

The background features a dark blue gradient with faint, light blue circular patterns and numbers. The numbers, such as 160, 170, 180, 190, 200, 210, 220, 230, 240, 250, and 260, are arranged in a circular fashion, suggesting a scale or a clock face. The overall aesthetic is technical and modern.

COUNTERING THE RIPPLE EFFECTS: STRATEGIES FOR DECODING AND DISRUPTING EMOTIONAL TRIGGERS IN ONLINE RUMOR TRUST

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INTRODUCTION

- Online fake news spreads faster than factual news, influencing public opinion and decision-making.
- Emotions play a crucial role in how individuals evaluate and share misinformation.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

- Fake news manipulates emotions, leading to rapid misinformation spread.
- Understanding emotional triggers can help design better misinformation control strategies.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

- Investigate how emotional arousal, valence, and social contagion impact message believability and their interaction effects.
- Apply the Feelings-as-Information Theory to assess how emotions act as cognitive shortcuts.

LITERATURE REVIEW: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

- Emotions serve as heuristic cues that influence judgment and decision-making.
- Past studies highlight mixed findings on emotional impact on information evaluation.

FEELINGS-AS-INFORMATION THEORY

- Proposed by Schwarz & Clore (1983), the theory suggests that emotions act as information signals.
- People use emotional reactions as a basis for evaluating message credibility.

HYPOTHESES OVERVIEW

- The study proposes six hypotheses exploring the effects of arousal, valence, and social contagion on believability and sharing intent.

HYPOTHESIS 1

- Emotional arousal increases message believability and sharing. Lower arousal reduces engagement and trust.
- H1: The absence of emotional arousal cues lowers perceived message believability.

HYPOTHESIS 2

- Emotional valence shapes message believability. Positive emotions increase trust and acceptance, while negative emotions encourage skepticism and critical thinking. Messages with negative emotional valence are more likely to be scrutinized and perceived as less believable.
- H2: Messages with negative emotional valence are perceived as less believable than those with positive valence.

HYPOTHESIS 3

- Emotional valence moderates the effect of arousal on believability. High arousal with positive valence enhances trust, while high arousal with negative valence encourages critical thinking and skepticism, reducing misinformation acceptance.
- H3: Arousal cues have a weaker effect on message believability under negative valence conditions.

HYPOTHESIS 4

- Emotional contagion enhances message credibility. Shared emotions create social validation, increasing belief in misinformation. Greater emotional contagion leads to higher acceptance of fake news.
- H4: Fake news containing emotional contagion cues is perceived as more believable.

HYPOTHESIS 5

- Emotional contagion amplifies arousal, increasing message credibility. Shared emotions strengthen collective belief, making misinformation more persuasive. Without contagion cues, arousal has a weaker effect on believability.
- H5: The impact of arousal cues on perceived message believability is reduced without emotional contagion cues.

HYPOTHESIS 6

- Message credibility influences sharing behavior. When a message is seen as believable, people are more likely to share it when perceived as unreliable, sharing decreases.
- H6: Lower perceived believability reduces the intention to share a message on social media.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- Experimental Design: A 2 (Arousal: present vs. absent) x 2 (Valence: positive vs. negative) x 2 (Social Contagion: with vs. without) experimental design.
- Eight conditions tested to assess the impact of emotional variables on perceived believability.
- Recruiting 320-350 participants.
- Using ANOVA and moderation analyses to assess relationships.

FINDINGS AND EXPECTED CONTRIBUTIONS

- This study explores how emotional arousal, valence, and contagion impact online rumor believability and spread. Understanding these factors helps explain misinformation dynamics and informs strategies to reduce fake news. Findings will support media literacy and platform policies to counter emotionally driven misinformation.

IMPLICATIONS FOR MISINFORMATION CONTROL

- Reducing emotional triggers in online content may reduce misinformation spread.
- Fact-checking efforts should consider emotional influence on message believability.
- Exploring cultural differences in emotional responses to misinformation.
- Assessing long-term effects of emotional interventions on misinformation resistance.

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Thank you!