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How do People Process and Share Fake News on Social Media?: In the context of Dual-Process of Credibility with Partisanship, Cognitive Appraisal to Threat, and Corrective Action

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to examine how the information processing of news users happens on social media in the context of spreading fake news. This study is intended to shed light on how fake news spreads on social media with the effects of two moderators (i.e., partisanship and source credibility) from political attitude consistency to message credibility and the effect of mediation (i.e., cognitive appraisal to threat) from message credibility to intent to share fake news on social media and corrective action. As a theoretical lens, dual-process theories were adopted in this paper. For this, a 2 (news topic: Immigration vs. Gun control) X 2 (news topic stance: Positive vs. Negative) X 2 (source: major (i.e., Associated Press) vs. minor (i.e., blog news) between-subject online experiment with 507 participants was conducted for both immigration and gun control topics. As a result, in the moderation effects, although partisanship was significant for both topic immigration and gun control news, source credibility was significant only for immigration news. Plus, the mediation effect of the cognitive appraisal to threats was significant between message credibility and the intent to share fake news on social media for both news topics. Lastly, even though the relations between message credibility and corrective action had to be negatively associated, they were positively correlated.

Key Words: Fake News, Dual-Process Theory, Credibility, Partisanship, Social Media

How do People Process and Share Fake News on Social Media?

: In the context of Dual-Process of Credibility

with Partisanship, Cognitive Appraisal to Threat, and Corrective Action

by

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Is fake news the second advent of *The War of the Worlds*? This was a radio program broadcast by CBS in the 1930s of Orson Welles' adaptation of the science fiction novel by H. G. Wells about Martians invading Earth. Although CBS described that it was a science fiction drama rather than a real situation several times before and after the radio show and in the intermission, its airing had a tremendous social impact. Many people believed this fake radio news was actually real news. Those who listened to the broadcast were in a panic, and injuries and material damage followed in the process. CBS publicly apologized, and the U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) banned the use of press coverage in the airplay.

The participation of news viewers in news events has been growing through sharing via current social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter (Oeldorf-Hirsch & Sundar, 2015). Three-quarters of online news users have had news website content shared with them via social media (Purcell et al., 2010). Even though two-thirds of internet users use social media (Purcell et al., 2010), the internet still tends to provide greater opportunity for them to obtain information that is associated with already existing beliefs whereas, in the opposite case, they are neglected to encounter news that is different from their existing opinion. (Bimber & Davis, 2003).

On social media, the influence of fake news is gaining strength. Silverman (2016) in *BuzzFeed News* analyzed the share, response, and comment counts on Facebook's 20 most popular fake news stories for three months prior to the November 2016 US presidential election. The research determined that fake news figures (8.70 million) secured a higher proportion of reactions than articles featured in major media (7.33 million) such as *The New York Times*.

Strikingly, the problem is that online news users on social media share fake news on their own. The false information that fake news represents is far more rapid, invasive, and widespread than the truth from all other information types, and the impact of false political news is more influential than other false news like natural disasters, scientific stories, or financial information (Vosoughi et al., 2018). Indeed, social media users on Facebook have shared the most popular fake news stories more widely than the most popular mainstream news during the 2016 US presidential Election (Silverman, 2016). Furthermore, many people who read fake news tend to believe that it is true (Silverman & Singer-Vine, 2016).

Notably, during the 2016 US Presidential Election, a number of fake news articles about the presidential candidates prevailed. Among them, the"Pizzagate conspiracy theory" (Wikipedia contributors, 2020) caused enormous repercussions on social media and in real life as well. Pizzagate grew from the proliferation of malicious rumors that Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton and her campaign manager, John Podesta, engaged in child sex abuse in the cellar of a pizza shop. This rumor was picked up by fake news websites and spread via social media, particularly through anonymous Twitter accounts and various internet communities (Wikipedia contributors, 2020). The significance of the incident was that it drove a subscriber to gun violence. Indeed, this may be one of the first cases of fake news developing into a criminal offense. The series of events surrounding the Pizzagate serve as evidence that certain individuals may be sufficiently suggestible to be influenced by fake news, and that crucial knowledge based on the existing confirmation bias that individuals have can eventually trigger specific actions in real life.

Despite the rise of fake news research, the academic concept of fake news still remains far from fully defined. In other words, it is difficult to define or figure out 'what fake news is.'

Relatively little 'experimental' research has been carried out about how fake news spreads out on social media. Lastly, little attention was paid to a psychological explanation in the context of 'dual-process' to provide empirical evidence on how fake news spreads on social media. Given these considerations, this study attempts to help reduce these research gaps.

Therefore, the purpose of this experimental study is to explore how news users cognitively process fake news on social media when they decide to share it. This research will shed light on the relationships among partisanship, credibility (i.e., message credibility and source credibility), cognitive appraisal to threat, intent to share fake news on social media, and corrective action. In addition, to explain this phenomenon, these concepts will be examined as key dependent variables. The theoretical lens of dual-process theories (i.e., the Elaboration Likelihood Model and the Heuristic-Systematic Model) will be used to examine these relationships.

Research Question

In order to examine these relationships, the following general research question is proposed:

RQ: How is the news users' information processing based on partisanship in the context of spreading fake news on social media?

Chapter 2 will investigate the relationship among fake news, partisanship-based political attitude consistency, credibility, dual-process, cognitive appraisal to threat, intent to share fake news, and corrective action. Chapter 3 will discuss the methodological approaches to data collection, analysis of this data, Chapter 4 will ultimately draw results with quantitative methods. Chapter 5 will deal with discussion, limitations, and future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Fake News

The narratives and formats used to present fake news not only appear realistic but, to some extent, do indeed reflect reality. Fake news has been at the center of scholarly discussion since the 2016 Presidential Election. Despite this, it is somewhat surprising that the concept of *Fake* was not explicated until very recently. According to Pennycook et al. (2017), fake news relates to the articles that are created and advertised on social media to deceive newsreaders in order to gain ideological or financial benefits. Allcott and Gentzkow (2017) further defined fake news as news articles that can potentially mislead readers through intentional but verifiable falsities. In order to conduct an experimental study with the exact definition of fake, they extracted six cousins of fake news:

> First, unintentional reporting mistakes. Secondly, rumors that do not come from particular news articles. Third, conspiracy theories. Fourth, a satire that is unlikely to be misconstrued as factual. Fifth, false statements by politicians. Lastly, reports that are slanted or misleading but not outright false. (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017, p.5).

Generally, fake news has received criticism from the normative and ethical point of view. From the normative perspective of journalism, Borden and Tew (2017) suggest that there are journalistic problems with fake news because of the expectations of news with respect to 'gatekeeping,' 'factuality,' and 'objectivity.' First, in terms of the gatekeeping of information providers, journalism has an obligation to deliver important and intellectual information to news audiences rather than to convey entertainment, gossip, or simply subjective opinions toward particular issues. Second, as Lim (2017) pointed out, news articles without fact-checking, such as

fake news, allow, encourage, and neglect to provide the truth with deceptive claims and political deception. Finally, as regards journalistic accountability, fake news violates self-regulation and moral consensus. That is to say that fake news fails to perform the appropriate role of journalistic autonomy.

One of the principal problems of fake news pertains to the idea that it can make readers inadvertently believe false information. Such perception becomes particularly dangerous when this false information leads people to utilize this information as though it were fact. In fact, previous studies (Bamas, 2012; Polgae, 2012) show that perceptions of viewers toward particular candidates can be shaped with exposure to fake news during an election campaign. In line with this idea, Polage (2012) claims that exposure to misleading information can significantly affect the perceived truthfulness and plausibility of particular information. Also, Polage (2012) notes that familiarity plays a critical role in forming judgments towards the validity of statements. Interestingly, Balmas (2014) argues that later exposure to authentic news, which will be used as an antonym of fake news, can subdue the impact of fake news. The study implies that exposure to fake news can be influenced by perceiving *not* real issues as real.

Political Attitude Consistency based on Partisanship

People are psychologically more likely to pursue particular viewpoints and information to support their pre-existing standpoints (Festinger, 1957). That is, cognitive efforts are made to avoid cognitive dissonance. Festinger called it "cognitive consistency." Confirmation bias is a good explanation of this cognitive consistency. Confirmation bias is the tendency to acquire or process new information by confirming preconceptions and avoiding inconsistencies with existing attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, memories, and experiences (Allahverdyan & Galstyan,

2014). McRaney (2012) pointed out that confirmation bias occurs when you perceive the world and selectively think through the filter. Nikerson's work (1998) is to help to understand the relationship of "determined information from seeking and interpretation" with personal beliefs or attitudes. In addition, other relevant research studies (Brannon et al., 2007) set out to examine the selective exposure effects regarding what is most likely strongly held attitudes and beliefs. For example, it was determined that people prefer to gather information that is consistent with the social stereotypes they already hold (Johnston, 1996) or which help them to retain a positive view of the self (Holton & Pyszczynski, 1989). Also relevant is a study by Jonas et al. (2003) in which they found selective exposure when participants made decisions concerning a current real-world controversial issue (e.g., national health policy).

Confirmation bias has its roots in psychology and offers a broad range of definitions, depending on the context in which it is being employed (Nikerson, 1998). The use of this concept is highly situation-dependent (Klayman, 1995). It is for this reason that some researchers have questioned how confirmation bias explains real-world decision making (Jonas et al., 2001). However, it is evident that confirmation bias influences people to believe their personal data, such as experience, knowledge, and memory, in order to confirm their prior beliefs and expectations (Klayman, 1995; Nikerson, 1998).

In reference to the discussion above, in the context of a political point of view, since partisanship is psychologically motivated to process information that is similar to individual's beliefs, such individuals are apt to expose themselves to information that supports their existing viewpoints (Stroud, 2008, 2010). According to previous research (Knobloch-Westerwick et al., 2015; Knobloch-Westerwick & Kleinman, 2012), with particular reference to big events such as presidential elections, information acquisition based on existing attitudes occurs more frequently

in the internet age. That is to say, the Internet affords an increase in confirmation bias with exposure to familiar knowledge rather than exposure to diverse information or opinion (Knobloch-Westerwick et al., 2015; Knobloch-Westerwick and Kleinman, 2012). So, regardless of the topic, people exposed themselves to more politically attitude-consistent news more frequently than not (Knobloch-Westerwick & Johnson, 2014; Knobloch-Westerwick & Meng, 2009). Of course, although there are arguments that partisanship alleviates the effects of media (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Young, 2004), the environment of the internet has further accelerated or reinforced selective exposure to political messages (Kim, 2011).

This feature also can be applied to selective exposure toward inaccurate or unchecked news such as political fake news (Balmas, 2014). That is to say, users want to read more news that matches their existing beliefs, knowledge, and attitude (Knobloch-Westerwick et al., 2015; Knobloch-Westerwick & Kleinman, 2012). Namely, people are more likely to have selective exposure to fake news that is consistent with their confirmation bias whether the news is fake or not. As a result, this research assumes that existing partisanship makes it that news users' selective exposure occurs based on their existing confirmation bias toward attitude-consistent news messages from fake news.

Credibility

With regard to news, the concept of credibility and its perception is multidimensional (Bucy, 2003; Cassidy, 2007; Gaziano & McGrath, 1986; Kiousis, 2006;). Chiefly, there are three types of credibility that have been discussed in previous studies: source credibility, media credibility, and message credibility (Metzger et al., 2003).

First, *source credibility* is the degree of credibility or trustworthiness of the communicator that sends a message (i.e., "interpersonal, organizational, and mass-mediated contexts") (Kiousis, 2006, p. 382). Researchers who studied source credibility in the early stages of the academic establishment were Hovland and Weiss (1951), who distinguished source credibility by expertise and trustworthiness. According to their research, expertise deals with the ability of a communicator to perform the work involved, and trustworthiness notes the possibility of sharing false information in order to change the attitudes and behaviors of the message receiver.

Second, *message credibility* is the degree of credibility of the message itself and its story, such as the characteristics of fairness, unbiasedness, accuracy, and believability. As mentioned above, even though there are several dimensions of credibility, the content of a message significantly contributes to the audience's judging of a news source's believability rather than another credibility such as source credibility (Austin & Dong, 1994). In addition, since fake news is a matter of whether the content of the story is false information or not, this study investigates the message credibility of fake news as online news on social media.

Lastly, *medium credibility* is the degree of credibility in which individuals trust media sources themselves, such as television, radio, newspaper, and blog (Kiousis, 2006; Newhagen & Nass, 1989; Sundar & Nass, 2001). In this discussion, Gaziano and McGrath (1986) conducted an early in-depth study of the concept of credibility, in which they identified credibility as a perspective of believability. They contributed to identifying what the dimensions of credibility are and how they are related and to presenting a measuring index in the context of the newspaper and television.

As the internet has emerged, research on credibility has been extended to online news

credibility. That is, it has begun to compare the credibility of traditional media such as television, newspaper, and cable with online news (Abdulla et al., 2002; Cassidy, 2007; Stroud & Lee, 2013). Recent comparison studies have conducted research on participants' views on the credibility of traditional media and new media. Furthermore, similar studies have been conducted regarding the credibility of online news on blogs and social media (Chung et al., 2012; Kang, 2010; Meyer et al., 2010).

Notably, the problem is that fake news, which is spreading as online news through social media, is being accepted as truth by newsreaders (Blamas, 2012). When fake news is consistent with the existing partisanship such as political interests or political attitude, it is more likely to affect people's perception more than news dealing with the truth (Blamas, 2012), and with that being the case, news users are being exposed to fake news more frequently (Knobloch-Westerwick & Meng, 2009). However, even though many previous studies have focused on the relationship between news and partisanship, they have overlooked the message credibility that news users have about fake news. That is to say, although fake news is easily seen by news users as truth, there are very few studies that address how credible it is for news users. In other words, the degree of message credibility for fake news should be treated as one important variable. Therefore, this study presents the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Participants who read attitude-consistent fake news will report higher

levels of message credibility than those who read fake news that is attitude-inconsistent.

Dual-Process Theories: Elaboration on Fake News and Credibility

According to dual-process theories like the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM: Petty & Cacioppo, 1984, 1986) and the Heuristic-Systematic Model (HSM: Chaiken, 1980, 1987; Chaiken, & Maheswaran, 1994; Chaiken, & Trope, 1999; Chen, & Chaiken, 1999; Maheswaran,

& Chaiken, 1991), information processing consists of two paths in the persuasion context: In ELM, they are the central route and the peripheral route. On the other hand, in HSM, they are systematic processing and heuristic processing.

Commonly, the central route and systematic processing focus on the message itself, which requires relatively high cognitive effort. On the contrary, the peripheral route and heuristic processing, in common, concentrate on external or secondary cues of the message, which requires relatively low cognitive effort. Of course, there is a remarkable difference between the two dual-process theories—the two routes in ELM work exclusively (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). In contrast, the two information processing paths in HSM operate simultaneously in certain circumstances (Chaiken, 1987).

Also, Chen and Chaiken (1999) focused on the motivation as the cause and condition for which the two information processing paths are activated. In the case of information that meets motivation, the degree to which information affects persuasion and judgment through systematic processing is significant. In consonance with this discussion, the crucial factors that determine the difference between the systematic process and the heuristic process are motivation and the ability (or capacity) to process information. For a long time, involvement has been considered as an essential element among motivational factors (e.g., McGuire, 1966). High involvement refers to a high degree of personal relevance to the message, whereas low involvement refers to a low degree of relevance (Petty et al., 1983). Specifically, as the message has relevance to them, their involvement with the message will increase, leading to the activation of systematic processing (Cacioppo & Petty, 1984; Petty & Cacciopo, 1986). The higher the involvement the recipient has with the message, the more influence they will be by the message itself, regardless of the message source. High involvement leads to systematic information processing. Conversely,

when the involvement is low, the information processing is influenced by the message source such as the attractiveness of sender, message length (Ryu & Kim, 2015), consensus opinion, and a statement from authority or expert (i.e., halo effect) (Reinhard & Sporer, 2010). In this case, low involvement results in heuristic processing (Chaken, 1980).

The concept of credibility plays a highly important role in risk perception and its communication, which threatens individuals and their environment (McComas & Trumbo, 2001), like fake news. This is because it deals with whether the content or source of information is trustworthy (Trumbo & McComas, 2003). Empirical studies that apply the concept of credibility to dual-process theories have divided the concept of credibility into two parts, such as message content credibility and source credibility.

First, with respect to message content credibility, as can be seen in the study of the perception of risk for nuclear accidents at Fukushima by Ryu and Kim (2015), people tend to focus more on messages through the systematic process than on sources. Reinhard and Sporer (2010) noted the difference between message content cues and source cues in credibility judgment. When people make a judgment about credibility, a cue called message content, which confirms that central route or systemic processing occurs in what they consider to be relatively high involvement. In other words, when people tried to elaborate on the context of credibility judgments, the review of the message content is more likely to greater influence the central route or systematic processing than the peripheral route or heuristic processing from source cues. Thus, it can be inferred from the preceding that when people perform information processing, the message credibility of fake news on social media should be a central route or systematic processing.

Second, regarding source credibility, Petty and Cacioppo (1981, 1984) assert that source

credibility influences how individuals process a message. Source credibility is powerful in conditions of low involvement and high distraction. In this circumstance, individuals are likely to adopt a peripheral route with less motivation and source credibility corresponds to heuristic processing (Trumbo & McComas, 2003). Previous research about the relations between HSM, source credibility, and risk perception (McComas & Trumbo, 2001; Trumbo & McComas, 2003) found that source credibility, which invokes heuristic processing, consistently influences risk perception and that higher source credibility reduces risk perception. As a follow-up study, they attempted to combine source credibility with HSM. They explained that in this study (Trumbo & McComas, 2003), the risk perception varies depending on which organization the source credibility accompanying heuristic processing originates from.

Above, we discussed selective exposure and confirmation bias that consistent with our existing attitude based on partisanship. Taking that into account, the current study attempts to examine what source credibility will do as a moderator under this condition. Tormala and Petty (2004a, 2004b) conducted an experimental study of resisting persuasive messages, explicitly exploring the moderation effect of source credibility. In their study, the results show that people will solidify their initial attitudes when they face a counter attitudinal persuasive message. In the meantime, the high and low credibility of the source acts as a moderator. In line with the points above, the present study will shed light on how the source creditability, which is related to heuristic processing, works as a moderator in situations where one resists or defends oneself against attitude-inconsistent news, or when one encounters attitude-inconsistent news. This study tries to clarify what the relationships among partisanship, political attitude consistency, message credibility, and source credibility are and what effect they will have. Therefore, the current study suggests the following research questions:

RQ1: To what extent does source credibility moderate the systematic processing of message credibility?

RQ2: Both partisan consistency and source credibility can be shown as heuristic cues.

To what extent do they affect the relations between political attitude consistency and message credibility?

Cognitive Appraisal to Threat as Risk Perception

Cognitive appraisal of a threat is a cognitive evaluation of an environment that can be emotionally or cognitively harmful to a person's well-being (Lazarus & Lazarus, 1991). In detail, Lazarus and Lazarus (1991) defined this as "primary appraisal," referring to appraisals of personally significant events. A primary appraisal consists of two components: (a) goal relevance ("Should I care?"), and (b) goal congruence ("Is this positive or negative?"). Accordingly, in the context of fake news, cognitive appraisal of threats should conceptualize an appraisal toward fake news negatively related to oneself and one's environment.

Since fake news has typical characteristic ways of being sensational and mind-boggling enough to mislead news users (Haber, 2017), it should be viewed not only as a social and political threat (Levi, 2017; Tambini, 2017) but also as a threat to individuals (Mele et al., 2017; Waszak et al., 2018). From a journalistic point of view regarding fake news, while fake news is more novel than news dealing with facts, false stories in fake news have caused emotional or cognitive threats such as fear, disgust, and surprise (Vosoughi et al., 2018). Especially important is that even if the news article's perspective is consistent with one's existing viewpoint, the topic can come as a treat because it is already an issue that deals with 'social conflicts.' Traditionally and conventionally, in order to grab lots of attention from newsreaders, news is more used to

dealing with the social conflict issues that are likely to engage everyone, and the 'topic itself' from social conflict issues can pose a cognitive threat to the newsreader.

Empirical studies contribute to the effects of the two information processing paths on risk judgment in HSM (Ryu & Kim, 2015; Trumbo, 1999; Trumbo & McComas, 2003). When the heuristic path that pays attention to external or secondary cues of a message is processed, the perception of risk is judged to be smaller than that of systematic processing that requires higher cognitive effort toward a message itself. In other words, when source credibility is high, the processing of information is performed through heuristic processing, which makes risk perception lower (Ryu & Kim 2015; Trumbo & McComas, 2003). In contrast, systematic processing means a higher concentration on the given message, so it can be deduced that the risk information is more closely scrutinized and processed, leading to higher risk perception. To put it differently, high message credibility causes systemic processing, which results in higher risk perception (Reinhard & Sporer, 2010; Ryu & Kim, 2015). Therefore, this study will test whether and how the message credibility of fake news and cognitive appraisal to threat are positively related in intent to share fake news on social media.

Intent to Share Fake News on Social Media

The majority (75%) of online news consumers have news website content shared with them via email or social media (Purcell et al., 2010). The most popular fake news stories were more widely shared on Facebook than even the most widespread mainstream news stories during the 2016 presidential election (Silverman 2016). However, the significant problem is that many of those who see fake news stories report that they believe fake news (Silverman & Singer-Vine, 2016). That is, people are getting used to believing fake news as true and have no qualms about

sharing it. This is because, even though two-thirds of internet users have access to and use social media (Purcell et al., 2010), the characteristics of the internet still tend to provide greater opportunities for them to obtain information that is associated with their already existing beliefs while ignoring information that goes against these beliefs (Bimber & Davis, 2003). That is to say, users seek to increase their exposure to familiar knowledge rather than exposure to diverse information or opinions (Knobloch-Westerwick & Kleinman, 2012; Knobloch-Westerwick & Johnson, 2014).

Fundamentally, previous studies of behavioral psychology suggest that people are naturally inclined to share information (Warneken & Tomasello, 2009). According to the Social Exchange Theory, sharing information on social media presents an inherent benefit that convinces individuals that the information they provide is useful (Osatuyi, 2013). Besides, social media provides an environment that strengthens and boosts sharing (Hermida et al., 2012). Specifically, the social media environment facilitates users to share by "like," "retweet," "share," "comment," and "post" with its functionality.

In summarizing the above discussions, the message credibility is related to central route or systematic processing and shows high involvement and low distraction despite the message source. This means that closer scrutiny occurs when individuals process information about a message. Therefore, if the message credibility is high, it can be inferred that as mentioned in the Social Exchange Theory, news stories will be shared more with others for a beneficial purpose.

Hypothesis 2 a: High message credibility will increase the intent to share fake news.

Hypothesis 2 b: High message credibility will increase cognitive appraisal of threat.

Hypothesis 3: High cognitive appraisal of threat, as a mediation effect, will increase intent to share fake news.

Intent to Share Fake News with Corrective Action

The corrective action hypothesis (Barnidge & Rojas, 2014; Rojas, 2010; Rojas et al., 2016) postulates that when people perceive that media is biased and influential, it can motivate people to express their own opinions and engage in interpersonal, political discussion. Therefore, corrective action happens as "counteraction," occurring when people seek to correct the wrong media content that they perceive in the public sphere (Rojas, 2010; Rojas et al., 2016). Such being that case, it occurs when the position is different from one's position, leading to political behavior (Barnidge & Rojas, 2014; Rojas, 2010). This has been done through traditional media, but recently, with the development of new communication technology, corrective action is actively happening in the online public sphere or public domain through emerging media such as social media (Rojas, 2010).

Corrective action is closely related to the causes of an existing nonconformity. People are likely to get rid of the existing nonconformity from a situation, issue, or message (Motschman, & Moore, 1999; Rojas, 2010) when they identify and recognize these existing problems and finally "correct" them (Hardoroudi, Dareshuri, Sarkan, & Nourizadeh, 2011). In this process, people are trying to counterbalance the opposite media effect, positively reacting to their own viewpoints (Rojas, 2010). Hence, in accordance with the discussion mentioned above, it can be inferred that corrective action will be increased. This is because the nonconformity from news causing threats will be increased if the news is inconsistent with pre-existing partisanship.

Hypothesis 4: Low message credibility will increase intent to share fake news with corrective action.

Fig. 1.

The proposed research model
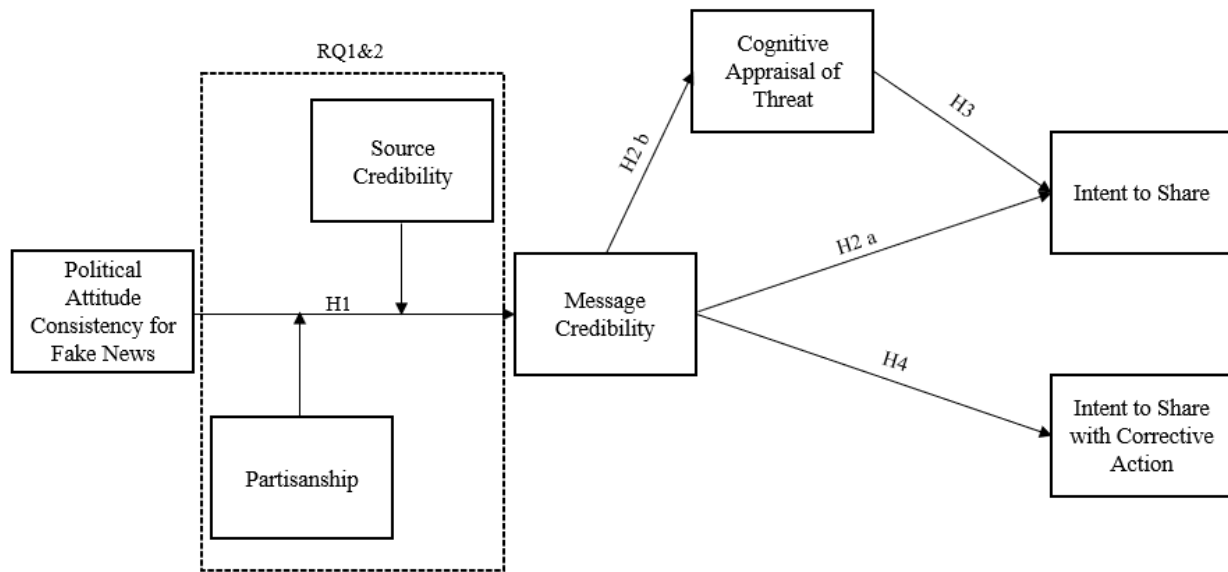
Chapter3: Method

This chapter outlines the specific methods and procedures used to examine the proposed research questions. In other words, the purpose of this chapter is to explore the effect of fake news on information processing, with measurable variables such as message credibility, source credibility, cognitive appraisal to threat, intent to share fake news on social media, and corrective action.

Experimental Design

A 2 (news topic: Immigration vs. Gun control) X 2 (news topic stance: Positive vs. Negative) X 2 (source: major (i.e., Associated Press) vs. minor (i.e., blog news)) between-subject

online experiment was conducted. The researcher collected samples through Amazon Mechanical Turk (Mturk from here on) which is an online survey site for data collection. All participants recruited through Mturk are randomly assigned to one of eight conditions and asked to answer whether the news is attitude consistent or attitude inconsistent right after news reading; participants were asked to read two articles for each condition. For example, a set of two articles that a participant read consisted of one positive article about immigrants, and one negative article about gun control. The other set of two articles was composed of that one was a negative article about immigrants and the other was a positive article about gun control. And then, one story was sourced to AP and one to a blog. In these two conditions, the order of sources and news stories were combined to form a total of eight conditions. Participants read the paired articles on the different topics and sources mentioned above and then answered the following survey questions.

Sample

A total of around 507 participants from an online experimental survey were recruited for this study. In order to achieve a reliable data set, 507 participants were recruited (above the ages of 18), who are either American or permanent residents of the United States. The sampling design was single-stage random sampling. Mturk, which provides an online survey, employs nonprobability sampling of voluntary participants as a convenience sample.

Data Collection

The present research utilizes an online experimental survey design. The reason that an online experiment design is employed is due to the fact that it is possible to collect a large sample in a short space of time with a limited budget. Additionally, the data from an online survey will be collected at one point in time. The researcher designed the survey in Qualtrics,

ensuring that the data is collected within the policies of the platform and adhering to data security and anonymity.

There are several strengths to using an online survey for this study. As Creswell and Creswell (2017) note, an online survey can help to ensure the anonymity of participants. From the perspective of data availability, it is both easy and quick to collect data using the online method. Specifically, both the researcher and the participants are able to access the questionnaire simply by accessing a certain page and it is easy to design the questionnaire. Nevertheless, there are drawbacks that must be considered. One of these is the difficulty in conducting stratified sampling in order to guarantee demographic representation, and the possibility of participants failing to finish the questionnaire.

Stimuli Development

According to Tandoc Jr et al. (2018), fake news can be classified as the level of facticity and intention to deceive: Satire, Parody, Propaganda, and Fabrication news. Among them, fabricated news is a lower level of facticity and a higher level of intention to deceive like "Pope Francis Endorsed Donald Trump" (Allcott and Gentzkow, 2017). Especially, fabricated news prevails on social media. This is because even though it has no factual basis, it is difficult to be distinguished since it looks like real news in the formatting and there is no clear evidence whether the news is false or not. Guided by this discussion, stimuli were created.

The issues of gun control and immigration were selected for the fake news article. This is because they are specific social issues that have the biggest difference of opinion depending on partisanship. According to a Gallup analysis (Newport & Dungan, 2017), over the last decade, the gap between Republicans' and Democrats' attitudes toward particular social issues has been

widened. Overall, the Gallup analysis shows that the partisan gap has been consistent through a variety of issues such as the death penalty, global warming, and abortion over the last 15 to 20 years. However, the partisan gap on issues of immigration and gun control has gradually expanded to 40% and 43%, respectively, over the last decade from 2003 to 2016. In addition, this increasingly partisan gap adheres to the traditional perspective of Republicans' and Democrats'. In other words, their attitude toward particular social issues seems to be highly correlated, which means that individuals with negative attitudes about immigrants tend to also have negative attitudes about gun control.

Therefore, the researcher produced four articles that have opposite viewpoints of immigration and gun control topics. Since fake news had to accomplish a lower level of facticity and the high level of intention to deceive, the contents of all the articles were intentionally fabricated in the context of 'the 5W1H approach (i.e., Who, When, Where, What, Why, and How)' based on a bunch of true news stories. To be more specific, the content fabricated in the news is a sophisticated mix of facts and truths based on the 5W1H approach: For example, it was true that President Trump pushed ahead with the construction of the border wall between Mexico. However, it is false that he and Republicans (who) have endeavored to make a zero-tolerance policy (what) for immigrants (how) as migration deterrence (why) at Washington/The Whitehouse (where) recently (when). In order to achieve journalistic elements such as formatting, wording&sentence, structures, the researcher hired a professional journalist to review four different articles. Finally, they were constructed to look like true news articles with formatting and photography.

News Message Design

On the issue of immigration and gun control, a total of 4 news stories was made in favor and opposition, respectively: pros and cons for immigration and gun control. The contents and photos of the text are different according to each subject. All of the articles were identically controlled with respect to formatting: The main title was Times New Roman, size 16, bold; the font of the mid title was Times New Roman, size 14, bold; and the font of the main text was Arial 12, on average, two pages. Also, every article has one picture.

Source Credibility Design

As mentioned above, a total of 8 news articles were manipulated for source credibility. The same stories were used in the high and low credibility conditions and the only thing that changed was the story source. Source credibility was manipulated in two ways: Associated Press (AP) news for high credibility and blog news for low credibility. In other words, the four different articles created above were presented as AP news or blog news, respectively. A total of eight news articles were finally created. The priming for both sources (i.e., AP and blog news) were applied twice at the beginning of the title and once at the end of the article.

The reason why high/low news source was manipulated into an AP article and blog is that the AP is expected to be perceived as more credible than a blog. The credibility of blog news has been gradually increasing recently (Gunter et al., 2009). However, it is still viewed as less trustworthy than mainstream news sources (e.g., CNN, AP, New York Times), which still have traditional news brands (Cassidy, 2007). Source credibility may elicit the dual-process mentioned above.

Furthermore, AP is relatively rated as unbiased. According to the AllSides Media Bias Chart (AllSides, 2019), AP, along with the BBC, REUTERS, and Bloomberg, has been 'in the center' of the political spectrum. AllSides, the internet media outlet providing balanced news, have rated/distributed the result of media bias around 600 media outlets and their writers in the context of the political spectrum from left to right. To evaluate media bias, only online versions of news coverage (i.e., not TV, print, or radio content) were used with multi-partisan and scientific analysis (AllSides, 2019). For example, CNN is located on the left or lean left. On the other hand, Fox News is situated on the right or lean right. Thus, it is considered appropriate for AP to be used as a source with high levels of credibility because it is comparatively free from political biases, prejudice, and expectations in line with the spreading of online news on social media.

Procedure

After completing the consent process, participants were then randomly assigned to a set of the attitude-consistent or attitude-inconsistent conditions. They were given the task of reading two different topics of fake news articles from different media sources. Also, these two articles have different stances like positive or negative perspective for social issues. After reading fake news, they were asked to answer whether news articles are attitude consistent or attitude inconsistent. The average duration of the experiment was approximately 15 minutes. Participants were compensated $1.5 for their time and efforts. All stages of this study were approved by the university's institutional review board. To help participants better understand the context of the situation, they were given the following instruction: Firstly, you will read two news articles. After reading the news article, you will be asked to complete an online questionnaire based on any thoughts or feelings they have about the article they read. This allows the measurement of

cognitive information processing the participants invested in the current research model. The average duration of the experiments is approximately 15 minutes. The participants were compensated $1.5 each for their time and efforts. In terms of data quality, recent studies (e.g., Mason & Suri, 2012) suggest that samples recruited through online sites (to an extent) reliably represent the U.S. population. According to Chandler and Shapiro (2016), the data collected from online sites should be based on the following requirements, so as to ensure the quality of the data: (a) a record of the completion of over 500 tasks, (b) an approval rate greater than or equal to 95%, and (c) compensation based on a realistic rate ($.10 per minute). In this study, the researcher adheres to the suggestions so as to ensure the quality of the data.

Survey Instrument

Independent variable

    Political Attitude Consistency. The idea for the operational definition of political attitude consistency toward news articles was adapted from a study of Knobloch-Westerwick and Kleinman (2012): After reading two different topics of news from different sources, participants were asked to answer a binary question whether the news article that they read is (a) attitude-discrepant or (b) attitude-consistent.

Dependent variable

    Message Credibility. In the current study, credibility is operationalized with two dimensions: one is message credibility for the dependent variable and the other is source credibility for the moderating variable. The measures are adapted from previous studies with ten adjective semantic scales (Arpan, 2009; Bucy, 2003; Cassidy, 2007; Johnson & Kaye, 1998, 2000; Kiousis, 2006) for each message content credibility and source credibility: "credible,"

"believable," "fair," "accurate," "in-depth," "newsworthy," "informative," "objective,"

"comprehensive," "trustworthy" (1=*Not at all* to 7=*Extremely*). An averaged score (Cronbach's

alpha = .96) was used to create a Media Credibility variable.

Cognitive Appraisal to Threat. Through investigation of previous research, it has been

ascertained that cognitive appraisal is a process through which a person evaluates whether a

particular encounter is relevant to his or her well-being and their environment (Folkman et al.,

1986). The purpose of this study is to examine how information processing happens with

attitude-discrepant or attitude-consistent fake news between news users. In the case of attitude-

discrepant fake news, this would be an appraisal threat that threatens their well-being and

environments. Therefore, for the cognitive appraisal towards fake news, the Stress Appraisal

Measure (SAM) is applied with a seven-point Likert-type scales, (1=*strongly disagree* to

7=*strongly agree*) on 28 items – based on a study by Peacock and Wong (1990) (e.g., "Does this

situation create tension in me?"). An averaged score (Cronbach's alpha = .95) was used across

news stories for the present analyses.

Intent to Share Fake News on Social Media. Participants were asked to indicate how

likely they are to share news on social media platforms in the future by using a seven-point

Likert scale (1=*Very Unlikely to* to 7=*Very Likely to*): (a) "I would like to share this news on my

social media." (b) "I would leave any comment to share this news with others on my social

media." (c) "I would post a link of this news to share this news with others on my social media."

(d) "I would leave any comment on the web site of this news to share this news with others on

social media." An averaged score (Cronbach's alpha = .97) was used across stories for the

present analyses.

Intent to Share with Corrective Action was adapted from a study of Velasquez and LaRose (2015). The participant will answer how likely they are to share this news on social media with corrective action. The five items were adopted with a seven-point Likert-type scale (1=*Very Unlikely to* to 7=*Very Likely to*): (a) "I would leave a negative comment under this kind of news on social media to correct their arguments." (b) "I would post a link of another news article to counter this kind of news on my social media." (c) "I would post a link of another news article with a negative comment to counter this kind of news on my social media." (d) "I would post a website entry on my social media that introduce counter argument toward this kind of news." (e) "I would post a social media site of an online-activist group that combats this kind of news." An averaged score (Cronbach's alpha = .97) was used across news stories for the present analyses.

Moderating Variable consists of partisanship and source credibility.

Partisanship. The partisanship questionnaire was revised from the research of Knobloch-Westerwick and Kleinman (2012, p.180): a seven-point semantic scales ranged (a) from 1 (*liberal*), 4 (*Independent*) to 7 (*Conservative*); (b) from 1 (*Democrat or lean left*), 4 (*Independent*) to 7 (*Republican or lean right*); (c) from 1 (*Strongly Trump disapproval*) to 7 (*Strongly Trump approval*). An averaged score (Cronbach's alpha = .91) was used across news stories for the present analyses.

Source Credibility was measured by ten adjective semantic scales with a Likert scale (1 = *Not at all* to 7 = *Extremely*) (Arpan, 2009; Cassidy, 2007; Johnson & Kaye, 1998, 2000; Kiousis, 2006): "credible," "believable," "fair," "accurate," "in-depth," "newsworthy," "informative," "objective," "comprehensive," "trustworthy" An averaged score (Cronbach's alpha = .97) was used across news stories for the present analyses.

Control Variables. To control potential self-bias of participants in rating the other variables, covariate variables include personal importance toward issue, existing attitudes toward the issues, political interests, news use frequency on social media, and need for cognition.

 Personal Importance of the Issue. Attitude regarding the importance of an issue that news covers (Knobloch-Westerwick & Meng, 2009, p.436) was measured with a question of how important the issue is to you personally by using a seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = *Not at all important* to 7 = *Extremely important*).

 Existing Attitude towards the Issues. In order to measure the existing attitude toward immigrants and gun control issues, the participants were asked to answer two questions. "I believe the amount of immigration into the U.S. should be decreased" and "I believe gun control in the U.S. should be stricter" from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

 Political Interest. Fake news stories are not only political also be extremely partisan in nature (Pennycook et al., 2017). Political interests were operationalized as how closely individuals followed what's going on in government and public affairs (Knobloch-Westerwick & Kleinman, 2012, p.179). This item was proposed with a seven-point Likert-type scale used to measure responses. The scale ranged from 1 (*Not at all closely*) to 7 (*Very closely*).

 News Use Frequency of Social Media. Participants reported their news use frequency (Knobloch-Westerwick & Kleinman, 2012, p. 180) with a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from "every day," "Several times a week," "Once a week," "Several times a month," "Once a month," to "Less often as response options."

 Need for Cognition. People who have a high need for cognition (NFC from here on) tend to process information in a more deliberative way (Pacini & Epstein, 1999). To control NFC, the

following six items were employed as an NFC index (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982; Cacioppo et al., 1984): (a) "I prefer complex problems to simple problems," (b) "I enjoy the responsibility of handling a situation that requires a lot of thinking," (c) "I would rather do something that requires little thought than something that is sure to challenge my thinking abilities," (d) "I try to anticipate and avoid situations where there is a chance I will have to think in-depth about things," (e) "I would prefer a task that is intellectual, difficult and important to one that is somewhat important but does not require much thought," (f) "I feel relief rather than satisfaction after completing a task that required a lot of mental effort" Participants will indicate how well each of the statements describes themselves on a seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = *doesn't describe me at all* to 7 = *describes me very well*). An averaged score (Cronbach's alpha = .77) was used for the present analyses.

Manipulation check

The researcher tested whether news articles properly assigned participants to the news topic immigration and gun control conditions. The effect of topic stance (positive vs. negative) and pre-attitude on the political attitude consistency was tested. For this test, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted with 10,000 numbers of bootstrapping. First, in the case of immigration, topic stance ($F = 5.87$, $p = .016$) and pre-attitude ($F = 2.43$, $p = .025$) for political attitude consistency were significantly different including their interaction ($F = 6.57$, $p < .001$). However, for the gun control case, while topic stance ($F = .166$, $p = .684$) was not significant, the pre-attitude ($F = 2.16$, $p = .045$) and their interaction ($F = 2.53$, $p = .02$) were significant.

Data Analysis Strategies

Descriptive statistics, including Pearson correlation coefficient for all study variables, were computed using SPSS, Version 22 and PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2016). In this study, the analysis to prove the hypotheses consisted of three parts: (a) analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) for hypothesis 1. (b) Effect of two moderators (i.e., partisanship and source credibility) based on Model 2 of SPSS PROCESS macro. (c) Effect of mediation (cognitive appraisal to threat) based on Model 4 of SPSS PROCESS macro.

Given the two political issues that are the most conflicting in the U.S., this study has various variables that need to be controlled: gender, age, race, education level, income level, news use frequency on social media, personal importance attitude toward issue, existing attitude toward the issues, political interest, news use frequency on social media, and need for cognition.

When it comes to rules of thumb for the test of normality, the acceptable ranges for the values of skewness and kurtosis are between +/-2 and +/-2, respectively (Hair et al., 2010; Bryne, 2010). Firstly, as the Skewness's values for the major variables were considered acceptable ($-.736 \leq S \leq .352$), the distribution was moderately skewed or approximately symmetric. Next, the values of kurtosis for major variables can be acceptable as well ($-1.569 \leq K \leq .230$). Nonetheless, since the major variables did not follow normality of distribution (i.e., values of less than .05 for both test results Kolmogorov-Smirnova and Shapiro-Wilk), bias-corrected bootstrapped resampling, was performed because the sample size was large enough. The number of bootstrap samples was 10000. The level of the confidence interval for the observed variables was 95%. Also, to control multi-collinearity that can happen in the moderation effect, the mean center for the construction of products was conducted (only for continuous variables).

Chapter 4: Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 shows the percentages of basic demographic information for each condition. On average, participants were 51.8% male, their mean age was 35.82 years ($SD = 11.54$), and 76% Caucasian. On Average, they had a bachelor's degree and earned $50,000 on a yearly basis. Partisanship was measured in three ways: (a) Political identification consisted of 36.7% Democrat or lean left, 15.2% independents, and 48.1% Republican or lean right; (b) Political ideology was composed of 36.3% liberal, 15.8% independents, and 48% conservative; (c) Trump Approval rating was comprised of 42.2% disapproval, 11.4% independents, and 46.2% approval. In the case of immigration news, 333 out of 507 participants answered that they read attitude consistent news articles. In terms of gun control news, 338 out of 507 participants said that they read attitude consistent news articles. Not only were all the mean values of source credibility for AP higher than that of blogs across the conditions, but also their source credibility for source type (i.e., AP and blog) showed significant difference. Lastly, there were no significant differences in demographic characteristics across experimental conditions for both source and news topics.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics for Condition.

	Total	Source		Topic	
	Averaged (%)	AP (%)	Blog (%)	Immigration (%)	Gun control (%)
Gender					
Male	51.8	51.9	51.8	51.9	51.8
Female	47	46.9	47	46.9	47
Other	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8
Prefer not to respond	0.4	0.4	.04	0.4	.04

Age					
18-29	35.8	30.4	30.4	30.4	30.4
30-39	34.8	34.2	34.2	34.2	34.2
40-49	15.7	16.2	16.2	16.2	16.2
50-59	8.6	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4
60-69	3.2	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4
70-79	1.9	1	1	1	1
Race					
Caucasian	76	76.1	75.9	75.9	76.1
African American	11.1	10.8	11.4	11.4	10.8
Hispanic	5.2	5.3	5.1	5.1	5.3
Asian	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3
American Indian / Alaska Native	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8
Other: Middle eastern	0.5	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.6
Education					
Less than a high school degree	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
High school	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7
Some college but no degree	15.4	15.4	15.4	15.4	15.4
Associate degree in college (2-year)	9.7	9.7	9.7	9.7	9.7
Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)	42.6	42.6	42.6	42.6	42.6
Master's degree	20.9	20.9	20.9	20.9	20.9
Doctoral degree	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8
Professional degree (JD, MD)	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6
Other (Please Specify)	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Income					
Less than $10,000	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8
$10,000 to $19,999	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9
$20,000 to $29,999	11.8	11.8	11.8	11.8	11.8
$30,000 to $39,999	12	12	12	12	12
$40,000 to $49,999	12.4	12.4	12.4	12.4	12.4
$50,000 to $59,999	16.4	16.4	16.4	16.4	16.4
$60,000 to $69,999	6.9	6.9	6.9	6.9	6.9
$70,000 to $79,999	8.9	8.9	8.9	8.9	8.9
$80,000 to $89,999	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7
$90,000 to $99,999	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7
$100,000 to $149,999	8.1	8.1	8.1	8.1	8.1
$150,000 or more	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3

Note: N= 507.

In what follows, this study attempted to analyze data in three ways. Data of two news topics were analyzed at the same time no matter what topic it is, and then the next cases are for each topic: (a) analysis for both immigration news and gun control news simultaneously, (b) analysis for immigration news only, and (c) analysis for gun control news only.

Analysis of both news articles.

Below, Table 2 indicates means, standard deviations, and correlation coefficients for basic demographic information and study variables. After this, the current research will test hypotheses and research problems in earnest.

Table 2

Means, standard deviations, and correlation coefficients for study variables of both news stories

Variable	M (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
							r						
1. Gender (Male)	51.8%	-											
2. Age	35.82 (11.54)	.06	-										
3. Race (Caucasian)	76%	-.01	-.17***	-									
4. Education	Bachelor's degree	-.10**	-.11**	.39	-								
5. Income	$50,000	-.06	-.03	.05	.26***	-							
6. Attitude Consistency	-	-.02	-.04	.07*	.00	-.01	-						
7. Partisanship	4.03 (2.01)	-.13***	.09**	.05	.15***	.03	.07*	-					
8. Message Credibility	4.76 (1.39)	-.04	-.10**	.06*	.09**	.00	.41***	.18***	-				
9. Source Credibility	4.75 (1.45)	-.05	-.09**	.08*	.10**	-.02	.33***	.11***	.80***	-			
10. Threat Appraisal	4.15 (1.16)	-.06	-.09**	.14***	.30***	.04	.07*	.35***	.34***	.34***	-		
11. Intent to Share	3.37 (2.09)	-.13***	-13***	.10**	.26***	-.02	16***	.37***	.52***	.48***	.67***	-	
12. Share with Corrective Action	3.07 (2.05)	-.14***	-.15***	.13***	.31***	-.04	-.01	.44***	.22***	.25***	.68***	.71***	-

Note. N=1014. *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001. Table includes both results from attitude-consistent and attitude-inconsistent cases toward immigration and gun control topics.

First, in order to test Hypothesis 1, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted. Basically, the mean value of message credibility for those who read an attitude-consistent article (*M*=5.17, *SD* = 1.18) was higher than the mean value of message credibility for those who read an attitude-inconsistent article (*M*=3.97, *SD*=1.44). In addition, the result of the ANCOVA showed that they were significantly different ($F(1,1001)$ =180.14, $p < .001$). Its effect size (partial eta squared) was .153. Therefore, hypothesis 1 was supported.

Secondly, in order to examine the moderation effect of research question 1 and 2, Model 2 (i.e., the effect of two moderators) of SPSS PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2016) was conducted. The outcome variable for analysis was message credibility. The predictor variable was political attitude consistency for fake news. The two moderators evaluated were partisanship and source credibility. When there is interaction, the moderation effect is significant. (a) The interaction between political attitude consistency for fake news and partisanship was statistically significant (*b*= -.0881, 95% C.I. (-.14, -.04), $p = .0011$). (b) Interaction between political attitude consistency for fake news and source credibility was found to be significant (*b*= .1121, 95% C.I. (.04, .18), $p = .0023$). Also, the mean value of source credibility for AP (*M*=5.05, *SD* = 1.31) was higher than that of blog (*M*=4.45, *SD*=1.52). Source credibility for source type (i.e., AP and blog) showed significant difference (*F*=50.56, $p < .001$). (c) Both Interactions were significant at the same time *(F(2, 996) = 9.16. p < .001. R^2 change = 0.6%)*. Hence, as moderators, both partisanship and source credibility significantly affected message credibility. The conditional effect of political attitude consistency for fake news on message credibility showed corresponding results. At low moderations (partisanship= -2.6907, source credibility= -1.3543), both were significant (conditional effect = .5773, 95% C.I. (.39, .77), $p < .001$). At middle moderations, (partisanship= .9093, source credibility= .1457), they were significant (conditional

effect = .4811, 95% C.I. (.37, .59), $p < .001$). At high moderations (partisanship= 2.2293, source credibility= 1.4457), all was significant (conditional effect = .4575, 95% C.I. (.27, .65), $p < .001$). These results identify that partisanship as a negative moderator and source credibility as a positive moderator of the relationship between political attitude consistency for fake news and message credibility.

Third, to test the mediation effect of hypothesis 2a, 2b, and hypothesis 3, Model 4 (i.e., the effect of mediator) of SPSS PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2016) was conducted. The outcome variable was the intent to share fake news. The predictor variable for the analysis was message credulity. The mediator variable was the cognitive appraisal to threat: the indirect effect of message credibility on the intent to share fake news was statistically significant (Effect = .0781, 95% C.I. (.04, .12)). Specifically, (a) Path between message credibility and cognitive appraisal to threat was significant (b=.1022, $F(11, 1000) = 79.84$. $p < .001$. 95% C.I. = (.10, 1.03). R^2= 51.75%). (b) Path between cognitive appraisal to threat and intent to share was significant (b=.7648, $t(998)$= 14.20 $p < .001$. 95% C.I. = (.62, .82)). (c) Path between message credibility and intent to share was significant (b=.4434, t (998)= -7.48 $p < .001$. 95% C.I. = (-3.60, -2.10)). Total model of these paths above was significant ($F(13, 998) = 113.24$. $p < .001$. R^2= 59.62%). Finally, the total effect between message credibility on the intent to share fake news was significant ($F(12, 999) = 88.27$. $p < .001$. 95% C.I. = (.44, .59). R^2= 52.15%). Its effect size was .52. The direct effect of message credibility on the intent to share fake news was significant ($p < .001$. 95% C.I.= (.38, .51)). The effect size was .44. The indirect effect of between message credibility on the intent to share fake news was significant (95% C.I. = (.04, .11)). Its effect size was .06. Consequently, the hypothesis 2a, 2b, and 3 were supported.

For H4 to be supported, the relationship between message credibility and intent to share with corrective action must be negatively correlated/associated with each other. Regretfully, since message credibility and intent to share with corrective action were positively correlated, hypothesis 4 was not supported. In other words, once message credibility was low, intent to share fake news with corrective action was also low.

Finally, the above discussion of the results can be summarized in the proposed research design as follows.

Figure 2

The result of the proposed research design for both news analysis
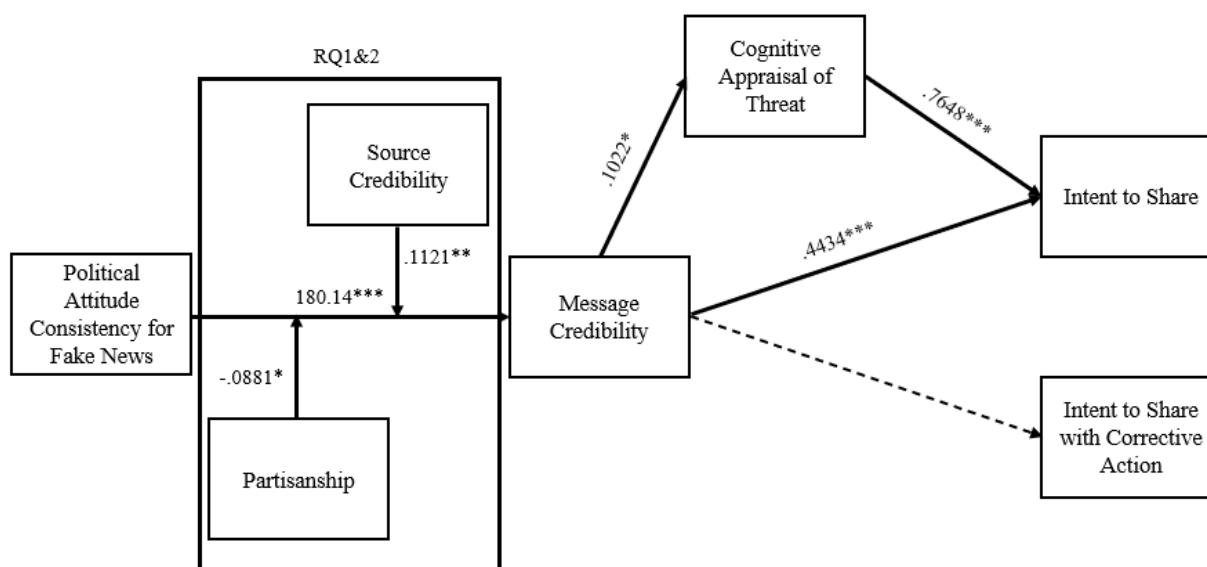
Note: Unstandardized estimates are shown. Bold lines indicate significant results. Control variable: gender, age, race, income, education, personal importance toward issue, existing attitude toward the issues, political interest, news use frequency on social media. need for cognition. *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Analysis of immigration news articles

Below, Table 3 illustrates means, standard deviations, and correlation coefficients for basic demographic information and study variables. After this, this study will examine hypotheses and research problems in earnest.

Table 3

Means, standard deviations, and correlation coefficients for study variables of immigration news articles

Variable	M (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
													r
1. Gender (Male)	51.8%	-											
2. Age	35.82 (11.54)	-.00	-										
3. Race (Caucasian)	76%	-.06	-.16***	-									
4. Education	Bachelor's degree	-.07	-.11*	.02	-								
5. Income	$50,000	-.06	-.01	.04	.26**	-							
6. Attitude Consistency	-	-.08	.03	.04	-04	-.02	-						
7. Partisanship	4.03 (2.01)	-.13**	.09*	.05	.15**	.03	.17***	-					
8. Message Credibility	4.76 (1.39)	-.11*	-.04	.07	.09**	-01	.45***	.26***	-				
9. Source Credibility	4.75 (1.45)	-.122**	.02	.13**	.09*	-.02	.35***	.20***	.82***	-			
10. Threat Appraisal	4.15 (1.16)	-.05	-09*	.12*	.30***	.03	.08	.38***	.32***	.33***	-		
11. Intent to Share	3.37 (2.09)	-.16***	-.09	.08	.27**	-.02	18***	.41***	.51***	.48***	.65***	-	
12. Share with Corrective Action	3.10 (2.05)	-.12**	-.16***	.12**	.33***	-.01	-.02	.40***	.20***	.23***	.68***	.71***	-

Note. N=507. *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001. Table includes both results from attitude-consistent and attitude-inconsistent cases toward immigration and gun control topics.

First, in order to test Hypothesis 1, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted. The mean value of message credibility for those who read an attitude-consistent article (M=5.20, SD = 1.17) was higher than the mean value of message credibility for those who read an attitude-inconsistent article (M=3.82, SD=1.53). Besides, the result of the ANCOVA indicated that they were significantly different ($F(1, 494) = 109.49$, $p < .001$). Its effect size (partial eta squared) was .181. Therefore, hypothesis 1 was supported.

Secondly, in order to examine the moderation effect of research question 1 and 2, Model 2 (i.e., the effect of two moderators) of SPSS PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2016) was conducted. The outcome variable for analysis was message credibility. The predictor variable was political attitude consistency for fake news. The two moderators evaluated were partisanship and source credibility. When there is interaction, the moderation effect is significant. (a) The interaction between political attitude consistency for fake news and partisanship was statistically significant (b= -.1005, 95% C.I. (-.18, -.03), p = .0085). (b) Interaction between political attitude consistency for fake news and source credibility was found to be significant (b= .1801, 95% C.I. (.08, .28), $p < .001$). Also, the mean value of source credibility for AP (M=5.08, SD = 1.33) was higher than that of blog (M=4.35, SD=1.61). Source credibility for source type (i.e., AP and blog) showed significant difference (F=22.65, p $< .001$). (c) Both interactions were significant at the same time ($F(2, 491) = 8.03$. p $< .001$. R^2 change = 0.9%). The conditional effect of political attitude consistency for fake news on message credibility showed corresponding results. At low moderations (partisanship= -2.6917, source credibility= -1.6205), both were significant (conditional effect = .5329, 95% C.I. (.27, .80), $p < .001$). At middle moderations, (partisanship= .3083, source credibility= .1795), they were significant (conditional effect = .5556, 95% C.I. (.39, .72), $p < .001$). At high moderations (partisanship= 2.2150, source

credibility= 1.4795), all was significant (conditional effect = .5981, 95% C.I. (.33, .87), p < .001). These results identify that partisanship as a negative moderator and source credibility as positive moderator of the relationship between political attitude consistency for fake news and message credibility.

Third, to test the mediation effect of hypothesis 2a, 2b, and hypothesis 3, Model 4 (i.e., the effect of mediator) of SPSS PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2016) was conducted. The outcome variable was the intent to share fake news. The predictor variable for the analysis was message credulity. The mediator variable was the cognitive appraisal to threat: the indirect effect of message credibility on the intent to share fake news was statistically significant (Effect = .0224, 95% C.I. (.00, .10)). To be more specific, (a) path between message credibility and cognitive appraisal to threat was significant (b=.0707, $F(11, 494) = 40.13$. $p = .0131$. 95% CI = (.04, .15). R^2= 47.20%). (b) Path between cognitive appraisal to threat and intent to share was significant (b=.6588, $t(493)$= 9.23 $p < .001$. 95% CI = (.56, .83)). (c) Path between message credibility and intent to share was significant (b=.3980, $t(493)$= 9.18 $p < .001$. 95% CI = (.32, .50)). Total model of these paths above was significant ($F(12, 493) = 57.82$. $p < .001$. R^2= 58.46%). Finally, the total effect between message credibility on the intent to share fake news was significant ($F(11, 494) = 88.27$. $p < .001$. 95% CI = (.38, .57). R^2= 44.46%). Its effect size was .48. The direct effect of message credibility on the intent to share was fake news significant ($p < .001$. 95% CI = (.38, .51)). The effect size was .40. The indirect effect of between message credibility on the intent to share fake news was significant (95% CI = (.04, .11)). The effect size was .05. As a consequence, the hypothesis 2a, 2b, and 3 were supported.

For H4 to be supported, the relationship between message credibility and intent to share with corrective action must be negatively correlated/associated with each other. Unfortunately,

since message credibility and intent to share with corrective action were positively correlated, hypothesis 4 was not supported. In other words, once message credibility was low, intent to share fake news with corrective action was also low.

In the end, the above discussion of the results can be summarized in the proposed research design as follows.

Figure 3

The result of the proposed research design for immigration news analysis
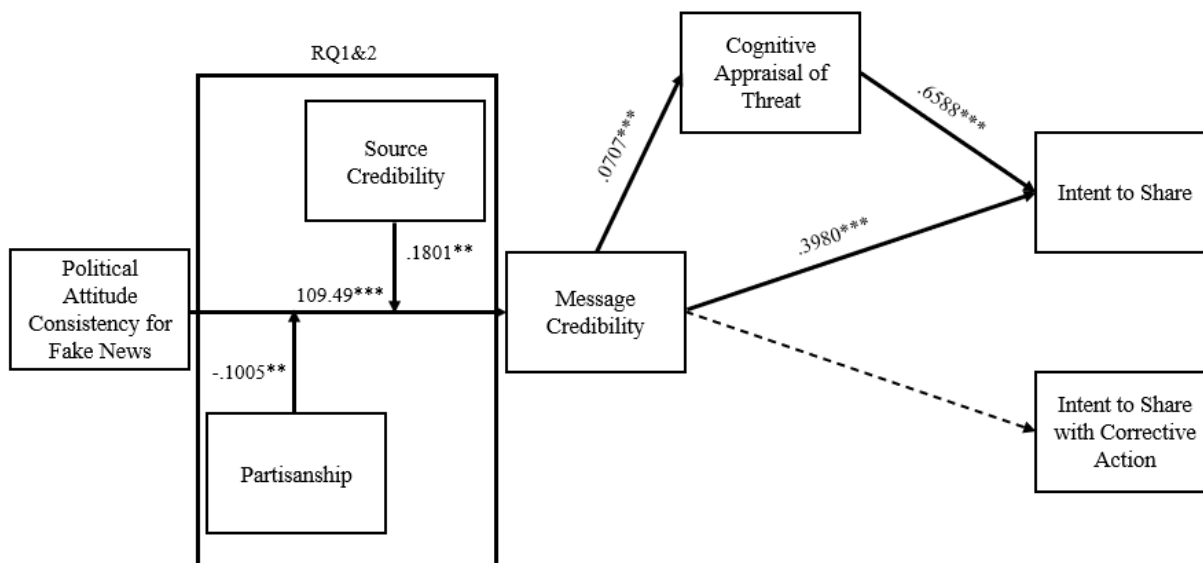
Note: Unstandardized estimates are shown. Bold lines indicate significant results. Control variable: gender, age, race, income, education, personal importance toward issue, existing attitude toward the issues, political interest, news use frequency on social media. need for cognition. *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Analysis of gun control news articles

Below, Table 4 depicts means, standard deviations, and correlation coefficients for basic demographic information and study variables. After this, the present study will investigate hypotheses and research problems in earnest.

Table 4

Means, Standard Deviations, and correlation coefficients for study variables of gun control news articles.

		r											
Variable	*M (SD)*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Gender (Male)	51.8%	-											
2. Age	35.82 (11.55)	-.00	-										
3. Race (Caucasian)	76%	-.06	-.17***	-									
4. Education	Bachelor's degree	-.07	-.11*	.00	-								
5. Income	$50,000	-.07	-.01	.02	.26***	-							
6. Attitude Consistency	-	-.04	-.11*	.10*	.05	-.01	-						
7. Partisanship	4.03 (2.01)	-.13**	.09	.06	.15**	.03	-.04	-					
8. Message Credibility	4.80 (1.32)	.03	-.17***	.06	.09*	.01	.37***	.09*	-				
9. Source Credibility	4.79 (1.38)	.04	-.21***	.03	.12*	-.01	.30***	.01	.79***	-			
10. Threat Appraisal	4.25 (1.13)	-.06	-.10*	.16***	.30***	.07	.06	.31***	.37***	.34***	-		
11. Intent to Share	3.37 (2.10)	-.10*	-.17***	.12**	.25**	-.02	13**	.34***	.54***	.47***	.69***	-	
12. Share with Corrective Action	3.03 (2.04)	-.16**	-.13**	.13**	.30***	-.06	-.00	.48***	.24***	.27***	.68***	.72***	-

Note. N=507. *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001. Table includes both results from attitude-consistent and attitude-inconsistent cases toward immigration and gun control topics.

First, in order to test Hypothesis 1, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted. The mean value of message credibility for those who read an attitude-consistent article (M=5.15, SD = 1.19) was higher than the mean value of message credibility for those who read an attitude-inconsistent article (M=4.12, SD=1.33). Besides, the result of the ANCOVA illustrated that they were significantly different ($F(1, 495) = 63.94, p < .001$). Its effect size (partial eta squared) was .114. Therefore, hypothesis 1 was supported.

Secondly, in order to examine the moderation effect of research questions 1 and 2, Model 2 (i.e., the effect of two moderators) of SPSS PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2016) was conducted. The outcome variable for analysis was message credibility. The predictor variable was political attitude consistency for fake news. The two moderators evaluated were partisanship and source credibility. When there is interaction, the moderation effect is significant: (a) The interaction between political attitude consistency for fake news and partisanship was statistically significant (b= -.0830, 95% C.I. (-.16, -.01), $p = .0344$). (b) Interaction between political attitude consistency for fake news and source credibility was found to be not significant (b= .0332, 95% C.I. (-.08, .14), $p = .5478$). Also, the mean value of source credibility for AP (M=5.03, $SD = 1.30$) was higher than that of blog (M=4.55, SD=1.41). Source credibility for source type (i.e., AP and blog) showed significant difference (F=19.90, $p < .001$). (c) Both Interactions were not significant at the same time ($F(2, 490) = 8.03. p = .0945. R^2$ change = 0.34%). The conditional effect of political attitude consistency for fake news on message credibility showed corresponding results. At low moderations (partisanship= -2.6897, source credibility= -1.1881), both were significant (conditional effect = .6281, 95% C.I. (.34, .91), $p < .001$). At middle moderations, (partisanship= .3103, source credibility= .1119), they were significant (conditional effect = .4222, 95% C.I. (.26, .58), $p < .001$). At high moderations (partisanship= 2.2703, source

credibility= 1.3119), all was significant (conditional effect = .2994, 95% C.I. (.03, .57), *p*

= .0327). These results identify that partisanship as a negative moderator and source credibility

as non-moderator of the relationship between political attitude consistency for fake news and

message credibility.

Third, to test the mediation effect of hypothesis 2a, 2b, and hypothesis 3, Model 4 (i.e.,

the effect of mediator) of SPSS PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2016) was conducted. The outcome

variable was the intent to share fake news. The predictor variable for the analysis was message

credulity. The mediator variable was the cognitive appraisal to threat: the indirect effect of

message credibility on the intent to share fake news was statistically significant (Effect = .1559,

95% C.I. (.10, .23)). In detail, (a) Path between message credibility and cognitive appraisal to

threat was significant (*b*=.1842, $F(11, 494) = 33.40$. $p < .001$. 95% CI = (.11, .23). $R^2 = 42.65\%$).

(b) Path between cognitive appraisal to threat and intent to share was significant (*b*=.8460,

t(493)= 12.78. $p < .001$. 95% CI = (.75, 1.02)). (c) Path between message credibility and intent to

share was significant (*b*= .4962, *t*(493)= 10.00 $p < .001$. 95% CI = (.41, .60)). Total model of

these paths above was significant ($F(12, 493) = 62.98$. $p < .001$. $R^2 = 60.52\%$). Finally, the total

effect between message credibility on the intent to share fake news was significant ($F(11, 494) =$

40.54. $p < .001$. 95% CI = (.54, .76). $R^2 = 47.44\%$). Its effect size was .65. The direct effect of

message credibility on the intent to share fake news was significant. ($p < .001$. 95% CI =

(.41, .60)). The effect size is .50. The indirect effect of between message credibility on the intent

to share fake news was significant (95% CI = (.09, .22)). The effect size was .15. Accordingly,

the hypothesis 2a, 2b, and 3 were supported.

For H4 to be supported, the relationship between message credibility and intent to share

with corrective action must be negatively correlated/associated with each other. Regrettably,

since message credibility and intent to share with corrective action were positively correlated,

hypothesis 4 was not supported. In other words, once message credibility was low, intent to share

fake news with corrective action was also low.

Lastly, the above discussion of the results can be summarized in the proposed research

design as follows.

Figure 4

The result of the proposed research design for gun control news analysis
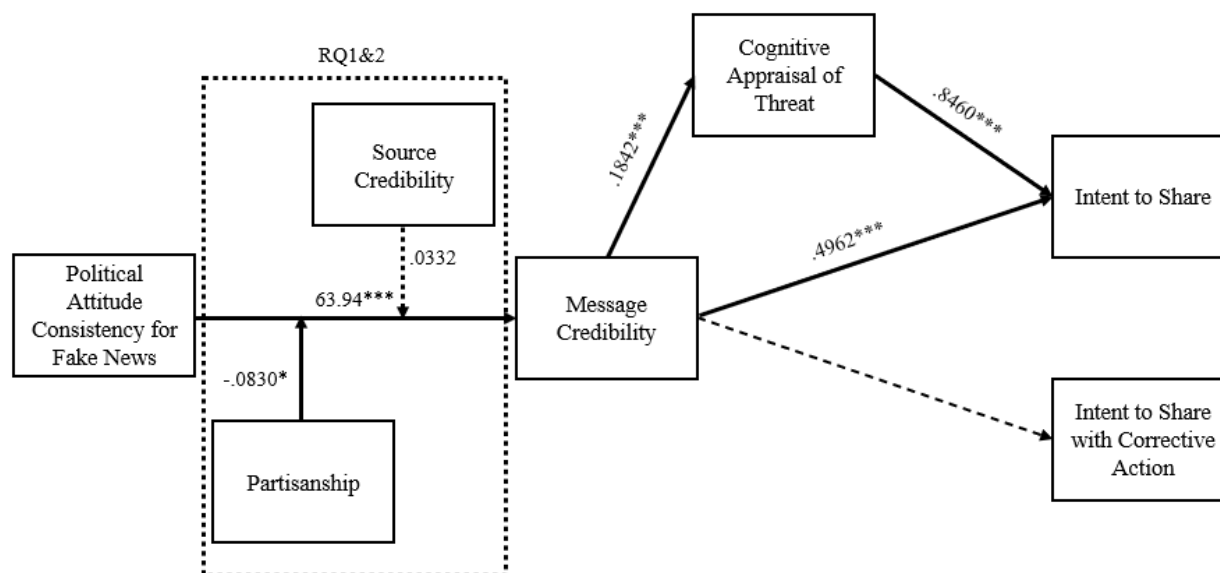
Note: Unstandardized estimates are shown. Bold lines indicate significant results. Control variable: gender, age, race, income, education, personal importance toward issue, existing attitude toward the issues, political interest, news use frequency on social media. need for cognition. *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Given a throwback to The War of the Worlds in the 1930s, the media environment and its

effect has been dramatically changed. It is difficult to apply the current situation because the

media environment and technology have changed so much. We no longer live in the media

environment at that time. Types and platforms of media have exploded and diversified, enabling

double-checking or cross-checking of news events immediately and actively. Ironically, however, it has become difficult to tell which is true or false in a flood of information.

Now let's go back to the case of Pizzagate conspiracy theory. We generally don't believe the news that the Pope is an alien or that the U.S. president is Illuminati. This is because these stories are too far from the values and materials that the news generally deals with. But if people consume news that can deftly blend facts and lies together, this may maintain and strengthen their confirmation bias. In other words, they tend to believe the news that matches their existing attitudes, beliefs, and experiences is true rather than asking whether the news is true or not. This is the purpose of fake news, the trigger for fake news to spread on social media, and the reason for this study.

Discussion of results

As the topics of the fake news, the reason the current study focused on immigration and gun control topics is that they are the most representative conflicts showing different involvement with different partisanship. This was demonstrated by hypothesis 1. For both topics, the results showed that participants reported higher credibility for the news articles consistent with their political attitude.

In research questions 1 and 2, the moderation effect of partisanship happened in the articles on the two topics. Partisanship, whether it's consistent with existing political attitude or whatever the subject is, is activated. Whereas both moderation effects of partisanship and source credibility were activated in the immigration articles, only partisanship was activated in the gun control article. Specifically, since the interaction effect of the source credibility was not significant in the gun control news, the moderation effect did not occur in the gun control news.

Partisanship was significant in both topics. In particular, negative coefficient values were observed in all conditions. The lower the value of partisanship, the left/liberal/trump disapproval, and the higher the value of partisanship, the right/conservative/Trump approval. Therefore, since the moderation effect of partisanship between political attitude consistency and message credibility is negatively significant, the higher the left/liberal/Trump disapproval, the higher the message credibility.

Source credibility was significant in immigration topics. Specifically, positive coefficient values were observed in all conditions. In other words, in the causal relationship between political attitude consistency and message credibility, if the credibility of the source increases, the credibility of the message also increases. The moderation effect of this source credibility was significant for the immigration topic, but not significant for the gun control topic.

In addition, the higher the level of message credibility in both news, the higher the level of the cognitive appraisal to threat, which led to the intent to share fake news. In other words, message credibility and intent to share fake news showed a significant relationship through cognitive appraisal to threat. In addition, message credibility and intent to share fake news showed significant results in the direct effect.

Nonetheless, both topics showed that there was not much significant relationship between message creditability and intent to share fake news with corrective action.

Limitations and future research

First, in this study, the topic of fake news is limited to political issues. This means that the model of this study may apply to political news, but it couldn't be applicable for the case of

the news that is not a political issue. A research model that can be applied to general and universal fake news will be needed as future studies.

Secondly, all four news articles on the pros and cons of immigration and gun control used here are all fake. In other words, all of the news articles here are fake news with an artful mixture of truth and falsehood. The experiments conducted in this study also do not imply a comparison between the news dealing with the truth and the fake news. Therefore, the comparison with true news is not solved through this study and it can be further developed through future research.

In the case of source credibility, a moderating effect occurred in the immigration news article, but not in the gun control article. It may mean that there may be differences in the subject matter of the news, regardless of other factors. Therefore, it is expected to make a great academic contribution if there is a meta-analysis on various topics of fake news.

Lastly, by employing the online experimental survey, this study was able to quickly access a number of samples and easily collect large amounts of data. However, since this online survey employed non-probability sampling called convenience sampling, it is not possible to guarantee its validity and reliability compared to probability sampling, such as stratified sampling. Besides, compared to offline experiments, it is not easy to regulate/control its process, time, answer, and exposure to the stimulus.

Conclusion

This study demonstrated through an online experiment that readers who read fake news judged it in the context of dual-process and were willing to share it on social media. In the process, different judgments were made through the peripheral route or heuristic processing like

partisanship and news source. Proceeding from what has been said above, there are a few remarkable theoretical implications that this study has in general.

As Reinhard and Sporer noted (2010), the result of this study can help how to understand the credibility judgment processing by applying dual-process theories to the deceptive communication field. Concretely, this study examined how peripheral routes or heuristic processing, such as partisanship and source credibility occur in the context of political fake news. The moderation effect of partisanship between partisanship's political attitude consistency and message credibility showed negatively significant. This means that the more left/liberal/Trump disapproval partisanships are, the higher the message creditability. As a result, if a left/liberal/Trump disapproval participant reads news that matches his existing political orientation/disposition through the source of the AP, it can be said that the message credibility is higher than that of the other.

Next, there can be two reasons why the moderating effect of source credibility in gun control news is not significant. First is thought to be due to the high sensationalism and importance that the content of the news itself has a social issue. In other words, the issues of gun control, regardless of whether it stands for a major news agency or blog, may be high motivation or involvement issues for the U.S. citizens. To judge from dual-process theory, since the topic of gun control itself is a subject that can activate high involvement or motivation, central route / systematic processing of messages may have overwhelmed peripheral route/heuristic processing from source credibility. Put otherwise, when assessing to message credibility, information processing goes through a central route / systematic process. On the other hand, in the case of the immigration topic, the moderation effect of source credibility was significant. That is, it confirms the dual-processing's theoretical assumption and theoretical implications that show a higher

motivation, involvement, capacity to process news articles that match their existing political attitudes.

Given the findings, it is also meaningful that the explanation of how fake news spreads over social media is further extended based on the dual-process theoretical background. Among the various explanations for the spread of fake news, this study cited the news reader's cognitive appraisal to threat as a factor. In other words, the question of 'how much of this news is a threat to me" can be seen as one of the answers why fake news is shared on social media. As has been noted in the body of the literature review, high message credibility leads to systemic processing, which brings about higher risk perception (Reinhard & Sporer, 2010; Ryu & Kim, 2015). In other words, by reading AP news articles that match their existing political orientation, fake news readers with high message credibility assess the severity of the threats of news articles they read through central route/systematic processing. As a result, they feel more serious, so they have a high intention of sharing this news with others, which in turn leads to the spread of fake news on social media.

To sum up, the current study provides a clue to how dual processes work under the context of fake news, and at the same time, extends it to the spread of fake news. Admittedly, although the influence of news sources varied according to news topics, it was all valid in the case of partisanship. This expands our understanding of dual-process theory by explaining the moderating effects of partisanship and perceived source credibility and the ways this can contribute to the spread of fake news on social media.

Appendices

Appendix A: Survey Instrument

Independent variable

Existing Attitude toward the issues

(1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*).

"I believe the amount of immigration into the U.S. should be decreased."

"I believe gun control in the U.S. should be stricter."

Dependent variable

Political Attitude Consistency (Knobloch-Westerwick and Kleinman, 2012).

A binary question.

"For me, the news article that I read above is … (a) attitude-discrepant article or (b) attitude-consistent."

*Message Credibility (*Arpan, 2009; Cassidy, 2007; Johnson & Kaye, 1998, 2000; Kiousis, 2006).

A seven-point semantic scales.

"In this section, you will answer about the credibility divided into (1) message content credibility (credibility for message content itself) and (2) source credibility (credibility for everything EXCEPT message content itself)."

"How is the message content of this news credible? (not news source)"

    (a) Not at all credible Extremely credible

(b) Not at all believable Extremely believable

(c) Not at all fair Extremely fair

(d) Not at all accurate Extremely accurate

(e) Not at all in-depth Extremely in-depth

(f) Not at all newsworthy Extremely newsworthy

(g) Not at all informative Extremely informative

(h) Not at all objective Extremely objective

(i) Not at all comprehensive Extremely comprehensive

(j) Not at all trustworthy Extremely trustworthy

Cognitive Appraisal to Fake News: Stress Appraisal Measure scale (Peacock & Wong, 1989).

(1 = *Not at all*, 7 = *Extremely*).

(a) Is this a totally hopeless situation?

(b) Does this situation create tension in me?

(c) Is the outcome of this situation uncontrollable by anyone?

(d) Is there someone or some agency I can turn to for help if I need it?

(e) Does this situation make me feel anxious?

(f) Does this situation have important consequences for me?

(g) Is this going to have a positive impact on me?

(h) How eager am I to tackle this problem?

(i) How much will I be affected by the outcome of this situation?

(j) To what extent can I become a stronger person because of this problem?

(k) Will the outcome of this situation be negative?

(l) Do I have the ability to do well in this situation?

(m) Does this situation have serious implications for me?

(n) Do I have what it takes to do well in this situation?

(o) Is there help available to me for dealing with this problem?

(p) Does this situation tax or exceed my coping resources?

(q) Are there sufficient resources available to help me in dealing with this situation?

(r) Is it beyond anyone's power to do anything about this situation?

(s) To what extent am I excited thinking about the outcome of this situation?

(t) How threatening is this situation?

(u) Is the problem unresolvable by anyone?

(v) Will I be able to overcome the problem?

(w) Is there anyone who can help me to manage this problem?

(x) To what extent do I perceive this situation as stressful?

(y) Do I have the skills necessary to achieve a successful outcome to this situation?

(z) To what extent does this event require coping efforts on my part?

(aa) Does this situation have long-term consequences for me?

(bb) Is this going to have a negative impact on me?

Intent to Share Fake News on Social Media

(1=*Very Unlikely to* to 7=*Very Likely to*).

(a) "I would like to share this news on my social media."

(b) "I would leave any comment to share this news with others on my social media."

(c) "I would post a link of this news to share this news with others on my social media."

(d) "I would leave any comment on the web site of this news to share this news with others on social media."

Corrective Action (Velasquez & LaRose, 2015).

 (1=*Very Unlikely to* to 7=*Very Likely to*).

(a) "I would leave a negative comment under this kind of news on social media to correct their arguments."

(b) "I would post a link of another news article to counter this kind of news on my social media."

(c) "I would post a link of another news article with a negative comment to counter this kind of news on my social media."

(d) "I would post a website entry on my social media that introduce counter argument toward this kind of news."

(e) "I would post a social media site of an online-activist group that combats this kind of news."

Moderating variable

Partisanship (Knobloch-Westerwick and Kleinman, 2012, p. 180).

A seven-point semantic scales.

(a) "Conservative" and "Liberal"

(b) "Democrat," "Independent," and "Republican,"

(c) "Strongly Trump disapproval" and "Strongly Trump approval."

*Source Credibility (*Arpan, 2009; Cassidy, 2007; Johnson & Kaye, 1998, 2000; Kiousis, 2006).

A seven-point semantic scales.

"In this section, you will answer about the credibility divided into (1) message content credibility (credibility for message content itself) and (2) source credibility (credibility for everything EXCEPT message content itself)."

"How is the source of this news credible? (not news message / content)"

(a) Not at all credible Extremely credible

(b) Not at all believable Extremely believable

(c) Not at all fair Extremely fair

(d) Not at all accurate Extremely accurate

(e) Not at all in-depth Extremely in-depth

(f) Not at all newsworthy Extremely newsworthy

(g) Not at all informative Extremely informative

(h) Not at all objective Extremely objective

(i) Not at all comprehensive Extremely comprehensive

(j) Not at all trustworthy Extremely trustworthy

Control variables.

Political interest (Knobloch-Westerwick, Johnson, & Kleinman, 2012, p 179).

(1 = *Not at all closely*, 7 = *Very closely*).

"How closely you follow what's going on in government and public affairs?"

Attitude importance for News (Knobloch-Westerwick & Meng, 2009, p. 436).

(1 = *Not at all important*, 4= *fairly important*, and 7 = *Extremely important*).

"How important are the issues to you personally?"

News Use Frequency on Social Media (Knobloch-Westerwick & Kleinman, 2012, p. 180). a seven-point Likert-type scale arranging from (a) "every day," (b) "Several times a week," (c) "Once a week," (d) "Several times a month," (e) "Once a month," (f) "Less often as response options," to (g) "Never."

"How often do you usually read news on social media?"

Need for Cognition (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982; Cacioppo et al., 1984).

(1= *doesn't describe me at all*, 7 = *describes me very well*).

(a) "I would prefer complex to simple problems."

(b) "I like to have the responsibility of handling a situation that requires a lot of thinking."

(c) "I would rather do something that requires little thought than something that is sure to challenge my thinking abilities (reverse-coded)."

(d) "I try to anticipate and avoid situations where there is likely chance I will have to think in depth about something (reverse-coded)."

(e) "I would prefer a task that is intellectual, difficult, and important to one that is somewhat important but does not require much thought."

(f) "I feel relief rather than satisfaction after completing a task that required a lot of mental effort (reverse-coded)."

Demographics

Age

"What is your year of birth?"

_____

Gender

"What is your gender?"

Male

Female

Other (Please Specify) _____

Prefer not to respond

Ethnicity

"Choose one or more races that you consider yourself to be"

White/Caucasian

African American

Hispanic

Asian

American Indian or Alaska Native

Other (Please Specify) _____

Education

"What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?"

Less than a high school degree

High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED)

Some college but no degree

Associate degree in college (2-year)

Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)

Master's degree

Doctoral degree

Professional degree (JD, MD)

Other (Please Specify) _____

Income

"Please select an estimate of your annual household income."

Less than $10,000

$10,000 to $19,999

$20,000 to $29,999

$30,000 to $39,999

$40,000 to $49,999

$50,000 to $59,999

$60,000 to $69,999

$70,000 to $79,999

$80,000 to $89,999

$90,000 to $99,999

$100,000 to $149,999

$150,000 or more

Appendix B: Stimulus

1. Pro-immigration AP news

Why do Pro-immigration Policies Make America Better?

WASHINGTON (AP) - Democrats have consistently opposed the harshest immigration policies of the Trump Administration, from the travel ban to family separation, while Republicans have largely remained silent. The administration's latest efforts to punish immigrants, for instance, is not just cruel, but foolish.

Immigrants make the labor market thrive.

As the U.S. finds itself entangled in a debate over immigration, research indicates there are plenty of economic benefits of immigration to the American workforce.

In a policy brief for Trump administration, the three major shifts that the U.S. labor market will face over the next few decades: an aging workforce, automation, and alternative staffing — and argued that "increased immigration can provide many benefits to the U.S. economy."

A Penn Wharton budget model policy paper had similar findings, indicating that "From an economic standpoint, the largest positive impact on employment would come from increasing the net flow of immigrants. The research evidence is pretty clear in showing that what's best for the U.S. economy is to have more immigration."

Millions have gained citizenship and productive lives while the economy has thrived. Agriculture could not exist without an immigrant workforce, while the list of immigrant-dependent industries has grown to include meatpacking, construction, hospitality and recreational sectors, such as ski resorts and golf courses, some owned by President Donald J. Trump himself.

Meanwhile, as immigrants provide essential labor, helping businesses profit, the Trump administration has targeted those in some of the most onerous jobs in order to stir fear and hate, while exacting nothing from the employers.

Foreign-born workers include surgeons, computer engineers, and financiers, as well as those working in restaurant kitchens, driving cabs, and doing less desirable jobs at the lowest wages. But they contribute to the growth of the nation, and if some of them need help at some point with housing or food stamps, it's a bargain in the long term. The economic return makes immigration a great investment for the nation. This is why Trump's public charge rule is bad for all Americans, not just those who strive to become one.

Increasing the inflow of immigrants means a bigger market.

U.S. Census data and the Penn Wharton paper support the notion that immigration leads to a bigger market. They highlighted how increasing legal immigration can have a major positive impact on GDP, stating that 2.1 million more legal immigrants over the next 40 years would put the average annual GDP growth at 3%.

Notably, Havard Business Review describes, "Immigration is not just an increase in the supply of workers. It's also an increase in the supply of consumers. Increasing the inflow of immigrants means a bigger consumer market, growing demand for housing and food. And not only do more people increase the demand for existing products, but

they also create new markets because immigrants bring new tastes and needs and mix those tastes and needs with local people."

In fact, Trump administration will expand on helping Immigrants

Despite anti-immigrant rhetoric and tighter enforcement of immigration laws aimed at slowing legal immigration, the Trump administration is giving up to $20 million to help permanent residents become American citizens. This will increase further over the next five years.

Under the Trump administration, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced it is accepting applications for grants for citizenship preparation programs in communities across the country.

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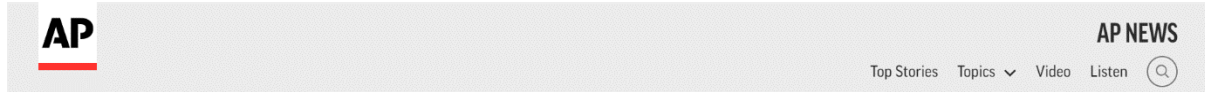
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2. Anti-immigration AP news

President Trump Allowed a Stronger Immigration Deterrence Policy and a Wider Range of Borderline Walls

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A zero-tolerance policy for immigrants makes the U.S. better.

The decision is based on long-term plans and actions. The Trump administration and Republican officials have endeavored to support and implement the administration's "extended borderline wall" and "zero-tolerance" policy.

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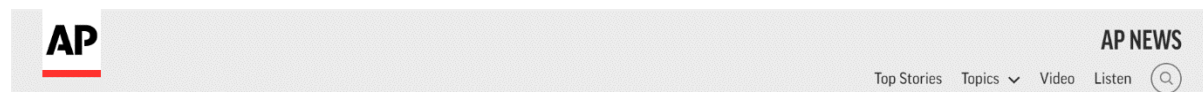
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3. Pro-Gun control AP news

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Congress heads back to work in the wake of yet another mass shooting. Democrats are preparing legislation that will reinforce and expand background checks on people buying guns. It is also expected to include legislation that can apply the existing red-flag law more comprehensively, that is, much broader coverage of ownership and portability restrictions. The long-term plan of extending the law to limit the sale of firearms to the private sector appears to be under discussion.

House Democrats pushed forward a new package of gun restrictions, including a bill that would ban the manufacture and sale of large-capacity magazines, and sharpened

their calls to take up a bill the House approved in February expanding background checks to all gun buyers.

There have been lengthy discussions between the White House and various Senators about potential gun control legislation since the series of tragedies.

The Senate majority leader has also allowed a vote on gun control legislation that was passed by the Democratic-controlled House. The bill would require universal background checks for almost firearm purchases.

The point is to see a reduction in all shootings. No one believes that all gun deaths will be prevented, just drastically reduced. And that argument actually reinforces a need to aggressively fund studies to figure out which measures would work best.

However, President Donald J. Trump made it clear that the mass shooting hadn't changed his thinking on guns. Trump does not agree that The National Rifle Association (NRA) itself is a consequence of American gun culture. If the NRA disappeared tomorrow, American gun owners would spontaneously self-organize in defense of their rights.

The gap between Trump's promises and actions is unfortunate because the vast majority of mass shootings take place in so-called gun-free zones. As studies of active-shooter incidents show beyond doubt, killing spree almost always ends when the people starting shooting back at the criminals. If law enforcement or security guards are present, that's good for prevention. But the police cannot be everywhere at once, and the time that it takes for the police to arrive is the criminals' window for murder. Opposition to the Trump administration's policy, Democrats in the Senate and House of Representatives, are in agreement with legislative procedures for stricter gun control, and their voices are becoming stronger.

One possible action is for states to extend so-called red flag laws. Such laws permit police or family members to petition a state court to order the temporary removal of firearms from a person who may present a danger to themselves or others. The court order also may prevent a person from purchasing guns. Seventeen states, including California and the District of Columbia, have adopted red flag laws. California adopted its law after a gunman killed six people and wounded 14 others in 2014 near the campus of the UC Santa Barbara.

Although it is unclear whether red flag laws prevent mass shootings, a number of studies have shown that they are successful in decreasing suicides. Taking guns away from those a court finds to be potentially dangerous is undoubtedly desirable.

Red-flag laws could stop mass shootings at least occasionally, but unless the laws have very strong due-process protections (which the bills being pushed by the gun-control lobbies do not), these laws are easy to abuse.
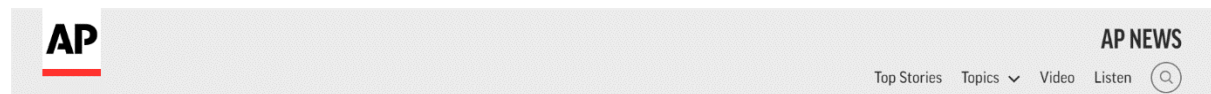
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A large chunk of people still opposes any new gun control laws. They claim the only thing that will stop a bad man with a gun is armed guards to prevent all mass shootings. Any new legislation is a slippery slope for an aggressive agenda to massively restrict guns.

House Republicans suggested that Republicans were more interested in making the existing background check system "work better" than they were in expanding it.

Polls from Chicago University and a Fox News/Washington Post partnership asked about the gun control debate in America and specific gun control proposals. Both polls showed a general downward trend in support for new gun control measures even in the immediate aftermath of mass shootings in Texas and Ohio.

In addition, the Trump administration does not seem to be compelling or making much progress on this issue, which is sensitive to public opinion, ahead of the 2020 election and impeachment trial. Trump imagines that he will win reelection because the other party's nominee will be too extreme. Trump has been sending mixed signals on whether he would support strong gun control legislation.

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5. Pro-immigration Blog news

Welcome to News Blog

Why do Pro-immigration Policies Make America Better?

Democrats have consistently opposed the harshest immigration policies of the Trump Administration, from the travel ban to family separation, while Republicans have largely remained silent. The administration's latest efforts to punish immigrants, for instance, is not just cruel, but foolish.

Immigrants make the labor market thrive.

As the U.S. finds itself entangled in a debate over immigration, research indicates there are plenty of economic benefits of immigration to the American workforce.
In a policy brief for Trump administration, the three major shifts that the U.S. labor market will face over the next few decades: an aging workforce, automation, and alternative staffing — and argued that "increased immigration can provide many benefits to the U.S. economy."

A Penn Wharton budget model policy paper had similar findings, indicating that "From an economic standpoint, the largest positive impact on employment would come from increasing the net flow of immigrants. The research evidence is pretty clear in showing that what's best for the U.S. economy is to have more immigration."

Millions have gained citizenship and productive lives while the economy has thrived. Agriculture could not exist without an immigrant workforce, while the list of immigrant-dependent industries has grown to include meatpacking, construction, hospitality and recreational sectors, such as ski resorts and golf courses, some owned by President Donald J. Trump himself.

Meanwhile, as immigrants provide essential labor, helping businesses profit, the Trump administration has targeted those in some of the most onerous jobs in order to stir fear and hate, while exacting nothing from the employers.

Foreign-born workers include surgeons, computer engineers, and financiers, as well as those working in restaurant kitchens, driving cabs, and doing less desirable jobs at the lowest wages. But they contribute to the growth of the nation, and if some of them need help at some point with housing or food stamps, it's a bargain in the long term. The economic return makes immigration a great investment for the nation. This is why Trump's public charge rule is bad for all Americans, not just those who strive to become one.

Increasing the inflow of immigrants means a bigger market.

U.S. Census data and the Penn Wharton paper support the notion that immigration leads to a bigger market. They highlighted how increasing legal immigration can have a major positive impact on GDP, stating that 2.1 million more legal immigrants over the next 40 years would put the average annual GDP growth at 3%.

Notably, Havard Business Review describes, "Immigration is not just an increase in the supply of workers. It's also an increase in the supply of consumers. Increasing the inflow of immigrants means a bigger consumer market, growing demand for housing and food. And not only do more people increase the demand for existing products, but they also create new markets because immigrants bring new tastes and needs and mix those tastes and needs with local people."

In fact, Trump administration will expand on helping Immigrants

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Appendix C: advisor and committee members

Advisor: Dr. Tamara Makana Chock.

Committee members: Dr. Dennis Kinsey, Dr. Greg Munno

Oral Chair: Dr. Bong Gee Jang

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