.

3. Theoretical framework

Message forwarding in social media as a phenomena can't be seen as an individual phenomena rather it is dependent on various types needs of people to access a particular information. Thus here the study has used the Uses and gratification theory proposed by Katz and Blumler (Vinney, 2019). The theory states people use a particular media to satisfy their different kind of needs. Thus this theory can be used to understand the phenomena of message forwarding. As the study is a quest to understand the message forwarding habits of people that is why through the lens of uses and gratification theory, this question can be understood better because looking through the lens of this theory one can easily understand why people are forwarding a message? what are their needs behind such forwarding? How it is satisfying their communication needs?

4. Objectives:

- a. To understand the reason behind message forwarding
- b. To understand the preferences associated with message forwarding

5. Research questions

- a. Why people forward messages in social media?
- b. What type of contents and mostly contents in which form are preferred to forward?

6. Methodology

To understand the message forwarding habits in using social media, a study is conducted among 150 students of Centurion University Bhubaneswar from its different departments. The reason of considering the students is, students are the biggest consumers of social media and they easily get affected by information coming through social media. Survey method using interview schedules are used for the study. Both primary and secondary data are used for the purpose of the study. Sampling technique used for the purpose of study is convenient sampling. Variable of the study are time of the study and social media preference of the students.

7. Outcomes of the study:

Answering to the questions during the study, regarding message forwarding only 50% of them told that message forwarding is good and 95% of them told that they forward messages. Regarding their preference of app to send the messages, 90% of them told that WhatsApp is their first preference, then they preferred messenger, later Instagram and then telegram was of least preference.

40% of them explained that they forward messages to others because they want to inform others about facts they know and 40% of them told that they forward messages, because they want to create fun and 20% of them told they send without any reason. Most of them told, they prefer to send messages sent to them by others.

Talking about types of messages for forwarding, Text messages were the first choice, photos were the second choice, Audio and video messages were of equal preference for forwarding. Regarding content selection, they told that they strictly choose the receiver according to the content.

Regarding purpose of sending, most of them told that they do not like to send messages for wishing good Morning, Good Night or to wish in special occasions, but they do so because others are doing. Regarding seriousness during message sending, most of them told, they check messages before sending. They were not able to confirm that messages are coming to them as a result of forwarding by others. Around 70% of them were not sure of the fact that, whether message forwarding is necessary or not but around 30% told it is a necessity and around 80% of them were unable to say that, whether message forwarding is a good or bad habit and 20% told it is good to forward messages.

Regarding message receiving and forwarding 45% told that 0-25% of Messages coming to them are forwarded messages, 35% told that 26-50% are forwarded and 20% told they receive forwarded messages up to 75%. 45% told, while receiving a message they do not check the source, 30% told they check the source and others were not sure about the answer. 55% told if they receive the same message again and again, they react and 40% told they accept such messages as it has become a practice of the day and 1% told they feel irritated and helpless.

Regarding message sending 70% told they do not think about messages before sending them and 30% expressed their inability to answer. 90% of them told that it is necessary to analyze messages before sending and 30% agreed that messages sent without proper checking can have serious harmful effects on society and 50% told that no such thing will happen if messages are not checked before sending and 20% expressed their inability to answer this question.

8. Conclusion:

Thus, looking into the above facts, it can be said that message forwarding has become a trend of the day and people in most of the cases are forwarding messages but their preference of message forwarding are different and in most of the cases it is not a fact that they are forwarding it without understanding it and a proper level of awareness and increase in media literacy can resolve the issue of spreading rumors in social media to create disturbances in society.

References

- Alaggia, R. W. (2020). I never told anyone until the #metoo movement”: What can we learn from sexual abuse and sexual assault disclosures made through social media. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 104312.
- Al-Qaysi, N. ,.-E. (2023). Social media adoption in education: A systematic review of disciplines, applications, and influential factors. *Technology in Society*, 102249.
- Atad, E. ,.-O. (2023). Diplomacy under fire: Engagement with governmental versus non-governmental messages on social media during armed conflicts. *Government Information Quarterly*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2023.101835>.
- Bhatnagar, G. V. (2016, October 16). After Its Silence on Jaya's Health Fans Rumours, State Arrests Those Speculating on Social Media. Retrieved from www.thewire.in: <https://thewire.in/politics/jayalalithaa-health-rumours-police>
- Cavanah, S. O. (2023). Birds of feather flock together: A longitudinal study of a social media outreach effort. *Biological Conservation*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2023.109999>.
- Chen, S. ,. (2023). Spread of misinformation on social media: What contributes to it and how to combat it. *Computers in Human Behavior*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2022.107643>.
- Cheng, L. ,. (2022). Media literacy and national security awareness: The formation of Chinese higher education groups' attitude to the Russia-Ukraine war. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2022.100373>.
- Davies, B. T. (2023). Are humorous or distractor images more effective than self-compassion messages for combatting the negative body image consequences of social media? An experimental test of possible micro-intervention stimuli. *Body Image*, 356-371.
- Dutta, P. K. (2018, July 23). Rahul Gandhi as “Prince” and Pappu: The Hindu Right's Politics of Ridicule. Retrieved from *India Today*: <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/rahul-gandhi-pappu-1293314-2018-07-23>
- Fouillet, C. ,.-M. (2021). Demonetization and digitalization: The Indian government's hidden agenda. *Telecommunications Policy*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.telpol.2020.102079>.
- Gordon, J. (2022, April 15). Uses and Gratification Theory - Explained. Retrieved from *The business professor*: https://thebusinessprofessor.com/en_US/communications-negotiations/uses-and-gratification-theory-explained
- Hong, S. N. (2012). Which candidates do the public discuss online in an election campaign?: The use of social media by 2012 presidential candidates and its impact on candidate salience. *Government Information Quarterly*, 455-461.
- K.M, A. (2018, May 11). Forwarding Social Media Posts Equal To Endorsing It: Madras HC Denies Anticipatory Bail To BJP Leader S Ve Shekher. Retrieved from *Livelaw*: <https://www.livelaw.in/forwarding-social-media-posts-equal-to-endorsing-it-madras-hc-denies-anticipatory-bail-to-bjp-leader-s-ve-shekher/>
- Lerouge, R. ,. (2023). The role played by government communication on the level of public fear in social media: An investigation into the Covid-19 crisis in Italy. *Government Information Quarterly*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2022.101798>.
- Malko, A. ,.-A. (2023). Message similarity as a proxy to repetitive thinking: Associations with non-suicidal self-injury and suicidal ideation on social media. *Computers in Human Behavior Reports*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chbr.2023.100320>.
- Mohanty, K. (2017, April 07). Odisha: Curfew in Bhadrak town after communal violence over Facebook post. Retrieved from <https://www.hindustantimes.com/>: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/odisha-curfew-clamped-in-bhadrak-town-after-communal-violence-over-a-facebook-post/story-Hoq66bQkDpnw6n1FtlCWNO.html>
- Pokorny, E. (2023, July 13). Building your content localization strategy: best practices and why it's key to your website's success. Retrieved from *Weglot*: <https://www.weglot.com/blog/content-localization>

Prasetya, T. A. (2023). Systematic review of social media addiction among health workers during the pandemic Covid-19. *Heliyon*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e16784>.

Sharma, B. ., (2022). Food Industry: Experiencing positive impact after goods and service tax implementation. *Materials Today: Proceedings*, 1726-1732.

Tu, Y. ., (2023). How to improve the rumor-confutation ability of official rumor-refuting account on social media: A Chinese case study. *Computer Communications*, 331-348.

Vinney, C. (2019, April 19). <https://www.thoughtco.com/uses-and-gratifications-theory-4628333>. Retrieved from thoughtco: www.thoughtco.com

Wei, L. ., (2023). Do social media literacy skills help in combating fake news spread? Modelling the moderating role of social media literacy skills in the relationship between rational choice factors and fake news sharing behaviour. *Telematics and Informatics*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2022.101910>.

