Social Media User Satisfaction and the Spread of Fake News: Insightful Perspectives of Users

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Abstract

In the modern era, social media is an effective medium for the dissemination of information and communication. As such, social media increases the avenues of information among users and may influences their behaviour. However, social media as a communication medium is often misused by certain groups of people, especially for sharing unauthorised information and fake news. This study will examine the extent of social network usage among Malaysians by exploring the relationship between user satisfaction and the spread of fake news. This research presents the results of a survey conducted with 379 respondents who were at least 18 years old and had utilized internet platforms to search for information. Additionally, this study used Partial Least Squares (PLS) data analysis to identify how the five distinct variables (pass time, entertainment, socialisation, information sharing and information seeking) impacted the spread of false information. The study found a direct relationship between user satisfaction and fake news dissemination, where amusement and the pursuit of knowledge were the key motivators. Furthermore, we found that other motivations for social media usage, were social interactions, passing time and information sharing, had less significant relationship with the dissemination of misinformation.

Keywords: social media, behaviour, fake news, gratification

1. Introduction

Social networking has become a global phenomenon and is presently an essential and integral part of our everyday lives. Social media encompasses internet platforms that enable people to communicate and share information with others from different backgrounds in a virtual environment. In this age of globalization, social media also acts as a vital channel for communication and the spread of information (Alivi, 2023; Balakrishnan et al., 2022; Beauvais, 2022). According to the *Digital Data Reportal Digital Global Insight* report (Kemp, 2025), social media usage has become increasingly widespread, with millions of people around the world using applications such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp and Twitter (now known as X) are increasing their global usage. In addition, social media also impacts many other aspects of our lives like communication, social relationships, business and political developments (Victor et al., 2024; Paidi & Hassan, 2021).

Social media use has been on the rise in Malaysia. According to the Statista Research Department (2023), 78.5% of Malaysians are known to be active users of social platforms as of January 2023. However, there were 26.80 million users, (just 62 %) in 2016. The significant difference reveals that social media and the internet have huge impact on the daily lives of Malaysians, shaping their lifestyles, and changing their self-identities thought digital processes (Aziz et al., 2021). Since the 1980s, the Malaysian Institute of Microelectronic Systems (MIMOS) has been instrumental in developing internet networks throughout the country. As mentioned in Hamizi et al., (2023), the Malaysian government has allocated funds under the Malaysia Plan eight and nine to expand Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in higher education institutions and schools to enhance computer literacy and bridge the digital divide.

Social media is now a main source of news for many Malaysians. As such the development of social media has led to a rise in fake news, which has become a serious problem. Fake news refers to false information that is presented as if it were true. Many people believe and share such false contents without checking their authenticity. The dissemination of false information can harm individuals, businesses and even national security and can also create problems in areas like data security, politics, media and marketing, which in turn can affect decision-making, consumer behaviour, and public

trust (Arencibia et al., 2023).

New technologies such as deepfakes and artificial intelligence (AI) make fake news harder to detect. Photos and videos can be edited in ways that look real, making it difficult for people to tell the difference between the authentic and unraal. Many users also lack the skills to assess whether information is genuine (Hazrin et al., 2024). Without being cautious, false information can harm specific groups. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, anti-vaccine groups in Malaysia spread misleading claims about vaccines, which created fear and confusion (Azmian et al., 2024). Ramli et al. (2022) highlight that the impact of online platforms depends on how people choose to use them whether for positive or harmful purposes. Apps such as WhatsApp, Twitter and Telegram have been among the hardest to control when it comes to stopping the spread of fake news (Jeffri et al., 2021).

Young people are especially at risk. Many lack strong critical thinking skills and are often exposed to misleading content (Bakar et al., 2025). This study looks at how people depend on social media and the internet for information and the sharing of fake news. The study uses the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) to understand the reasons behind such behaviour. Past studies have shown that factors such as demographics, personal interests and social habits can influence how people respond to false information (Omar et al., 2023).

Despite growing research on fake news, there are still important gaps. First, most studies are based on Western countries and little is known about fake news in the Malaysian context. Second, there is limited research on how motives such as entertainment or information-seeking affect fake news sharing in Malaysia. Third, while many studies suggest that passing time and information sharing are strong predictors, this study examines whether these factors are less important in Malaysia. Finally, few studies explore how cultural values, such as face-saving and harmony, influence the link between socialising and misinformation. This research addresses these gaps by applying the Uses and Gratifications Theory to a Malaysian sample testing five key factors linking social media user satisfaction to the spread of fake news.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 An Overview of Fake News

Generally, the fake news, which is also known as the spreading of falsify information that is without support from facts has attracted considerable public interest and has led to extensive investigations by researchers and policymakers (Omar et al., 2023). To illustrate, fake news can be characterized by presentation of misleading or inaccurate details and appears to be legitimate news. Usually, this information can be produced and scattered through several channels, including conventional news channels, social media platforms and websites (Nasser et al., 2025; Kong et al., 2023). Popular social media networks such as Facebook, Weibo, and Twitter have established anti-rumor hubs that allow users to report and counteract possible misinformation (Hu et al., 2025). Hence, fake news is particularly pressing in today's digital landscape, where misinformation can circulate swiftly and exert considerable influence on society. The increasing prevalence of social media also affects how individuals share and consume information (Apuke & Omar, 2021). Fake news often bypasses verification processes by credible news sources and is not supported by verifiable facts. Changes in media systems have allowed fake news to spread quickly (Chaudhuri et al., 2025). The transmission has made information available not only through news channels and professional journalists but also to a wide range of parties, especially individuals themselves (Hamzah et al., 2020). Therefore, the swift spread of dummy news is intricately connected to social media, with both serving as significant conduits for the distribution of misinformation (Bakar et al., 2025; Fernández-Torres, 2021). Consistent with this view of fake news, Hamizi (2023) asserted that the public now has greater knowledge available and more chances to produce and distribute unconfirmed news because of the existence of internet.

2.2 The Role of Social Media in Malaysia

In the modern age, Internet and social media have become a necessity. For many Malaysians, social media is a vital communication tool. Technological advancements have evolved the Internet from a mere information retrieval system into a comprehensive social media platform that facilitates not only technology use but also dialogue and information exchange (Victor et al., 2024; Alivi, 2023; Ahmad et al., 2023). Furthermore, the extensive use of social network and medias has empowering users to opt for their preferred sources of information and entertainment which eventually, has strengthened interactivity (Arfan et al., 2023). In this context, social media is often viewed as more influential than traditional media, such as print and broadcast, due to its fewer restrictions (Uran et al., 2022).

The emergence of social networks like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter has introduced new avenues for interaction and communication within the virtual realm. These networks have attracted many social media users to engage actively in online interactions for various purposes and to derive certain satisfactions (Victor et al., 2024; Hamizi, 2023). The majority of Malaysian use Facebook to interact with their friends and families while WhatsApp has become an immensely popular instant messaging application. In this regard, WhatsApp has become the primary platform for sending messages, sharing photos, and making voice or video calls in Malaysia. At the same time, platforms like TikTok and YouTube provide engaging and entertaining content for Malaysian users (Arfan et al., 2023) and allow them to follow celebrities, and

influencers, and share self-created entertainment content. Hakim et al.'s (2021) examination of Malaysians' use of the Internet during the pandemic showed that the Internet has become a key necessity for performing daily tasks. Another report by *Berita Kosmo* (11 May 2023) mentioned that Malaysia ranked second globally in terms of social media platform usage. Not only that, social media has also jumped into the primary information source of sharing news among Malaysians. People follow news sources to stay updated on current affairs and topics of interest via social media.

Research on media consumption has made extensive use of the Uses and Gratifications [U & G Theory, which was first created by Blumler and Katz (1974). It is especially pertinent to studies that concentrate on social media. In recent years, the speedy growth of Internet and networking approaches has fuelled the mass media to a new high level, making the U&G theory a focal point for researchers who examine social media satisfaction (Wang & Oh, 2023; Aldamen, 2023). The U & G theory explains how individuals use media among the available options to meet specific needs, which ultimately provide satisfaction to them (Di Domenico et al., 2021). While media plays an integral character in modern human life, individuals often do not reflect on the specific rationale of using the social media or the impacts it has on them (Brony et al., 2024). Therefore, people have utlised the U&G theory to gain a deeper understanding of the many forms of personal fulfilment that various users are pursuing, whether it is for informational, emotional, social, or recreational purposes. In summary, the Uses and Gratifications Theory helps to explain how media fulfil different personal needs and gratifications.

3. Developing the Research Model and Hypotheses

With the U&G theory, this research has identified five primary factors (pass time, entertainment, socialisation, information sharing and information seeking) of satisfaction associated with social media usage among Malaysians. These are regarded as the primary determinants of individual behaviour concerning the sharing of fake information on the internet (Bakar et al., 2025; Balakrishnan et al., 2022; Beauvais, 2022; Sampat & Raj, 2022). According to this research, there is a connection between fake news and a number of behaviours, such as engaging with information, passing the time, finding enjoyment, and interacting with others on social media.

3.1 Time Passing and Sharing of Fake News

According to statistic by Statista (Statista 2025), Malaysians have a significant presence on social media as well. In the Asia Pacific region, it ranks third for the longest average daily time dedicated to social media, with approximately two hours and 46 minutes spent across different platforms each day. From another angle, individuals who primarily engage with the social media for the purpose of passing time exhibit the most significant behaviours regarding news sharing (Balakrishnan et al., 2022). According (Victor et al. 2024) adolescents who spend excessive time on social media sites is concerning since prolonged exposure can result in addiction. This perspective aligns with the notion that the gratification obtained from time-passing on social network can be associated positively with the proliferation of rumours. Therefore, we have concluded with the following Hypothesis:

H1: The dissemination of fake news on social networks correlates positively with the satisfaction that comes from Passing Time.

3.2 Entertainment and Sharing of Fake News

Furthermore, as highlighted by Hamizi (2023), social media provides entertainment satisfaction and serves as a platform for individuals to showcase their interests and hobbies. Engaging with online news platforms can also yield personal satisfaction, as they are both interesting and entertaining, facilitating easy access to information. Online news fulfils needs for entertainment, emotional release, and enjoyment among users (Alivi et al., 2021). In addition to maintain connections with friends, families, and acquaintances, social media enables users to follow their favourite celebrities for entertainment and leisure. Simultaneously, individuals can achieve a sense of personal fulfilment by consuming information or exchanging opinions in the online space. According to Kirin et al. (2023), the majority of TikTok users state that they access the app primarily for entertainment purposes. Therefore, entertainment has become a driving factor in modern society, leading many to become addicted to virtual platforms. Consequently, this study suggested the second Hypothesis:

H2: The dissemination of fake news on social networks correlates positively with the satisfaction that comes from Entertainment.

3.3 Socialization and Sharing of Fake News

Socialization on social media encompasses the emotional fulfilment and interpersonal connections derived from interactions with others. This process satisfies the desire to establish and broaden social networks, particularly among individuals who share similar perspectives and interests in common content (Apuke & Omar, 2021; Sampat & Raj, 2022). As noted in previous research (Omar et al., 2023), social media facilitates connections among friends, families, and colleagues, both directly and through various groups or communities. However, the proliferation of misinformation on these platforms can adversely affect satisfaction among users with socialization. The circulation of false information can shape public perceptions and foster conflicts or misunderstanding among individuals. Given that misleading

information can spread swiftly on social media—especially when accompanied by strong emotional responses users may notice themselves embroiled in detrimental disputes. Several studies have found a link between socialization and the spread fake news, especially when it comes to social media use (Balakrishnan et al., 2022; Omar et al., 2023; Sampat & Raj, 2022). Consequently, the study has come up with the third hypothesis:

H3: The dissemination of fake news on social networks correlates positively with the satisfaction that comes from Socialisation.

3.4 Sharing of Information and Fake News

The satisfaction users derive from sharing ideas, thoughts, and information on social networking sites is known as information sharing. Users often experience emotional and social gratification when they can express their thoughts and share what they consider significant information. Nevertheless, the spread of fake news can undermine this sense of satisfaction. Fake news, however, has the potential to erode this sense of fulfilment. According to research in Sampat and Raj (2022), social media is a simple way to disseminate information, but it has also facilitated the rapid spread of erroneous information. Although society generally perceives fake news as detrimental to both individuals and the community, the act of sharing fake news tends to exert a more significant impact on others than on the individuals who disseminate them (Lee, 2021). Information sharing on social media platforms is a major factor in this occurrence according to several earlier research (Apuke & Omar, 2021; Sampat & Raj, 2022). Based on the above discussion, the fourth Hypothesis is mentioned below:

H4: The dissemination of fake news on social networks correlates positively with the satisfaction that comes from Infromation Sharing

3.5 Information-gathering and Sharing of Fake News

Information and seeking details on social media pertain to the fulfilment users derive from successfully locating the information they require via these platforms (Alivi, 2023; Balakrishnan et al., 2022; Beauvais, 2022; Kemp, 2022; Paidi & Hassan, 2021; Kirin et al., 2023; Arfan et al., 2023; Pew Research Center, 2023; Hamizi, 2023). Social media frequently acts as an essential tool for individuals to explore a diverse array of subjects, including current affairs, public opinions, and evaluations of products and services (Alivi et al., 2021). The pursuit of information is a key source of satisfaction associated with content consumption on social media. This quest for information can also be characterized as the inclination individuals seek significant and timely information through social media channels (Apuke & Omar, 2021). Furthermore, the satisfaction derived from information seeking is intricately linked to the capacity to accurately identify and evaluate misinformation, as well as the propensity of social media users to disseminate news on these platforms (Leeder, 2019). The ability to verify information becomes a key advantage for social media users, enabling them to exchange opinions, as well as acquire and share new knowledge online (Hamizi, 2023). Therefore, this study proposes the fifth Hypothesis:

H5: The dissemination of fake news on social networks correlates positively with the satisfaction that comes from Information Seeking
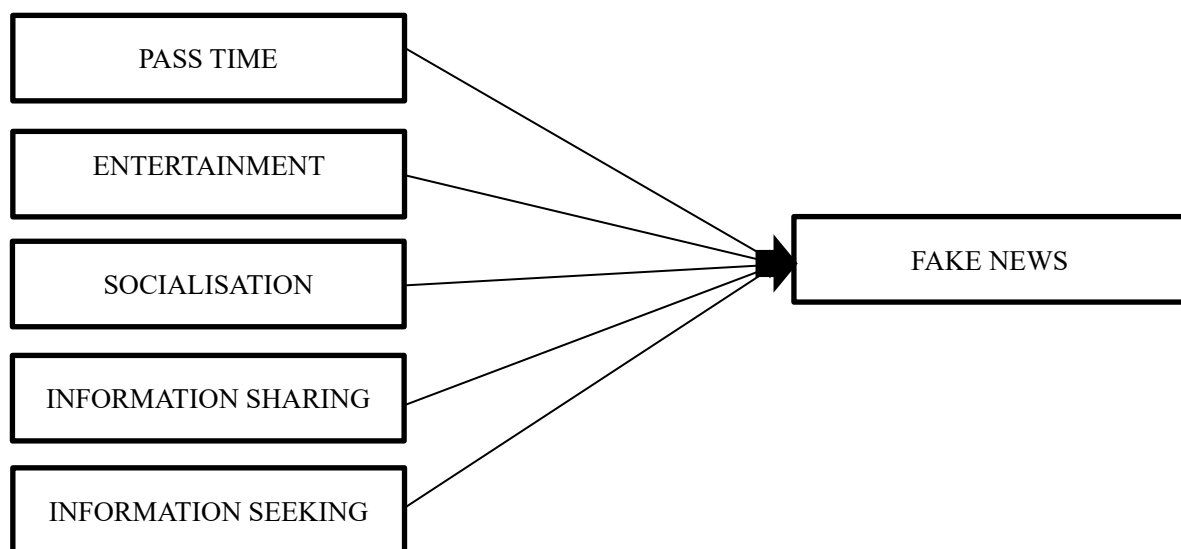
Figure 1. A research model

4. Methods

4.1 Methods for Gathering Data

This study used GPower to determine the minimum sample size for data collection. GPower is often recommended for structural equation modelling (Hair et al., 2017). The calculation showed that at least 178 participants were needed. Some researchers, such as Chou (2000), suggest that 200 is a good benchmark for SEM. Taking these points into account, this study set a target of at least 300 participants to improve the reliability and generalisability of the results.

In total, 379 people took part in a cross-sectional online survey. The survey was created in Google Forms and focused on social media use and the spread of false information. Participants were at least 18 years old and lived in Malaysia. The survey link was posted on several social media platforms and respondents were encouraged to share it with others. They were informed that participation was voluntary, anonymous and confidential. Data collection used non-probability sampling, specifically purposive and convenience sampling Table 1. The 379 interviewees' demographic information.

Table 1. The 379 interviewees' demographic information.

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	205	54.1
Female	174	45.9
Age		
18-29	46	12.1
30-40	130	34.3
> 41	203	53.6
Race		
Malay	171	45.1
Chinese	123	32.5
Indian	84	22.2
Others	1	0.3
Education		
Secondary	9	2.4
College/University	370	97.6
Working Status		
Government	68	17.9
Private	121	31.9
Own Business	136	35.9
Housewife/ Unemployment	8	2.1
Student	46	12.1
Household income		
No income	32	8.4
B40	63	16.6
M40	167	44.1
T20	117	30.9
Marital status		
Single	72	19.0
Married	304	80.2
Widowed	3	0.8

This study focused on a population of Malaysians. Malaysian nationals who were 18 years of age or older and frequent users of social media sites like Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, and others met the sampling criteria. Participants were instructed to respond to all questions to prevent any missing data. However, they were informed that they could withdraw from the survey at any moment if they opt to.

Table 2. Types of Social Networking (n=379)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Facebook	352	92.9
Instagram	338	89.2
WhatsApp	334	88.1
Tiktok	312	82.3
Twitter	123	32.5
Telegram	102	26.9
Youtube	77	20.3
Linkedin	71	18.7
Lain-lain	63	16.6

As shown in Table 2, Facebook is the platform used most by respondents (92.9%), followed by Instagram (89.2%), WhatsApp (88.1%), Tiktok (82.3%), Twitter (32.5%), Telegram (26.9%), Youtube (20.3%), and LinkedIn (18.7%). There is only a minority percentage of users who use WeChat, Tumbler, Line, Reedit, and other social media platforms. Notably, many of the respondents use more than two different social networking platforms.

4.2 Variable Measurement

Five (5) independent variables (pass time, entertainment, socialisation, information sharing and information seeking) and one (1) dependent variable (the dissemination of fake news) were the main focal points of the study. Every item was adapted from earlier research. The entertainment variable was taken from the work of Whiting and Williams (2013), and the pass-time fulfilment variable was taken from the study of Quan-Haase and Young (2010). The Socialisation gratification variable was adapted from Hossain (2019) while Information Sharing variable was adapted from Smock et al. (2011) and Information Seeking variable from Luo et al. (2011). Finally, the variable related to the dissemination of false information was adapted from a recent study by Apuke and Omar (2021).

5. Data Analysis and Outcomes

The investigation was conducted using structural equation modeling, or SEM (Hair et al., 2020). In particular, SmartPLS 4 was used to ascertain the importance of the pathways using 10,000 samples and the bootstrap resampling technique. Since the measurements in the study did not follow a normal distribution, the PLS technique was deemed appropriate. For both kurtosis and skewness, the Shapiro-Wilk, Kolmogorov-Smirnov, and Mardia's tests yielded significant results ($p < 0.05$). The data was also processed using Mardia's coefficient website. Multivariate skewness ($\beta = 20.922$, p<0.01) and multivariate kurtosis ($\beta = 117.331$, p<0.05) were seen in the findings. PLS, which works well with lower sample sizes, was appropriate for this study because of the low response rate that was also observed. (Hair et al., 2022).

As recommended in Anderson and Gerbing (1988), the constructed model was evaluated in two stages. To confirm the dependability and efficiency of the instrument, the measurement model was first assessed in compliance with the guidelines from Hair et al. (2020) and Ramayah et al. (2018). Also, the suggested hypotheses were then tested using a structural model, and the study model was examined using SEM (Hair et al., 2022). Variance inflation factors (VIF) and common method bias (CMB) were previously validated.

5.1 Common Method Bias (CMB)

A Common Method Bias (CMB) test was conducted because all the variables were taken from the same survey. CMB was assessed using principal component analysis and Harman's single factor test. The results mentioned that the majority dataset's volatility could not be explained by a single factor. Additionally, by examining the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values linked to the variables, we evaluated collinearity problems. Every VIF value stayed below the three-point critical threshold. Six factors were found in the research, and the largest percentage of variance that could be accounted for by a single component was 36.03%. The VIF values ranged from 1.38 to 2.93, all of which were below the recommended limit of 5 (Hair et al., 2017). Therefore, it can be said that the model used in this study is unaffected by CMB or collinearity.

5.2. The Model of Measurement

Convergent validity, discriminant reliability, internal consistency reliability, and indicator reliability were used to assess the measurement model of this study. The study included six variables [five independent and 1 dependent] which were treated as reflective rather than formative. The independent variables included passing time, entertainment, socialisation, information sharing and information seeking while the dependent variable is fake news dissemination. All variables

were measured using reflective indicators designed to capture interrelated measures within a single dimension and to ensure high internal consistency (Freeze & Raschke, 2007).

The study initially looked at the indicator loadings to make sure all of them were higher than the 0.7 criterion in order to evaluate convergent validity (Hair et al., 2022). To verify that every result was higher than 0.5, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was then assessed. The Composite Reliability (CR) was then evaluated, and all values were found to be over 0.7 (Hair et al., 2017). The analysis then confirmed the Cronbach's alpha values, all of which were higher than the suggested cutoff point of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2017) ("see Table 3"). Therefore, there was no issues with discriminant validity in the study. All the measures in our model showed outstanding psychometric properties.

Table 3. Result of Measurement Model

Variables	Code	Loadings	CR	AVE
Passing Time	PT1	0.652	0.880	0.551
	PT2	0.724		
	PT3	0.739		
	PT4	0.74		
	PT5	0.795		
	PT6	0.794		
Entertainment	ET1	0.774	0.860	0.552
	ET2	0.702		
	ET3	0.739		
	ET4	0.718		
	ET5	0.778		
Socialisation	SS1	0.825	0.880	0.648
	SS2	0.829		
	SS3	0.759		
	SS4	0.804		
Information Sharing	SR1	0.838	0.905	0.705
	SR2	0.857		
	SR3	0.837		
	SR4	0.828		
Information Seeking	SK1	0.864	0.899	0.691
	SK2	0.776		
	SK3	0.834		
	SK4	0.849		
Fake News Sharing	FN1	0.824	0.947	0.780
	FN2	0.935		
	FN3	0.870		
	FN4	0.884		
	FN5	0.900		

Note: PT = Pass Time, ET = Entertainment, SS = Socialisation, SR = Information sharing, SK = Information Seeking, FN = Fake News Sharing

A 5-point Likert scale for the variable that was independent and a 7-point Likert scale for the variable that was dependent were used to evaluate the items.

5.3 The Model of Structure

In view of the directional nature of all assumptions, the study used a bootstrap resampling method with 10,000 iterations and a one-tailed test to assess the structural model. Table 4 shows that two hypotheses are statistically significant and three hypotheses are not supported. It was concluded that H1 was not supported by the research, which showed that pass time (ß =-.066; p>.05) was not a predictor of the spread of fake news. On the other hand, entertainment was found to be positively correlated to favourably promote the spread of fake news (ß =.198; p <.05), confirming H2. The researcher also observed that the behaviour of distributing fake news on social media was not predicted by socialization (ß = -.071; p>.05) or information sharing (ß =.104; p>.05) (ß5 0.01, p > 0.05), leading to the rejection of H3 and H4. However, information seeking significantly and positively impacts sharing fake news on social media as H5 was supported (see Table 4).

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Hypothesised relationship	Std. Beta	Std. Dev	t-value	p-value	f²	Result
H1	Pass Time -> Fake News Sharing	0.066	0.078	0.841	0.200	0.003	Not supported
H2	Entertainment -> Fake News Sharing	0.198	0.079	2.516	0.006	0.022	Supported
H3	Socialisation-> Fake News Sharing	0.071	0.074	0.957	0.169	0.003	Not supported
H4	Information Sharing-> Fake News Sharing	0.104	0.066	1.572	0.058	0.011	Not supported
H5	Information Seeking -> Fake News Sharing	-0.099	0.053	1.878	0.030	0.007	Supported

The criteria tested in the measurement of the structural model involve path coefficient, coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2),and Stone-Geisser's (Q^2) (Hair et al., 2017). After determining the path coefficients, the study evaluated the effect size (f^2) (Hair et al., 2022), which may be categorized as little (0.02), medium (0.15), or high (0.35) (Cohen, 1988). The findings demonstrated that the impact sizes (f2) of the five associations varied is small.

6. Discussion

This research discovered that the dissemination of deceptive news on social network was predicted by entertainment and information-seeking. Of these variables, entertainment had a greater impact on the dissemination of fake information than information seeking. However, this study discovered no correlation between the dissemination of fake news on social media and passing time, socialization, or information sharing. The study's first hypothesis is not supported by the passing time results. The results show that the link is not substantial and is negative. Many studies highlight a significant link pass time and the spread of misinformation on social media platforms. (Bakar et al., 2024; Obadă & Dabija, 2022; Sampat and Raj, 2022) demonstrates a strong correlation between the spread of false information on social media platforms and the pastime element. But this study revealed that time was not a significant determinant of how social media users behaved when disseminating false information. These results offered empirical proof that the amount of time spent had no discernible impact on the sharing of misleading news among internet users. In Malaysia, many social media users spend their free time on activities like updating their status, sharing photos or videos, searching for funny or interesting content and sharing media for personal satisfaction (Meri et al., 2022. It is mainly because of this focus on entertainment and personal sharing that news dissemination may not be a central part of users' online interactions. Topics such as politics, crime, international affairs, and sports did not always attract interest, so people may be less likely to share them for leisure. Cultural habits also influence users behaviour. The diverse, multi-ethnic society in Malaysia, many users avoid topics that could cause disagreement. Instead, users prefer light-hearted, neutral, or commercially useful content. This reflects the local value of face-saving, where people try to keep harmony and avoid conflict, especially in mixed social or family groups online.

Additionally, this study discovered that entertainment was a significant predictor of fake news sharing (ß =.198; p <.05), indicating that participants motivated by entertainment were more likely to share misinformation, in contrast to many other studies (Apuke & Omar, 2021; Islam et al., 2020). In this context, entertainment satisfaction refers to people who use social media for their own pleasure and interaction with the online community, as well as using entertainment to increase their popularity. As a result, several respondents showed a propensity to spread false information as a quick and simple way to become more well-known. This could that users of social media are aware that they use these sites for amusement, which also helps spread false information. Additionally, dissemination of false information is frequently perceived as a source of entertainment, with individuals deriving enjoyment from believing the content (Balakrishnan et al., 2021). In Malaysia, some users, especially those in their 40s, share sensational or humorous false content to gain quick attention or popularity online. This behaviour illustrates that, for some individuals, entertainment can be more important than checking facts, which in turn helps spread misinformation.

There was no evidence to support the third hypothesis, which proposed that socialization would be a key predictor of the spread of fake information on social media. According to earlier research, social networking sites strengthened social ties by fostering relationships and improving connections. Mazhar et al. (2024) found that these platforms promote relational closeness by enabling frequent communication and shared online activities. Similarly, Apuke and Omar (2021) reported that users were more likely to accept information from relatives and close companions than from random individuals. Nonetheless, our research showed a negative relationship between socialization and the dissemination of false information among Malaysians'. This negative relationship implies that engagement of people with their networks was only marginally impacted by the satisfaction they derived from social interactions. In Malaysia, many users avoided sharing unverified or risky news within their personal circles to protect trust and prevent arguments. Strong social ties can act as a barrier, rather than a driver, for spreading misinformation. This barrier often leads people to be more cautious about what they post in private groups such as family WhatsApp chats, alumni networks, or neighbourhood Facebook pages. The fear of embarrassment or harming their reputation if the information turns out to be false often stops them from passing it on.

The study found that exchanging of information exchange was not a significant predictor of the spread of fake news, which was unexpected. This result runs counter to previous studies that suggest information sharing aids in the dissemination of false information (Apuke & Omar, 2021; Adnan et al., 2022). However, the findings of this study, implied that disseminating information on social media did not always lead the population to misleading information. Sharing information on social media did not always mean spreading false content in Malaysia. This difference can be explained by the unique cultural and social dynamics of Malaysia. The findings suggested that fake news here was influenced more by the type of content and the purpose of sharing than by how often people shared them. While some misinformation could still spread because of limited fact-checking, cultural values like helpfulness, harmony, and respect often work against them. These values help set Malaysian social media habits apart from those seen in other countries. The majority of users shared information with positive intentions, such as expressing opinions or helping others. The study result suggests that general information sharing should not be mistaken for being the main way that fake news spreads. Furthermore, the dissemination of fake news was greatly influenced by social media algorithms and cognitive biases rather than merely information exchange.

As a whole, the study found a beneficial relationship between disseminating fake news and information-seeking behavior. The findings corroborated this, indicating a strong correlation between the dissemination of fake news and information seeking. According to research, one of the most often stated motivations for utilizing social media was to obtain information (Alivi, 2023). On social networking platforms, it was discovered that there was a need to be "in the know" among people that frequently resulted in the consumption and dissemination of fake news (Brony et al., 2024). We think that freedom among users with information searching often results in their desire to share news immediately on platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp, that offer the opportunity to reach a wider audience (Sampat & Raj, 2022). In Malaysia, Facebook and WhatsApp are the main platforms for getting news and staying in touch. People use them not only as quick sources of updates but also easy ways to share information with many others. Features like group chats, "forward" buttons and instant notifications make it easy to pass contents without checking their accuracy. For those who want to be seen as always up to date with news, sharing news quickly often takes priority over verifying the facts.

7. Implications of This Study

7.1 Theoretical Implications

This study advances the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theoretical framework development. The U&G theory has been widely used in earlier research to determine the variables affecting news sharing (Hamzah et al., 2020; Sampat & Raj, 2022). This study enhances our model and expands on the existing variables that influence news dissemination by identifying specific characteristics that forecast the dissemination of false information among social media users. It is obvious that this research gives the application of U&G theory a fresh perspective. Activities including passing the time, looking for entertainment, interacting with others, exchanging information, and looking for information have all been linked to the propagation of fake news. Since the majority of previous and ongoing research have not developed an empirical framework to enhance knowledge of fake news distribution pattern on social media. As such there is a glaring shortage of thorough studies on the transmission of misleading information.

Studying Uses and Gratifications (U&G) Theory in terms of technology, especially the online platforms, helps researchers to understand why people utilize these platforms. Studies in online platform and social media usage also expand our understanding of why social media attracts users compared to other forms of media, providing a new aspect of this research. The new data can offer insightful perspectives into how to understand better behaviours of people and how they perceive the benefits (gratification) and drawbacks (fake news dissemination) when using social media.

7.2 Practical Implications

The study provides a number of practical implications. First of all, it has demonstrated that the spreading of inaccurate information on social media can be influenced by individual motives such as enjoyment, sociability, time passing, information sharing, and information seeking. The findings highlight the need for immediate action in this area that shows amusement is the most key indicator for the propagation of misleading information among those surveyed. Consequently, the study encourages social media users to adopt a more critical approach when sharing news, even when they seem to provide cautionary advice to others.

Over the last ten years, it has become evident that research focusing on social media satisfaction and the proliferation of misinformation has predominantly taken place in Western nations, while in Malaysia, such investigations are notably scarce. Consequently, the researchers aspire for this study to be broadened and examined in greater depth, as the challenge of fake news dissemination remains critically significant. Additionally, contributions to the domains of media and social sciences will prove advantageous. The results of this study, including the literature review and data analysis, will provide crucial information and recommendations for controlling the dissemination of false information among

users on social media platforms. Providing such guidance is particularly crucial given that the dissemination of misleading information is a significant issue in Malaysia and around the world.

8. Limitation and Future Direction

There are various limitations to this study. The sample of this study was restricted to respondents of only one nation (Malaysia). To extend this study and make it more relevant other nations dealing with comparable problems, can be included in the investigation. Another limitation of this research is that our findings are exclusively predicated on the variables we have identified and examined. Other possible variables that could have been investigated include peer pressure, social media exhaustion, self-disclosure, online trust, and others. To learn more about the spread of false information on social media, future research could include additional variables.

This study neglected to look into the way cultural background, gender, age, or income affected the dissemination of misleading information. These factors could be included in future studies to investigate how they could possibly affect the results of our research. . Additionally, we acknowledge that our sample size was somewhat small, which would have affected how strongly the independent variables predicted outcomes. For more solid and statistically sound results, future researchers should consider expanding the sample size.

9. Conclusion

This study showed that both the incidence of fake news among internet users and the degree of participation of social media users with its spread was very high. As a result, social media user behaviour is a good way to track the spread of false information. Furthermore, variables such as entertainment and information-seeking exhibited significant correlations with the sharing of fake news, whereas activities like passing time, socializing, and information sharing did not demonstrate a significant relationship.

Simultaneously, there was evidence suggesting that social media users possess an awareness of their behaviours and their satisfaction levels with social media platforms. Fake news was less likely to proliferate among users used social media mainly for entertainment, communication, and information exchange. Nonetheless, the results showed that the satisfaction gained from entertainment and information seeking was a major influence on the spread of false information. Several research were carried out between 2019 and 2021, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, which could be the reason for this disparity. The results of those studies differ significantly from that of the current study. Therefore, the researcher advocates for a more in-depth examination of the five variables of social media satisfaction in future research. It is essential to recognize that, as was previously said, the results of this study are not all-inclusive and are susceptible to limitations.

publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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