The Effect of Need for Cognition and Need for Affection on the Intention of Spreading Fake News

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THE EFFECT OF NEED FOR COGNITION AND NEED FOR AFFECTION ON THE INTENTION OF SPREADING FAKE NEWS

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to determine the effect of the need for cognition and the need for affection towards the intention of spreading fake news. This research used an experimental design by giving the participants some manipulations in the form of fake news. The study examined whether the participant spreads the news provided based on their different need orientations. The results of this study indicate that there was a significant relationship between the need for affection and the need for cognition in terms of spreading false news. This study also investigated the variation of the tendency to spread the news based on both need scores. Although predictions are related to participants who have high or low scores who tend to spread false news, further research is needed.

A. Introduction

The rapid development of internet usage in Indonesia has accelerated people's awareness and access to information. The Communication Studies Center (PUSKAKOM) of the University of Indonesia has joined research with the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) (puskakomui, 2014) indicated that the number of internet users in Indonesia reached 88 million by the end of 2014. Internet users in all provinces in Indonesia often access the internet using cellular phones. More than 80% of internet users in Indonesia access the internet at least once a day. There are three main reasons why Indonesian people use the internet; (1) access social/ communication facilities (72%), (2) daily information sources (65%), and (3) up-to-date with the latest information (51%).

Higher internet usage leads to higher access to information. However, when information is getting easier to obtain, there is an increasing challenge to verify the source of the news, whether it is fact, opinion, or even fake information. The need to obtain trusted information based on a high-speed internet platform makes the dissemination of information that is not necessarily a challenge in this era of the fourth industrial revolution easy. Transition/shift is not smooth Some definitions of fake news: 1) accidental reporting errors; 2) rumors that do not originate from specific news articles that have authority; 3) conspiracy theories (this, by definition, is difficult to verify as true or false, and they usually come from people who believe they are right); 4) satire which cannot be misinterpreted as fact; 5) false statements by politicians; and 6) report that it appears or is misleading but not entirely wrong (Gentzkow, Shapiro, and Stone, 2016).

Based on research conducted by the Ministry of Education and Culture together with the Ministry of Communication and Information in 2015, it is known that victims of false news and short messages of fraud may have a high level of intellectuality. People used fake news to justify their opinions about something. In line with a study from Acerbi (2019) which

stated that online misinformation needs to maintain some level of credibility. The level of credibility from the message and the news people finally deceived. Based on the explanation above, this paper aimed to investigate the difference between individuals who have the need for cognition and the need for affection towards their tendency to spread fake news.

Further, Cacioppo and Petty (1982 add more recent) define the need for cognitive as the tendency of individuals to seek and use their thinking abilities. Individuals with a low need for cognition function likely to avoid processing information carefully; therefore they may decode only a small portion of the message. On the other hand, individuals with a high need for cognitive function are trying to solve any incongruence of information that they find (Nan, 2006). Previous research has found that individuals with a high need for cognitive likely to enjoy the elaboration process on conveying the message even though the message might do not relate to them (Cacioppo et. Al., 1986; See et Al.,2009).

Meanwhile, individuals with a low need for cognitive function tend to experience inconvenience while elaboration on the information and only processing the news when a message is related to them (Priester at al., 2004). Overall, individuals who have needed for cognitive will process the information obtained and then be able to process that information with their cognitive abilities. An individual who lacks the emotional intelligence to overcome bias in evaluation and interpretation of information cannot be information literate. Cognitive bias was exposed as part of the learning process, the participants were more inclined to acknowledge where they were allowing their own opinions to interfere with their judgments. However, they tended to justify the bias rather than change it (Macklin, 2018).

The need for affection is defined as the general motivation of people to approach or avoid situations and activities that stimulate emotions for themselves and others (Maio & Esses, 2001). In addition, they show that these needs include the desire to experience and understand emotions and that places the belief that emotions are useful for forming

judgments and behavior. Individual differences in the need to influence are related to results that are relevant to the experiences and information people seek. Need for affection with the extent to which individual attitudes are guided by affective information (Haddock & Huskinson, 2004). Individuals who have the need for affection will process the information obtained then process the information with their affections. Based on the review above, this study aims to explore individual differences in processing the information based on their need orientations.

The need for effect has been linked to the various psychological aspects, with some of these studies pointing to the possible relationship between need for effect and stories or news. One compelling argument for the impact of need for affect on reading news or message is the finding that needs for effect does not just refer to a desire to engage with emotions and situations creating emotions (both negative, positive, and ambivalent), but also the tendency to evaluate the emotions people experience in a more positive (Bartsch, Appel, & Storch, 2010).

B. Method

A field experiment approach was used in this research. This research can be categorized as experimental research because it aimed to examine causal or causal relationships by using manipulation in controlled situations (Kumar, 2011). This study aimed to explore the differences of need orientations on the intention to spread false news. The participants of this study were 130 students recruited from the Department of Psychology, State University of Jakarta. Prior to the survey session, consent was provided from participants.

The research design was initially started by making a manipulation intervention. Fake news containing articles from social media were disseminated to participants through social media (WhatsApp). Next, to that, the participant was asked to complete a battery comprising of manipulation checks, intention scale to spread false news, need for Cognition Scale, as well as the need for Affection Scale.

Intention to spread false news was assessed using a self-report scale comprising seven items asking whether a participant would like to spread the news or not, wherein a high score would indicate stronger intention to spread false news. In addition, both need orientations were assessed using Cacioppo, Petty, and Kao (1984 more recent study) the Need for Cognition scale consisting 8 items measuring the tendency of individuals to engage and enjoy thinking. Participants used a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to assess the extent to which they agree. The score for the Need for Cognition is calculated by reversing the negative key item score (α = 0.84). In previous studies, these measurements have produced very good test-retest reliability (α = .88) (Sadowski & Gulgoz, 1992). While Need for Affection was measured by using Maio and Esses (2001) scale consisting of 26 items. Participants responded to a scale from –3 (strongly disagree) to +3 (strongly agree) indicating the extent to which they agree with the item. The Need for Affection score is calculated by reversing the negative key item score (α = 0.84). In previous studies, this measure has produced excellent test-retest reliability (α = .85; Maio & Esses, 2001).

C. Finding and Discussion

1. Finding

The following section presents the results of data analysis. First, descriptive statistics showed that 130 participants were successfully recruited for the study. Participant characteristics can be seen in table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Descriptive statistic table

Time for using social media	N	%
1 - 3 years	8	6.2
3 - 5 years	36	27.7
More than 5 years	86	66.2
Total	130	100.0

Next, to that, the following table (Table 4.5) provides a cross tabulation need for affection and tendency to spread the fake news. Following that, Table 4.6 describes the cross tabulation need for affection and tendency to spread fake news.

Table 4.4 Variables total

		Spreading fake news		Total
		No spread	Spread	
Need for affection	High	26	37	63
	Low	27	40	67
Total		53	77	130

Tabel.4.5 Variables total

		Spreading fake news		**Total**
		No spread	**Spread**	
Need for cognition	High	24	31	55
	Low	29	46	75
Total		53	77	130

Moreover, Chi-square was subjected to the analysis. The analysis found is presented below. Based on the test results, the Significance value was. <0.05, that means that there was a significant relationship between need for affection with the spreading false news.

Table. 4.6. Chi-square result

	Need for affection	Spreads
Chi-Square	53.831[a]	4.431[b]
Df	20	1
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.035

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 6.2.
b. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 65.0.

The table above (4.8) indicated a Chi-square analysis of the need for cognition towards spreading fake news. Based on the test results the statistics above show that the value of significance was <0.05, this means that there was a relationship between need for cognition and spreading false news.

2. Discussion

Based on the results of the finding above, there were a number of things discussed for the progress of further research. The finding above parallel with a previous study conducted, by Cacioppo and Petty (1982). They defined the need for cognitive as the tendency of individuals to seek and use their thinking abilities. Individuals with a low need for the cognitive activity will avoid the burden of processing messages and choose to process only a small part of the message, while individuals with a high need for the cognitive activity will try to solve the incongruence of information that they find in advertisements (Nan, 2006).

Previous research has found that individuals with a high need for cognitive will intrinsically enjoy the elaboration process and will elaborate on the message even though the message has low relevance to him (Cacioppo et. Al., 1986). Conversely, individuals with the need for cognitive who are intrinsically low do not enjoy the elaboration process and will tend to elaborate on messages only when the variables in the message increase their motivation to do elaboration (Priester at al., 2004). Individuals who have the need for cognitive will process the information obtained and then be able to process that information with their cognitive abilities. Discuss with more recent studies

The need for affection is defined as the general motivation of people to approach or avoid situations and activities that stimulate emotions for themselves and others (Maio & Esses, 2001). Maio and Esses (2001) show that these needs include the desire to experience and understand the emotions of oneself and others, and that places the belief

that emotions are useful for forming judgments and behavior. Individual differences in the need to influence are related to results that are relevant to the experiences and information people seek. Need for affection with the extent to which individual attitudes are guided by affective information (Haddock & Huskinson, 2004). Individuals who have the need for affection will process the information obtained then process the information with their affections. Alexis Smith Macklin's (2018) study revealed participants relied heavily on their personal beliefs and opinions when evaluating information, a cognitive bias is high when making decisions. And cognitive biases are overtaken by empathy when interest on a topic is sustained, and eventually assimilates new information.

Our current finding demonstrated variations between high and low scores of needs for cognition and the need for affection on the tendency to spread the news. This research has shown that there are variations in participants based on their high and low scores to spread false news.

D. Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that there was a relationship between the need for affection and the need for cognition by spreading false news. This study also looked at variations related to participants who had a high or low need for affection and the need for cognition scores.

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