

College Students and Sharing Fake News on Social

Media: A Study

Study by Noah Walker

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Abstract

During and following the 2016 election, fake news in social media posts has been a significant occurrence on various social media sites. This can be attributed to the ability given to anybody to make a post on a social media site that can be claimed as true and obtains no prior fact checking before posting and can reach as many people as any sophisticated news source. Divisive content that elicits interactions are pushed by social media sites regardless of the content. This study explores three research questions regarding motivations behind college students sharing information on social media, the perceived impact of college students sharing fake news on social media, and who, if anyone, college students believe is responsible for preventing the spread of fake news on social media. A study was conducted via an online survey and four conclusions were made based on the responses of three survey questions that yielded significance. Many limitations were identified and discussed regarding the study.

Literature Review

Fake News and Social Media

A special focus has been placed on fake news in social media posts following the increased rate of fake news during and following the 2016 election (Leeder, 2019). Social media is a very vulnerable source for the spread of fake news because information on these platforms

can be spread with no prior fact-checking and can reach as many people as any sophisticated news source (Allcott and Gentzkow, 2017). Social media also incentivizes and pushes content that is divisive and elicits responses from users (Jack, 2017), and the speed in which the information is dispersed makes it incredibly difficult to prevent (Leeder, 2019). On top of this, social media has taken the responsibility of being a much-preferred vehicle to access news (Baptista and Gradim, 2020). This has allowed the existence and consumption of fake news and false information on social media to increase.

Social media has allowed fake news to have a large impact on people's understanding of current events (Zimmer et al., 2019). The impact is increased considering the algorithms and echo chambers that social media users find themselves in (Zimmer et al., 2019), often a result of the user's confirmation bias in seeking information that they agree with (Vydiswaran et al., 2015). Confirmation bias is a theory primarily used in psychology that is defined as the act of looking for or interpreting information in a way that aligns it with preexisting beliefs or expectations (Nickerson, 1998).

A 2016 study concluded that the most popular fake news stories were spread and shared much more on social media than the most popular true news stories (Leeder, 2019). Along with the 2016 election, fake news has become a prominent issue in society surrounding the Brexit vote in the UK (Bastos and Mercea and Baronchelli, 2018) as well as the repeating of the term "fake news" by Donald Trump during his presidency (Zimmer et al., 2019).

Most Americans believe that confusion and misunderstanding of current events and issues and the facts that surround them is an effect of the fake news presence of the internet (Barthel, Mitchell & Holcomb, 2016). As a result of the rise of fake news proliferation online, most US adults consider our democracy threatened (Knight Foundation, 2018). It is also believed

that fake news threatens the informed citizenry that is essential for an effective democracy (Leeder, 2019).

Terms Defined

Fake news is known by two more specific terms, misinformation, and disinformation. Misinformation is when the information is false unintentionally (Jack, 2017) and disinformation is information that is intentionally misleading and deceiving (Jack, 2017). In this study, we will be focusing on the disinformation realm of fake news. Fake news has also been compared to things like propaganda, parody, satire, and fabrication (Törnberg, 2018).

Social media is defined as a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of user generated content (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). The social media sites in mind while developing this study are Instagram, Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), Snapchat, and YouTube.

College Student Demographic

College students are the focus of this study due to their demographic being very active on social media. In a study conducted in 2018, 88% of people aged 18 to 29 reported using social media (Smith & Anderson, 2018). Further, 89% of 6000 college students in the US reported that they receive news from social media (Head, Wihbey, Metaxas, MacMillan, & Cohen, 2018). In a Pew Research Center survey, 23% of Americans say they have spread a fake news story, with 14% saying they shared a knowingly fake story at some point and 16% having shared a story they later discovered was fake (Barthell, Mitchell, and Holcomb. 2016). The two points proven by these statistics are that college students are a relevant demographic for this study, and that people have knowingly shared disinformation in the past.

Current Research

A systematic literature review on this topic has concluded that the most prevalent motivations behind spreading fake news online include misinformation belief, entertainment, and political ideology. Motivations were also found to be slightly more intrinsic than extrinsic, which means the motivation is slightly more internally based than external, 54% and 46% respectively (Melchior & Oliveira, 2023).

Users may believe in false information online for two main reasons: insufficient digital literacy and a desire to believe information that supports their preexisting beliefs (Szebeni et al., 2021). This combines with the algorithms that exist on social media sites that create echo chambers of information that create users to believe that the information they are consuming and believing is agreed on by their peers (Melchior & Oliveira, 2023).

Theoretical Application- Uses and Gratifications Theory

Current research has shown that uses and gratifications theory is a significant theoretical explanation as to why people use social media to satisfy their own personal needs (Ruggiero, 2000). Scholars have used uses and gratifications theory to explain the sharing of content on social media, including links, news, and pictures (Apuke & Omar, 2020). As far as news sharing on social media goes, Lee and Ma (2012) concluded that socialization, information seeking and status seeking to be the gratifications aligned with the action. Elevated status seeking and the sharing of information were found by Thompson et. al (2019) as well.

Research Questions

Future research on this topic has been recommended to include the specific characteristics of fake news that motivate users to spread them, perceived impact/significance of the spread of fake news by the senders on people's beliefs, attitudes, and opinions (Leeder,

2017), but little to no literature on who is perceived by college students to be responsible in the prevention of fake news spreading. These three topics formulate my three research questions:

RQ1: What characteristics of fake news on social media motivates college students to share it?

RQ2: What is the perceived impact of college students sharing fake news on social media?

RQ3: Who, if anyone, do college students believe is responsible for the prevention of the spread of fake news?

Methodology

This study used a survey research design. The online survey service Qualtrics was used to interview East Carolina University students. Qualtrics is free to use by both researchers and respondents. The target population consisted of current East Carolina University students. Research mentor Dr. Cindy Elmore distributed digital flyers linking to the survey to colleagues in the ECU communication department, with a request to share the flyer with their students. The East Carolina Honors College email list was also used to send a mass email to all students in the Honors College with an invitation and a link to take the survey. On top of these two methods, word of mouth was used as well. 175 responses were recorded at the end of the survey period, although there were issues regarding survey retention. Participation was voluntary and confidential, and respondents were informed of this prior to participation. Since you must be logged into an ECU account to use Qualtrics, there was no issue with confirming the student status of respondents.

The survey contained 42 total questions, beginning with a consent question, four demographic questions, and then 37 questions relating to the three research questions. 32 of the

questions had answers using a 1-5 likert scale, with 1 meaning the respondent does not agree with the statement and 5 meaning the respondent completely agrees with the statement. Two questions were write-in response. Three questions were yes or no answers. The complete list of questions asked on the survey, and the research question they are associated with are provided in the Appendix.

Analysis

Since there was an issue with survey retention due to the high volume of questions on the survey, not all of the 175 total respondents answered every question on the survey. A total of 23 respondents were omitted due to being graduate students or having unanswered demographic questions. The two demographic variables where significance was found included respondents' gender and political party affiliation. Among all respondents, 104 identified as female. Of the females, 27 identified as Democrats, 44 of them identified as Independents, 30 of them identified as Republicans, and one identified as Third-Party. Thirty-seven respondents identified as male. Of the males, four identified as democrat, 13 identified as independent, 15 identified as republican, and four identified as third-party. Six respondents identified as non-binary/third gender. Of the non-binary/third gender respondents, three identified as democrat, three identified as independent, and none identified with republican or third party. The total party affiliation breakdown included 34 Democrats, 60 Independents, 45 Republicans, and 5 Third-Party respondents.

A Tukey's Post-hoc Test was run on every question using the IBM SPSS Statistics software. After running the test for every question, significance was found for gender and/or party affiliation in three questions, all three shown below in Figure 2. The question and its number on Qualtrics is provided below. These three questions received 102 survey responses.

The three questions, descriptive statistics, and Tests of Between-Subjects Effects table showed significance are provided below.

Question 46: Sharing unverified politically one-sided information on social media has a negative effect on the person receiving the information. (Fig. 1 & 2)

Descriptive Statistics				
Dependent Variable: Q46				
Gender	Party	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Female	Democrat	3.6667	.97590	15
	Independant	3.2759	1.19213	29
	Republican	2.9048	1.22085	21
	Third-party	2.0000	.	1
	Total	3.2273	1.17402	66
Male	Democrat	2.8000	.83666	5
	Independant	3.2000	1.22927	10
	Republican	3.0000	1.12815	12
	Third-party	1.0000	.00000	4
	Total	2.7742	1.23044	31
Non-binary / third gender	Democrat	2.5000	2.12132	2
	Independant	3.6667	.57735	3
	Total	3.2000	1.30384	5
Total	Democrat	3.3636	1.09307	22
	Independant	3.2857	1.15369	42
	Republican	2.9394	1.17099	33
	Third-party	1.2000	.44721	5
	Total	3.0882	1.20316	102

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dependent Variable: Q46					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	27.703 ^a	9	3.078	2.390	.018
Intercept	207.071	1	207.071	160.761	<.001
Gender	2.094	2	1.047	.813	.447
Party	11.034	3	3.678	2.855	.041
Gender * Party	4.991	4	1.248	.969	.429
Error	118.503	92	1.288		
Total	1119.000	102			
Corrected Total	146.206	101			

a. R Squared = .189 (Adjusted R Squared = .110)

Significance was found for Question 46 (.041) based on political party affiliation

Significance was also found based on participants' gender and party affiliation (.016) to Question 47: "I believe the responsibility of preventing the spread of unverified politically one-sided information on social media lies with the social media website Owners/developers." (Fig. 3 & 4)

Descriptive Statistics				
Dependent Variable: Q47				
Gender	Party	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Female	Democrat	3.9333	1.16292	15
	Independant	3.7241	1.06558	29
	Republican	2.8095	1.36452	21
	Third-party	5.0000	.	1
	Total	3.5000	1.26795	66
Male	Democrat	4.0000	.70711	5
	Independant	3.7000	1.33749	10
	Republican	3.6667	1.15470	12
	Third-party	1.0000	.00000	4
	Total	3.3871	1.40659	31
Non-binary / third gender	Democrat	4.0000	.00000	2
	Independant	3.3333	2.08167	3
	Total	3.6000	1.51658	5
Total	Democrat	3.9545	.99892	22
	Independant	3.6905	1.17884	42
	Republican	3.1212	1.34065	33
	Third-party	1.8000	1.78885	5
	Total	3.4706	1.31032	102

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dependent Variable: Q47					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	44.014 ^a	9	4.890	3.477	<.001
Intercept	332.127	1	332.127	236.137	<.001
Gender	5.683	2	2.842	2.020	.138
Party	7.804	3	2.601	1.850	.144
Gender * Party	18.043	4	4.511	3.207	.016
Error	129.398	92	1.406		
Total	1402.000	102			
Corrected Total	173.412	101			

a. R Squared = .254 (Adjusted R Squared = .181)

Significance also was found based on gender for respondents answering Question 50

(.031): "I believe it is someone's responsibility to prevent the spread of unverified politically one-sided information on social media." (Fig. 5 & 6)

Descriptive Statistics				
Dependent Variable: Q50				
Gender	Party	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Female	Democrat	4.0000	.75593	15
	Independant	3.3793	.94165	29
	Republican	3.6190	1.02353	21
	Third-party	3.0000	.	1
	Total	3.5909	.94425	66
Male	Democrat	3.6000	.89443	5
	Independant	3.6000	1.42984	10
	Republican	3.7500	.86603	12
	Third-party	1.0000	.00000	4
	Total	3.3226	1.35122	31
Non-binary gender	Democrat	3.5000	.70711	2
	Independant	4.0000	.00000	3
	Total	3.8000	.44721	5
Total	Democrat	3.8636	.77432	22
	Independant	3.4762	1.04153	42
	Republican	3.6667	.95743	33
	Third-party	1.4000	.89443	5
	Total	3.5196	1.06919	102

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dependent Variable: Q50					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	31.331 ^a	9	3.481	3.807	<.001
Intercept	303.413	1	303.413	331.796	<.001
Gender	2.364	2	1.182	1.293	.279
Party	8.485	3	2.828	3.093	.031
Gender * Party	5.305	4	1.326	1.450	.224
Error	84.130	92	.914		
Total	1379.000	102			
Corrected Total	115.461	101			

a. R Squared = .271 (Adjusted R Squared = .200)

This was also true for self-identified Democrats, Republicans and Independents answering Question 47 (.037): "I believe the responsibility of preventing the spread of unverified politically one-sided information on social media lies with the social media website." (Fig. 7 & 8)

Descriptive Statistics				
Dependent Variable: Q47				
Gender	Party	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Female	Democrat	3.9333	1.16292	15
	Independant	3.7241	1.06558	29
	Republican	2.8095	1.36452	21
	Total	3.4769	1.26377	65
Male	Democrat	4.0000	.70711	5
	Independant	3.7000	1.33749	10
	Republican	3.6667	1.15470	12
	Total	3.7407	1.12976	27
Non-bin	Democrat	4.0000	.00000	2
	Independant	3.3333	2.08167	3
	Total	3.6000	1.51658	5
Total	Democrat	3.9545	.99892	22
	Independant	3.6905	1.17884	42
	Republican	3.1212	1.34065	33
	Total	3.5567	1.23296	97

Party

Multiple Comparisons						
Dependent Variable: Q47						
Tukey HSD						
(I) Party	(J) Party	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
Democrat	Independant	.2641	.31734	.684	-.4923	1.0205
	Republican	.8333 [*]	.33188	.037	.0423	1.6244
Independant	Democrat	-.2641	.31734	.684	-1.0205	.4923
	Republican	.5693	.28049	.111	-.0993	1.2378
Republican	Democrat	-.8333 [*]	.33188	.037	-1.6244	-.0423
	Independant	-.5693	.28049	.111	-1.2378	.0993

Based on observed means.
The error term is Mean Square(Error) = 1.454.
*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Discussion

Three questions, which asked about the sharing unverified information having a negative effect on the recipient, the responsibility of preventing the spread of unverified information lying with the social media site itself, and whether respondents believed that it is anyone's responsibility to prevent the spread of unverified information on the internet resulted in a significance value of < 0.5 . As seen in Fig. 2, Question 46 returned a significant value of 0.041 related to respondents' political party identification. Question 47 returned a significant value 0.016 based on gender, as seen in Fig. 4. Question 50 returned a significant value of 0.031 based on political party affiliation, as seen in Fig. 6.

Significant differences were found in the responses to the question regarding the sharing of unverified information online having a negative effect on the recipient based on respondents' political party identification. Self-described Democrats were slightly more likely to say that sharing politically one-sided fake news has a negative effect on the person receiving the information. Self-described independents were marginally less in agreement. Self-described Republicans were slightly less likely to agree, with an average response of 2.94. Self-described Third-Party respondents disagreed that sharing politically one-sided fake news had a negative effect on the recipient. According to this data it can be concluded that self-described Third-Party members feel as if sharing unverified politically one-sided information on social media does not have a negative effect on the person receiving the information, whereas self-described Democrats, Independents and Republicans generally feel neutral about the statement.

The analysis found influences from respondents' gender and political party affiliations regarding question 47, which asked about the responsibility for preventing the spread of

unverified information on social media lying with the social media site owners. Male, female, and non-binary/third gender Democrats agree that it is the responsibility of the site owners to prevent the spread of unverified information on it. Male, female, and non-binary/third gender independents are less likely to feel as strongly as Democrats on this issue, but still agree with the statement. The analysis found that Independents slightly agree with the statement that it is the responsibility of the social media owners to prevent the spread of misinformation on their sites. Republican females and males, as there were no non-binary/third gender Republicans, feel differently about this issue. Republican females slightly disagree with the statement while Republican males are more likely to agree with it, which shows that gender plays a role in the Republican answer to this question. However, respondents to this question included only one third-party female, four third-party males and no third-party non-binary/third genders. Due to this, the significance of the third-party response can be called into question. The four third-party males disagreed with the statement and the one third-party female strongly agrees with the statement that it is the responsibility of the social media owners to prevent the spread of unverified information on their sites. Respondents may agree with the statement that the media site owners must prevent the spread of fake news on the site because of the finding that social media is a vulnerable source for the spread of fake news due to the ability to share information to a very large amount of people with little to no prior fact checking (Allcott and Gentzkow, 2017).

Political party identification had a significant influence on respondents' answers to question 50. Regarding the question, "I believe it is someone's responsibility to prevent the spread of unverified politically one-sided information on social media," self-described Democrats were significantly likely to agree with the statement. Self-described Independents were slightly less likely than Democrats to agree. Republicans responded in the middle of

Democrats and Independents, thus still agreeing with the statement. Third-party respondents strongly disagreed. According to this data, self-identified third-party members feel as if it is nobody's responsibility to prevent the spread of unconfirmed information on social media, compared to Democrats, Republicans and Independents who slightly feel as if it is someone's responsibility to prevent it. Democrats, Republicans, and Independents may feel this way because of social media being a much-preferred vehicle for news access (Baptista and Gradim, 2020), and most US adults consider our democracy threatened due to the spread of fake news on social media (Knight Foundation, 2018). Further, since 89% of 6000 college students report they get their news from social media (Head, Wihbey, Metaxas, MacMillan, & Cohen, 2018), many people believe the informed electorate that is required to have an efficient democracy is threatened. These findings can help support the idea that someone must prevent the spread of fake news on social media, as agreed with by Democrats, Republicans, and Independents in this study.

However, only five third-party respondents answered the question. This was also true for the Gender*Party significance found in question 46, because only one third-party female respondent participated, and the respondents of that question did not include anyone who identified as third-party or non-binary/third gender. The lack of third-party respondents is a limiting factor regarding the significance in responses of party variety, as well as in question 47 because both gender and party affiliation were factors in the significance of the responses. For this reason, another Tukey's Post Hoc Analysis was run for questions 46, 47 and 50 with the third-party respondents omitted. It was impossible to eliminate the five non-binary/third gender respondents, because Tukey's Post Hoc Analysis requires three variables for each demographic. After running this analysis with Third-Party respondents omitted, it was discovered that only

question 47 contained significance in comparing Republican and Democrat respondents, as seen in Fig. 8.

The significance between the means of self-identified Republican and Democrat responses to question 47 shows a significance value of .037. The average Republican response to the question is 3.12 and the average Democrat response is 3.96, as seen in Fig. 7. As represented in Fig 8, the mean difference between these two average responses is .8333. Since this is significant at the 0.05 level, it can be concluded that Democrats feel significantly stronger that the responsibility of preventing the spread of unverified politically charged information on a social media site lies with social media owners. This belief makes sense when considering the findings that social media owners make the sites incentivize content that is divisive because it elicits responses from users (Jack, 2017). Not only that, but there are algorithms that create echo chambers of beliefs on social media sites (Zimmer et al., 2019), making users incredibly susceptible to unverified information. The social media site owners can prevent these algorithms and echo chambers that promote unverified information, and the respondents feel as if it is their responsibility to do so.

Conclusion

Four main conclusions can be taken away from this study. The results of this study find that self-identified third-party college students feel that sharing unverified politically one-sided information on social media does not have a negative effect on the person receiving the information, compared to self-identified Democrats, Republicans, and Independents, who slightly feel as if it does have a negative effect. However, no significance was found following the omittance of third-party respondents.

Self-identified Republican females agree slightly less than male Republicans that it is the responsibility of social media owners to prevent the spread of unverified politically charged information on the site. Although the data suggests that third-party males and third-party females are in opposition to one another on this issue, the small sample size of 5 for third-party respondents limits the significance of this finding. For this reason, another analysis was run on this question with the omission of the third-party respondents, and significance was found regarding the comparison between Democrat and Republican responses. This analysis found that Democrats feel significantly stronger than Republicans that it is the responsibility of social media owners to prevent the spread of unverified, politically charged information on social media sites.

This study also found that self-described third-party college students feel significantly less than Democrats, Republicans, or independents that it is someone's responsibility to prevent the spread of unverified, politically charged information on social media. However, significance was not found following the omission of third-party respondents.

Limitations and Further Research

This preliminary study had a number of limitations. The small sample size and lack of sample diversity became apparent and hindered clear results. A uniform representation for each demographic investigated in this study was lacking, as there were only five non-binary/third gender respondents and only five third-party respondents. This limited the analysis data and made it difficult to produce strong, meaningful conclusions. Survey completion was another limitation; while there were 175 respondents to the survey, only around 100 ended up answering every question. This can be mostly to blame on the large number of questions. To create higher retention, it would have been effective to limit question count. Reducing the question count to a

reasonable number would make it more likely that respondents would take the whole survey. Another limitation was there was no pre-testing of any kind. There was also no pre-research surrounding the demographic variables chosen, or any hypothesis regarding the outcome of the study.

Further research should take the same research questions and apply them to a more rigorous, hypothesis-driven study. This study provided intriguing areas of future research even though the significance of its results were limited. The questions that still require further research are as follows:

RQ1: What characteristics of fake news on social media motivates college students to share it?

RQ2: What is the perceived impact of college students sharing fake news on social media?

RQ3: Who, if anyone, do college students believe is responsible for the prevention of the spread of fake news?

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Appendix

Participation Consent Message:

You are being invited to participate in a research study titled “College Students and Fake News on Social Media” being conducted by Noah Walker, a student at East Carolina University in the department of Communication. The goal is to survey 199 individuals in/at East Carolina University. The survey will take approximately 5 minutes to complete. It is hoped that this information will assist us to better understand what characteristics of fake news motivate college students to share it, what the perceived impact of college students sharing fake news on social media is, and who college students believe is responsible for preventing the spread of fake news on social media. Your responses will be kept confidential, and no data will be released or used with your identification attached. Your participation in the research is voluntary. You may choose not to answer any or all questions, and you may stop at any time. We will not be able to pay you for the time you volunteer while being in this study. There is no penalty for not taking part in this research study. Please call Noah Walker at 919-889-4770 for any research related questions or the University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) at 252-744-2914 for questions about your rights as a research participant.

Demographics

- Gender
- Political affiliation
- Age
- Major

Respond to the following questions with a “Yes” or “No” answer.

- I have shared unverified politically one-sided information on social media without verifying the validity.
- I have shared unverified politically one-sided information on social media knowing it is false information.
- I have shared unverified politically one-sided information online while later discovering it was false.

Unless otherwise specified, respond to each statement with how much the statement applies to you on a range of 1 through 5, with 1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree 3- neutral 4- agree 5- strongly agree.

RQ1: What characteristics of fake news on social media motivates college students to share it?

- I have shared unverified politically one-sided information on social media because it supports my political stance.
- I have shared unverified politically one-sided information on social media because it is against a political stance I disagree with.
- I have shared unverified politically one-sided information on social media because it is funny or entertaining.
- I have shared unverified politically one-sided information on social media because it is shocking.
- I have shared unverified politically one-sided information on social media because I believe it is interesting.

- I have shared unverified politically one-sided information on social media because it enforces a political agenda I want to push.
- I have shared unverified politically one-sided information on social media because it appeals to my emotions.
- I have shared unverified politically one-sided information on social media because it contains information that I want to be the first to share.
- I have shared unverified politically one-sided information on social media because it contains divisive content.
- I have shared unverified politically one-sided information on social media for other reasons (Write in).
- I have shared a piece of unverified politically one-sided information for any of the previous reasons whether or not I believe it is true.
- I have shared a piece of unverified information on social media for any of the previous reasons because I believe it is true.
- I have shared a piece of unverified information on social media for any of the previous reasons even though I believe it is false.

Unless otherwise specified, respond to each statement with how much the statement applies to you on a range of 1 through 5, with 1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree 3- neutral 4- agree 5- strongly agree.

RQ2: What is the perceived impact of college students of sharing fake news on social media?

- Sharing unverified politically one-sided information on social media is wrong and harmful all the time.
- Sharing unverified politically one-sided information on social media is wrong and harmful in some cases.
- Sharing unverified politically one-sided information on social media has no negative effects.
- Sharing unverified politically one-sided information on social media has a negative effect on the person receiving the information.
- Sharing unverified politically one-sided information on social media has a negative effect on the social media platform where I shared it.
- Sharing unverified politically one-sided information on social media has a negative effect on my relationships with others.
- Sharing unverified politically one-sided information on social media can have a positive effect on the person receiving the information.
- Sharing unverified politically one-sided information on social media can have a positive effect on the social media where I shared it.
- Sharing unverified politically one-sided information on social media can have a positive effect on my relationships with others.
- Sharing unverified politically one-sided information on social media can have an overall positive effect.
- Sharing unverified politically one-sided information on social media has an overall negative effect.

- Sharing unverified politically one-sided information has an effect on the voting behavior of the demographic I am sharing it with.
- Receiving unverified politically one-sided information has a negative effect(s) on me.
- Receiving unverified politically one-sided information has a positive effect on me.
- Receiving unverified politically one-sided information has no effect on me.

Unless otherwise specified, respond to each statement with how much the statement applies to you on a range of 1 through 5, with 1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree 3- neutral 4- agree 5- strongly agree.

RQ3: Who do college students believe is responsible for the prevention of the spread of fake news?

- I believe the responsibility of preventing the spread of unverified politically one-sided information on social media lies with me.
- I believe the responsibility of preventing the spread of unverified politically one-sided information on social media lies with local or federal local or federal political officials.
- I believe the responsibility of preventing the spread of unverified politically one-sided information on social media lies with the social media website owners/developers.
- I believe the responsibility of preventing the spread of unverified politically one-sided information on social media lies with someone else (write in).
- I believe it is someone's responsibility to prevent the spread of unverified politically one-sided information on social media.
- I believe it is nobody's responsibility to prevent the spread of unverified politically one-sided information on social media.

