THE TWEEPS' PERCEPTIONS OF MISINFORMATION ON TWITTER IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA

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THE TWEEPS' PERCEPTIONS OF MISINFORMATION ON TWITTER IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA

BY

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DISSERTATION

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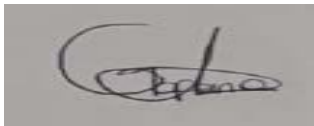**(School of Languages and Communication Studies)**

at the

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

Supervisor: DR E.J MALATJI

2024

DECLARATION

I Gafane Patricia Koketso, hereby declare that the information contained in this research project submitted to the University of Limpopo is my work, and any work obtained from elsewhere has been acknowledged accordingly. Presented here is my original work, and it has not been submitted in any other institution before.

30/10/2023

SIGNATURE   **DATE**

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Abstract

The significance of Twitter in recent years has come under scrutiny following the misinformation that has been popularly shared on the platform. Tweeps at the current moment are quick to share information without considering the facts. This study is based on the growing belief that misinformation is a significant obstacle to Twitter's credibility as a trustworthy information platform. Therefore, the study's objective is to examine how misinformation could impede Twitter's ability to function as a reliable source of information. Twitter faces challenges in effectively managing and addressing issues concerning harassment, hate speech, and abusive conduct occurring within its platform. The presence of trolls, bots, and fake accounts contributes to the dissemination of misinformation, involvement in targeted attacks, and the creation of an unfriendly and hostile online atmosphere. This study, however, recognises the significance of Twitter in information sharing, and entertainment amongst others. Moreover, this study covers a holistic view looking into both the benefits and negative aspects of Twitter. However, one of the dangers of using Twitter nowadays is sharing content that is detrimental to the people and or organisations. This study adopted a qualitative approach to analyse the implications of tweeps perceptions of misinformation on Twitter. It sampled 20 participants who gave their perceptions and ideals on the perceptions of misinformation. As a result, it has adopted a purposive sampling as a means of getting pertinent information to answer the initial research question. Furthermore, the study adopted a reflexive thematic analysis to analyse the perceptions of the participants and draw necessary suggestions. The study established that misinformation spreads faster than real information. It also found that misinformation has the potential to the destroy individuals' character and organisations reputation. Consequently, it recommends that the tweep must do a background check before sharing contents on twitter amongst others.

N.B: Please note that the title *The tweeps' perceptions of misinformation on Twitter in Limpopo Province, South Africa* of this study was approved by the Faculty of Humanities as well as the Turfloop's Research Ethics Committee (TREC) prior to the recent name change of Twitter as the social media platform. Notably, the change of the name from "Twitter" to "X" did not affect the key features of the platform. It mainly affected rebranding and the change of ownership. Thus, this change has not necessarily affected the aim and

objectives of the study. The misinformation and fake news challenges are still topical issues in the social media space with or without the name change.

Keywords: Tweeps; Twitter; Misinformation; Defamation; Fake news

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CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1. INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on tweeps' perceptions of misinformation on Twitter in Limpopo Province, South Africa. As stated in the abstract, the title of this study was approved prior to the renaming of Twitter. Thus, the name Twitter will be used across this dissertation to adhere to the approved title of the study. Twitter, recently renamed "X", is one of the microblogging platforms, which allows an individual to read and disseminate short pieces of information known as tweets (Carew, 2014). It is sometimes referred to as a digital community since it allows individuals to engage and bond over common experiences (Smit & Bosch, 2020). Twitter enables young people to avoid gatekeeping mechanisms for the news and information requirements of a diverse group of young people, providing perspectives and views rarely found elsewhere (Billik, 2021). Tweeps are persons who send and receive tweets on Twitter (Safitri, Angeline & Wibowo, 2021). Twitter and tweeting first emerged in 2006, and approximately two years later, people started identifying with individuals that tweet as tweeps (Klassen, 2022). Equally, tweeps are referred to as an individual who utilises the Twitter platform for sending and receiving tweets through its online messaging service (McKeown, 2021). Tweeps are also described by Kwak and Grable (2021) as an individual who employs a social media platform like Twitter. Similarly, Nabatchi and Mergel (2018) views tweeps as those who opt to receive messages from a specific individual, company, or social media platform, including the broader population of Twitter users.

This study aims to investigate the tweeps perceptions of misinformation on Twitter. Unfortunately, people's behaviour on Twitter makes it challenging to be transparent and accurate (Klassen, 2022). This is because people occasionally share and are willing to tweet erroneous information, which already distorts and endangers people's lives and livelihoods without considering the facts (Karami, Lungdy, Wedd, Turner-McKeever & McKeever, 2021). However, Twitter as a source of information has the capability to hold individuals, governments, and the private sector accountable. It can

only do so if legitimate information is shared. Meanwhile, the danger of sharing inaccurate information is inevitable and cannot be circumvented.

,For the past few years the evolution of Twitter has been at the centre of global discussion. It has a significant influence on people's lives and aims to support traditional modes of socialising and engaging (Nabatchi & Mergel, 2018). Furthermore, Twitter attempts to enhance the modern form of communication in the current circumstances (Alshaabi, Adams, Arnold, Minot, Dewhurst, Reagan, Danforth & Dodds, 2021). Thus, the expansion of Twitter may be claimed to be one of the components of the contemporary phenomena of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. (4IR). The following section discusses the research problem of the study.

1.2. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Twitter, as a microblogging platform, is replete with misinformation and fake news, limiting its efficacy as a source of valuable information. The rapid growth of information exchange and receiving has radically altered in a relatively short amount of time, impeding our ability to comprehend its value (Blankenship & Graham, 2020). Most of the Twitters' information is unregulated, which poses a significant predicament in terms of the content posted on various social networking sites. Hence, Blankenship (2020) indicates that the dilemma is that actions attempted to govern misinformation and propaganda frequently end in less openness of content and press confinement when in actual reality the opposite must happen.

While acknowledging Twitter's significance, it has recently acquired popularity and is occasionally misused (Siddiqui & Singh, 2016). Recognising that Twitter used to be a source for disseminating and enlightening the public on the socioeconomic and political landscape, it is now utilised for amusement and, to a greater extent, to misinform the public (Siddiqui & Singh, 2016). As a result, because individuals may freely express themselves, there is a lot of erroneous information, misguided information, and false news that harms Twitter's ability to operate as a watchdog for the public (Karami, Lungdy, Wedd, Turner-McKeever & McKeever, 2021).

To some extent, Twitter is an untrustworthy source of information due to misinformation and fake news. Blankenship (2020) emphasises that while the phrase "fake news" is frequently used to describe information that contradicts a person's ideas, misinformation and disinformation are more severe concerns. The author further lengthens that the concept "information pollution" is a more pertinent concept that encompasses all of these (fake news, misinformation, and disinformation and mal information) concepts. When false information is broadcasted, it is easier for it to spread and be picked up in press reporting and publications, which are then mentioned in social media posts. Misinformation has the highest potential of spreading when content leverages sentiments of dominance, wrath, or terror towards another person (Blankenship, 2020). The misinformation and fake news make Twitter an unreliable source of information (Ross & Rivers, 2018). Thus, Paul (2018) opines that fallacious narratives and news are 70% more likely to be retweeted on Twitter than legitimate ones. This suggests that most people are quick to tweet without doing thorough the background of the narratives and news. This study identified this as a gap in the literature that needs to be addressed. The study argues that the dissemination of misinformed tweets weakens the ability of Twitter to be a profound source of information to the public. The next section below discusses the significance of the study. Meanwhile, this study establishes that tweeps are core contributors to the misinformation on tweets because they are the one disseminates information that is at times controversial, fallacious, and untrue which could harm the companies, individuals and government. Consequently, it raises questions about the legitimacy of Twitter as a source of reliable information.

Fake news is being utilised to influence politics and promote business. It is defined as news items that are purposely and verifiably untrue to distort people's views of reality (CiTs, 2023). However, it has also become a tool for inciting and intensifying societal discord. Untrue stories that purposely mislead users have increased mistrust among the American people. In certain circumstances, this suspicion manifests itself as incivility, protest over fictitious events, or brutality. Nations abroad and even corporations employ false news for two distinct purposes. First, they exacerbate social strife to erode people's trust in the democratic process and their capacity to

collaborate. Second, they divert attention away from vital concerns, causing them to go unaddressed (CiTs, 2023).

While some false news appears to be harmless or even amusing, many fake news may be destructive, malevolent, and even dangerous. The risks of misinformation are obvious. For example, disclosing a person's private address might put them in danger. The hazards of misinformation and deception are subtler. Fake news is designed to influence people's ideas, attitudes, or perceptions, causing them to modify their behaviour (PeoplesBank, 2019; Arreerard & Senivongse, 2018). If you trust bogus news, someone else is influencing your thoughts and decisions. Furthermore, in certain parts of the world, writing and disseminating fake news can result in legal penalties. Misinformation may also be a source of worry for cyber security. Fake news stories might serve as entry points for hackers looking to steal information (Arreerard & Senivongse, 2018). It can pose serious risks and have harmful effects for people, society, and even democracies.

1.3. PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review is considered the backbone of any study and provides a comprehensive literature review of what other authors have researched and studied in relation to the subject under study.

1.3.1. Misinformation on Twitter

Twitter is a place of unregulated engagement; hence, Twitter can produce both positive and negative results (Siddiqui & Singh, 2016). Therefore, one of the positive effects of Twitter is to disseminate government information for people to access. Moreover, it can also be used as an educational tool for raising awareness and for society (Murthy, 2018). Twitter allows people to keep their current situation up-to-date and use it to increase government accountability. In this way, it allows people to actively participate and make informed decisions to improve their socio-economic status (Jaidka, 2022). Thus, as the source of information in the current time, Twitter also has some negative effects. This can have adverse effects including the

dissemination of potentially harmful information and the dissemination of information whose content is so sensitive that it could not be disclosed to a particular individual (Ziek, 2021). Most importantly, it can also inadvertently damage or destroy the image of an individual or organisation (Karami et al., 2021). This may be due to the public disclosure of false, unconfirmed, invalid information (Karami et al., 2021). Twitter does not guarantee privacy issues as it can be hacked or compromised. However, the existing literature does not cover the usage of the tweeps' perceptions of misinformation on Twitter in Limpopo Province, South Africa.

Assessing the effectiveness of Twitter in eliminating false information is a complex task that requires considering various perspectives and multiple factors. When evaluating Twitter's efficacy in combating false information, several key aspects should be considered. Firstly, Twitter has established policies and guidelines to address the dissemination of false information (Ruz, Henriquez & Mascareno, 2020). These policies cover topics such as public health, elections, and other significant subjects. The platform has taken measures to label or remove false or misleading content and introduced warning labels to provide context and fact-checking information (Garcia & Berton, 2021).

Secondly, Twitter has partnered with independent fact-checking organisations to review and identify false or misleading information on its platform (Keller, Schoch, Stier & Yang, 2020). When these organisations flag such content, Twitter may label it or restrict its visibility (Garcia & Berton, 2021). These partnerships aim to enhance the credibility of information shared on the platform. Thirdly, Twitter allows users to report false or misleading content, which helps identify problematic posts (Wojcik & Hughes, 2019). The platform relies on user reports to support its enforcement efforts. However, the effectiveness of this system depends on the accuracy and efficiency of the reporting process (Wojcik & Hughes, 2019).

Fourthly, Twitter has made efforts to adjust its algorithms to reduce the visibility of false information (Wojcik & Hughes, 2019). By prioritising credible sources and limiting the reach of misinformation, the platform aims to strike a balance between filtering out false information and avoiding undue censorship (Mazza, Cresci, Avvenuti, Quattrociocchi & Tesconi, 2019). Despite these efforts, eradicating false information entirely on Twitter is a challenging task (Mazza, Cresci, Avvenuti, Quattrociocchi &

Tesconi, 2019). The platform's extensive user base enables false information to spread rapidly through retweets, mentions, and other mechanisms. Detecting and addressing every instance of misinformation in real-time presents significant challenges, and false information may persist despite Twitter's interventions (Wojcik & Hughes, 2019).

The effectiveness of Twitter's efforts also depends on the behaviour and critical thinking of its users (Wojcik & Hughes, 2019). While the platform can take steps to label or remove false information, users ultimately decide whether to trust or share the content they encounter (Wojcik & Hughes, 2019). Precisely measuring the impact of Twitter's actions on shaping public opinion and countering the influence of false information is difficult. Nevertheless, Twitter demonstrates a commitment to improving its effectiveness in combating false information (Mazza, et al., 2019). The platform regularly updates its policies and enforcement strategies based on user feedback, research, and emerging challenges. This ongoing effort reflects a dedication to enhancing the effectiveness of their interventions (Mazza, et al., 2019). Twitter has implemented policies, fact-checking partnerships, and algorithmic interventions to address false information. However, fully eradicating false information on a large and dynamic platform like Twitter remains a significant challenge. The effectiveness of Twitter's efforts can be influenced by factors such as the accuracy of reporting, user behaviour, and the continuous adaptation of their strategies.

1.3.2. Management of misinformation on Twitter

Eliminating disinformation while preserving free expression is a significant problem for social media firms. There are several counter measures that Twitter is working on to prevent misinformation on the platforms. To report misinformation; the author Nanou (2021) supported by Jain, Sharma, and Kaushal (2016) argues that one way to reduce misinformation is to report the suspicions of misinformation to the admin team of Twitter. The users of Twitter are familiar with the "report Tweet" from the dropdown menu. However, such kind of an option should be utilised to stop the widespread of abusive misinformation. There is also a "speak up in the comments section" wherein, is a direct approach to challenge the tweet by posting on the comment section (Nanou, 2021). Nanou (2021) further suggests that the use of blocking or muting users who spread propaganda is another effective way of cleaning up the misinformation on one's timeline. Hence, in doing so it would be minimal to spread misinformation on the

platform. Lastly, Twitter has launched the birdwatch initiative to give users of Twitter an option to counter misinformation. The birdwatch individuals can submit a remark with more information to offer open context to the community on a Tweet that they believe is deceptive.

There are several steps you can take to remove misinformation from Twitter. Twitter may invest in improved algorithms that detect and report misleading content (Ittefaq, Abwao & Rafique, 2021). This would require significant investment in machine learning and artificial intelligence but could help prevent the spread of misinformation (Ibid). Twitter can also rely on human moderators to review content and ensure it meets the platform's standards of accuracy and truthfulness (Sharevski, Alsaadi, Jachim & Pieroni, 2021). Such an approach would require a large group of moderators but would provide a more nuanced and comprehensive approach to combating misinformation (Sharevski, Alsaadi, Jachim & Pieroni, 2021). Twitter may also work with fact-checking organisations to provide users with accurate information and refute false claims. Such an approach would require cooperation with independent organisations but could help build trust in the platform and reduce the spread of misinformation (Gonzales, 2023). Misinformation on Twitter can have significant implications for individuals, communities, and society overall. Here are some key effects of misinformation on the platform:

Manipulation of public opinion: False narratives and biased information on Twitter can be employed to shape public opinion, distorting people's understanding of various issues, individuals, or events (Roozenbeek & Van der Linden, 2019). Twitter's fast-paced and algorithm-driven environment can intensify political polarisation. Misinformation that aligns with people's existing beliefs can quickly spread, leading to the formation of echo chambers and reinforcing confirmation bias, hindering productive dialogue, and contributing to societal divisions (Roozenbeek & Van der Linden, 2019).

The dissemination of false information on Twitter can tarnish the reputation of individuals, organisations, or public figures (Greenspan & Loftus, 2021). Even when misinformation is debunked, its initial circulation can cause long-lasting harm to credibility and public perception. Misinformation campaigns on Twitter can exert influence over elections and undermine democratic processes (Greenspan & Loftus,

2021). By spreading false information about candidates, promoting conspiracy theories, or casting doubt on the integrity of the electoral system, misinformation can manipulate voter behaviour and erode trust in democratic institutions (Greenspan & Loftus, 2021).

Misinformation concerning public health matters, such as treatments, vaccines, or disease transmission, can have severe consequences. Inaccurate information on Twitter can lead to harmful behaviours, delays in proper medical treatment, or the fostering of vaccine hesitancy, endangering public health efforts (Sharevski, Devine, Jachim & Pieroni, 2022). Misinformation on Twitter can also have economic ramifications (Greenspan & Loftus, 2021). False information about companies, products, or financial markets can cause stock market volatility, influence investment decisions, or harm the reputation and financial stability of businesses (Greenspan & Loftus, 2021).

The real-time nature of Twitter enables rapid dissemination of rumours and unverified information. During crises or emergencies, misinformation can incite panic, impede official response efforts, and lead to harmful or irrational behaviours among the public (Sharevski, Devine, Jachim & Pieroni, 2022). Misinformation can be weaponised on Twitter, resulting in targeted online harassment, doxing, or other forms of abuse. False accusations or harmful rumours circulated on the platform can inflict severe personal and psychological damage on those affected (Sharevski, Devine, Jachim & Pieroni, 2022).

Constant exposure to misinformation on Twitter can contribute to a broader erosion of trust in media and information sources (Greenspan & Loftus, 2021). Widespread sharing of false information, coupled with inadequate addressing of the issue, can foster scepticism and make it challenging for users to distinguish reliable information from falsehoods (Greenspan & Loftus, 2021). Addressing misinformation on Twitter necessitates collaborative efforts from the platform itself, users, fact-checking organisations, and society. Promoting media literacy, critical thinking, and responsible sharing practices can help mitigate the impact of misinformation not only on Twitter but also in broader contexts (Sharevski, Devine, Jachim & Pieroni, 2022). The next section below deals with the pertinent theories which are aligned to the study.

1.3.3. Manipulation of public opinion

In the modern digital era, the dissemination of false or deceptive information to influence how the public perceives, believes, and acts is a noteworthy and intricate problem. This manipulation is orchestrated by diverse entities, such as governments, corporations, interest groups, and individuals, aiming to achieve their specific goals. Social media plays a critical part in manipulating public opinion. Hence, exploiting data gathered by social media platforms, manipulators can direct customised campaigns of misinformation at specific users. To sum up, social media manipulation is an intricate occurrence that takes advantage of the mechanics of internet communication to influence how the public thinks and acts. Dealing with this matter necessitates a multifaceted strategy that includes holding platforms accountable, educating about media literacy, and fostering joint endeavours among governments, technology firms, and society to cultivate a more positive online space.

What exacerbate this manipulation of public opinions is increasing usage of fake accounts on social media such as Twitter. Because Engaging in a misleading and troubling behaviour, the manipulation of false accounts on social media encompasses the crafting and deployment of fabricated or fake profiles. These profiles are used to interact with users and disseminate false information, propaganda, or pursue hidden agendas. This trend has gained prominence due to the extensive adoption of social media platforms and their ability to shape public viewpoints. The deceptive and worrisome practice of manipulating fake accounts on social media entails crafting and utilising fabricated or counterfeit profiles to interact with users and disseminate false information, propaganda, or achieve hidden agendas. This occurrence has grown more common due to the widespread adoption of social media platforms and their capacity to sway public sentiment.

1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

This section outlines the aim as well as the objectives of the study.

1.4.1 Aim of the study

The study aims to explore the tweeps' perceptions of misinformation on Twitter in Limpopo Province, South Africa.

1.4.2. Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To examine tweeps' perceptions of misinformation on Twitter.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of Twitter in eradicating misinformation.
- To recommend a regulatory framework to circumvent the dissemination of misinformation on Twitter.

1.5 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

This study is established on the basis that most of the literature has focused more on the significance of social media platforms such as Twitter in terms of information distribution. However, most of the literature has paid scant attention to the predicaments of what is shared on Twitter by tweeps. Hence this study dwells on the tweeps' perception of misinformation on Twitter. Consequently, Twitter has become a platform for individuals to share inaccurate information to damage nor harm other people's traits and organisational image. It has gone to a point wherein individuals create 'fake' accounts to share inaccurate information for their own selfish interests or cause confusion among Twitter users. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the tweeps' perceptions of misinformation on Twitter.

1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the context of this study, two theories are used i.e., Practice Theory and Liberal Theory.

1.6.1. Practice Theory

According to Couldry (2012), a Practice Theory is based on moving beyond the old debates about media effects, politics, the economy, and the ideological nature of the media. It is believed that practice theory seeks to focus our attention on the media as practised in life, in society, and in the world. It seeks to explain how the media as practice anchors and organises other human practices and experiences. In this study, this theory is particularly relevant in the context of new media, as social media is a major component of new media and because it highlights the evolution of political cultures characterised by public debate through mediated access in the form of YouTube, talk shows, studio debates and Twitter.

Brauchler and Postill, (2010) argue that the Practical Theory of media studies provides a new approach to tackle the core issues of the subject, such as media in everyday life, media and body and media production. In addition, Postil (2010) argues that Practice Theory is a new perspective that can be added to the existing strands of media theory, rather than a new practice paradigm for media studies. Moreover, it also reveals the importance of society because it rejects the general tendency to treat the media separately from social life, and ethnographic cases after cases reveal the relationship between media practices and the cultural framework of reference. The relevance of this theory in the study is that it links to Twitter in a way that allows tweeps to critically engage in the affairs of the country and on individual basis ranging from political space, personal affairs. Hence, most of the information about politics is shared on Twitter almost every day.

1.6.2. Liberal Theory

According to McQuail (1992), Liberal Theory suggests that the media should be free from any form of external interference. This theory believes that the media should be free to report on public issues so that important features of liberal society can be maintained, for example, the protection of rights such as free speech, or the monitoring of abuses of power (McQuail, 1989). Liberal Theory supports a free marketplace of ideas without interference from the government. The Liberal Theory believes that only a free press could act as a watchdog on government. In the interest of the study, this heory is appropriate because it endorses the importance of investigating the roles of Twitter and believes that news media should be free to report on public issues so that the crucial features of society can be maintained, for example, the protection of rights such as freedom of expression and monitoring of abuse of power by government officials. Likewise, Twitter as a new media empowers society to raise concerns about issues that are affecting them by the state. Ward (2014) indicates that the most realistic ultimate theory for democratic journalism is deliberative Liberal Theory.

A commitment to discussion in a diverse society necessitates journalists adopting limits and uses of their freedom to write articles that are not consistent with the Liberal Theory. Ward (2014) argues that publication technologies are a tool that may be utilised in a variety of ways, and a freedom of media cannot be utilised to advance

democracy. The author indicates and maintains that under Liberal Theory (i) a free press might be on the side of power monopolies or elites, (ii) a free press may advocate policies that restrict individual liberty, such as harsh defence restrictions or laws that discriminate against specific minorities, (iii) a free press may also be debased by people and irresponsible journalists who polarise debate and impede democratic deliberations, (iv) a free press is required but not sufficient for a democratic media. Despite all the criticisms by Ward (2014), the study stands firms on the Liberal Theory as a basis of exonerating people from the chains of limited freedom. In as much as media freedom has issues such as sharing wrong information, it is still a relevant platform for communication given that the world is now turning into a more digital age. The theory would mean that Twitter becomes a critical platform to enhance democracy and freedom of speech. The theory allows the public freedom to interact without any boundaries by the state. In fact, the theory talks to public participation in as far as social media (Twitter) is concerned.

The following section defines the key terms which are frequently used in the study.

1.7. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

1.7.1 Tweeps: People who use the Twitter online message service to send and receive messages known as tweets on Twitter. The name 'tweeps' comes from the social media website Twitter. It refers to the people or users who interact and utilises Twitter. It is a mix of the words Twitter and peeps. Tweeps is a colloquial term commonly used to refer to people active on Twitter, just as "peeps" is used to refer to people in general. It's a friendly and informal term that Twitter users can use to refer to their followers, friends, or the wider community on the platform (O'Glasser, Jaffe & Brooks, 2020).

1.7.2 Misinformation: False information shared without intent to harm. Misinformation is defined as erroneous or incorrect information that is disseminated through a variety of means, such as social media, websites, word of mouth or traditional media outlets, frequently unintentionally. Misinformation on Twitter, as on any social media platform, refers to the dissemination of false or misleading information that could provide misinformation or mislead users. Misinformation can take many different forms, including fake articles, fabricated images, false statistics, and more. It often goes viral on platforms like Twitter due to the ease of sharing and virality of the content (Vraga & Bode, 2020).

1.7.3 Twitter: A social media platform, where participants can share thoughts or opinions on pressing issues that are of concern to the public. Twitter recently known as X is a widely used social media platform that allows users to post and interact with short messages known as "tweets". These tweets are limited to a specific number of characters, helping to promote brief and immediate communication. Twitter allows individuals, organisations, and businesses to share thoughts, news, updates, and different types of content with a global audience in real time (Vicente, 2023).

1.7.4 Tweets: Short messages used on Twitter that allows users to share their thoughts, ideas and news in real time quickly and easy. A tweet is a short and concise message posted on the social media platform Twitter. Tweets are limited to a maximum of 280 characters, including spaces and punctuation, which encourages users to communicate succinctly and directly. Twitter is widely used to share thoughts, opinions, news, updates, links, images and other types of content (Mahdikhani, 2022).

1.7.5 Retweet: A feature on Twitter that allows users to share or repost content created by another user on their timeline retweet (often abbreviated as "RT") refers to the act of retweeting a tweet from another user to your followers. It's basically a way to share someone else's tweets with your audience. When you retweet a tweet, it will appear on your profile and in the feeds of your followers, allowing them to view and interact with the content you share. There are two main ways to retweet a tweet on Twitter:

Retweet often: This is the simplest form of retweet. Under each tweet there is a "Retweet" button represented by an arrow icon that forms a circle. When you click this button, the original tweet will be shared to your profile without any additional comments. The original author's username is mentioned in the retweet for credit.

Quote retweeted:
When you click the "Retweet" button, you also have the option to "Quote Tweet". Selecting this option allows you to add your own comments, context, or reactions to the original tweet. The quoted tweet includes the body of the original tweet as well as the text you've added. This type of retweet is useful for sharing your thoughts on a tweet or providing more information to your followers. Retweeting serves several purposes on Twitter (Naumzik & Feuerriegel, 2022).

1.7.6 Share: The act of reposting or forwarding a tweet from one user to another users' timeline. Share usually refers to the act of retweeting or retweeting a tweet that someone else has posted to your followers. When you share a tweet, it appears on your own Twitter profile and your followers can see it in their feed. The concept of sharing on Twitter is like retweeting, which is the official term used on the platform. Share on Twitter refers to the act of retweeting, i.e., retweeting someone else's tweet to your followers, with the ability to add your own comments (Modrek & Chakalov, 2019).

1.7.7 Repost: The act of sharing someone else's tweet on your own Twitter account. repost generally refers to the act of sharing or posting someone else's content to your own profile or feed. This can include text, images, videos, links, or any other form of content previously posted by other users. Reposting allows you to share content that you find interesting, relevant, or valuable with your own followers or connections. Reposting is a common practice on platforms like Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and others. It can serve a variety of purposes, such as: Share information: Reposting allows you to share news, articles, memes, or anything else that you think your followers will be interested in. Wang, Niu and Yu (2019) list and explain diverse ways of sharing as follows:

Support others: You can repost content to show your support for friends, colleagues, or other users' creative work.

Conservation content: Reposting allows you to create a feed that reflects your interests by sharing content from a variety of sources.

Build relationships: Reposting someone's content can foster a sense of community and engagement because it recognises their contributions.

Achieve vision: If you're a content creator, asking others to repost your content can help you reach a wider audience.

1.8. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of the study is to annotate the existing literature regarding the Tweep's perceptions of misinformation on Twitter. Consequently, the study attempts to close such a gap in the literature. The study would also assist the prospective scholars who wish to study the same phenomena. Hence, it would provide inferences

which would not necessarily be final but could be used as a guideline for future researchers. It would also assist the readers to be conscious of the subject under investigation. The findings of the study would also assist the policymakers to make an informed decision about the tweep's perception of misinformation on Twitter. Hence, it would provide sufficient analysis of the tweep's perceptions of misinformation on Twitter.

1.9. OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

1.9.1. Chapter 1

Chapter 1 of this study covers the introduction and background of the study. All the full details about what the study is all about, what the researcher intends to achieve in undertaking the study and what influences the researcher to undertake the study.

1.9.2 Chapter 2

Chapter 2 focuses on the literature review of the study. The review covers the previous research that is related to this study. The literature review follows what the previous researchers have discovered about the undertaken study and how that information relates to the current study.

1.9.3 Chapter 3

Chapter 3 focuses on the research design and methodology that the researcher is using in analysing the data. All the kinds of methods and techniques the researcher is using to analyse data for this study.

1.9.4 Chapter 4

Chapter 4 focuses on analysing the data on the study. The data is categorised into relevant themes which enable the researcher to report the finding. The outcomes from this study are also discussed in this chapter.

1.9.5 Chapter 5

Chapter 5 focuses on the conclusion and recommendations. This chapter summarises all the previous chapter and gives recommendations on the study. This chapter furthermore discussed the limitation and delimitations of the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to critically synthesise, describe and discuss the tweeps perceptions of misinformation on Twitter. Hence, a literature review is considered the backbone of this study and provides a comprehensive literature review of what other authors have researched and studied in relation to the subject under study. Aveyard and Bradbury-Jones (2019) summarises the definition of literature review, highlighting that a literature review is a summary of previously published research and writings related to a particular subject. It refers to a complete academic article or part of an academic work, such as a book or an article. A literature review is a comprehensive investigation and interpretation of the literature on specific topics. A literature review is an opportunity to tell the narrative by opening a space for a topic and research questions related to previous research. By reporting the critical views on relevant literature and determining the gaps that the research will attempt to address, the literature will locate and determine the importance of the topic or problem in the broader academic world of the discipline or field of research.

2.2 OVERVIEW OF TWITTER IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Twitter is a social media platform, where participants share thoughts on pressing issues that are of concern to the public (Sashi, Brynildsen & Bilgihan, 2019). This allows the users to freely express their opinions and solutions to issues that affect the public. Twitter has given much access to disseminate short pieces of messages that can be read in a short period, which saves time when reading and typing (Rosenberg, Syed & Rezaie, 2020). Misinformation suggests that social media users are spreading inaccurate information without negative intent (Malatji & Modiba, 2019). This chapter covers the effects of twitter's misinformation on tweeps/society and twitter's response in addressing misinformation amongst others.

Twitter is a social media platform that allows users to share short messages called tweets with their followers (Balakrishnan, Khan, Fernandez & Arabnia, 2019). Tweets are limited to 280 characters, making them a quick and easy way to share thoughts, ideas and news in real time. One of the advantages of tweets is their brevity (Vincente, 2023). Unlike longer content, tweets are easy to digest and can be consumed quickly.

This makes them a popular choice for news and updates, especially during events such as natural disasters or political protests such as the coronavirus epidemic (Dey, Shrivastava, Kaushik & Garg, 2019). Twitter can reach a large audience with over 330 million active users worldwide, and anyone with an account can share, retweet and discuss. It gives individuals and organisations a powerful tool to spread their messages and build their brands (Tommasetti, de Oliveira Leite, Mothe Maia & da Silva Macedo, 2021). However, the brevity of tweets can also be a disadvantage. With only 280 characters, it can be difficult to convey complex ideas or nuanced arguments. This can lead to misunderstandings and miscommunication, especially when discussing controversial topics. Twitter can be a very polarising platform, with users often retreating into echo chambers, where they only interact with like-minded people (Singh & Glinska-Newes, 2022). This can lead to a lack of diversity of views and a breakdown in civil debate. Twitter remains a popular and influential form of communication in the digital age. They provide a quick and easy way to share news, ideas and opinions with a global audience, making them an essential tool for individuals and organisations who want to build their brand and connect with their followers (Singh & Glinska-Newes, 2022).

Online social networks enhance the democratisation of information dissemination because they are all about hearing and seeing opinions about pressing issues and other users' reactions to them (Dzisah, 2018). It is assumed that the medium is the message and that a symbiotic relationship exists between the message and the medium, each affecting how the other is perceived. It can be used to understand the role of online social networks in the field of activity (Ewing, Men & O'Neil, 2019). From the perspective of how social media can contribute to advancing transformation in communication. Social media platforms are essential as they give us access to all the information on the internet. This means that the information is available to anyone who has access to it (Chu, Chen & Gan, 2020). Twitter is a widely popular social media platform that has had a significant impact on various aspects of society (Park, Park & Chong, 2020). Here are some key aspects that highlight the significance of Twitter:

2.2.1. Real-time information: Twitter is known for its fast-paced and real-time nature. It allows users to post short messages, called tweets, of up to 280 characters. This format makes it an ideal platform for breaking news, updates, and discussions on current events. Many individuals, organisations, and news outlets use Twitter to share

information as it happens, making it a valuable source of immediate and often uncensored news (Park, Park & Chong, 2020). Global reach and connectivity: Twitter have a massive user base spanning across the globe. It has become a platform for connecting with people from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and professions. This global reach facilitates communication and exchange of ideas on a wide range of topics. Users can follow accounts of their interest, engage in conversations, and build networks with like-minded individuals, experts, influencers, and even celebrities (Naseem, Razzak, Khushi, Eklund & Kim, 2021).

2.2.2. Amplification of voices: Twitter has played a crucial role in amplifying voices that may not have received mainstream attention. It has provided a platform for marginalised communities, activists, and ordinary individuals to share their perspectives, raise awareness about social issues, and mobilise support for various causes. The use of hashtags has become a powerful tool for organising movements and sparking conversations on topics like social justice, activism, and humanitarian crises (Wilson & Starbird, 2020).

2.2.3. Political influence: Twitter has become a significant platform for political discourse and engagement. Political leaders, government officials, and politicians often use Twitter to communicate directly with the public, share their views, and make policy announcements. Twitter has played a role in shaping political narratives, mobilising support, and even triggering protests and revolutions in some cases (Chen, Deb & Ferrara, 2021).

2.2.4. Marketing and brand promotion: Many businesses, organisations, and public figures leverage Twitter as a marketing and promotional tool. It allows them to reach a large audience, engage with customers, build brand awareness, and conduct market research. Twitter's advertising options enable targeted campaigns and provide valuable insights into consumer trends and preferences (Campbell, Sands, Ferraro, Tsao & Mavrommatis, 2020).

2.2.5. Influence on popular culture: Twitter has had a profound influence on popular culture. Memes, viral trends, and hashtags originating from Twitter often spread rapidly and become part of broader conversations in society. It has also given rise to a new breed of influencers and internet personalities who have gained fame and built careers through their presence on the platform (Sashi, Brynildsen & Bilgihan, 2019).

Overall, Twitter's significance lies in its ability to connect people, facilitate real-time information sharing, amplify diverse voices, and shape conversations on a global scale. Its impact on various domains, including news, politics, social issues, marketing, and popular culture, cannot be overlooked (Farsi, 2021). Uddin, Imran and Sajjad (2014) indicate that people use microblogging services such as Twitter to interact with other users on an array of topics and behaviours. Twitter is controlled by several sorts of users, including individuals, bots, spammers, companies, and experts. The authors identify six categories of Twitter users which are outlined here below:

2.2.5.1. Viral/Marketing Services: Viral marketing, or advertising, refers to marketing tactics used by marketers to boost awareness of a brand, revenue, or other advertising ambitions using technologies/social media such Twitter. To complete their marketing responsibilities, people utilise a viral process, which is a more advanced sort of bot (i.e., an intelligent bot that transmits content while also producing bogus likes, follows, and so forth.

2.2.5.2. Personal Users: Personal users could be defined as individual users who are ordinary home users who use Twitter for enjoyment, studying, or acquiring news, among other things. These users do not strongly support any sort of company or product, nor are they affiliated with any group. In general, they have an individual pro attitude and exhibit minimal to moderate conduct in social interactions.

2.2.5.3. Professional Users: They are home users who use Twitter for business purposes. They exchange relevant information about certain issues and engage in constructive debate about their areas of interest and competence. Professional users are very involved; they follow and are followed by numerous Twitter users. Perhaps, this could be well renowned individuals with great influence on the society.

2.2.5.4. Business Users: Business users are distinct from personal/professional users in that they use Twitter for advertising and commercial purposes. The positive description accurately portrays their motivation, and similar behaviour may be seen in their tweeting habit. Frequent tweeting and minimal engagement separate business users from individuals as well as professional users.

2.2.5.5. Spammers: Spammers frequently send out harmful tweets. Bots are usually programmed software applications that operate behind a spam profile and randomly follows users, hoping for a few to follow them back. Individual users can also spam,

however, they are typically not discovered since their spamming behaviour does not follow a routine that can be clearly identified in the case of a computerised spam profile. Furthermore, spam users' following diminish with time.

2.2.5.6. Feed/news: These profile kinds reflect automated services that send tweets including data obtained from news websites like as CNN, BBC, and others, or from various RSS feeds. Like spammers, bots frequently manage tweets posted by these profiles.

Misinformation is false or incorrect information spread intentionally or unintentionally (Wu, Morstatter, Carley & Liu, 2019). This has become more common in the age of social media and can have harmful consequences (Treen, Williams & O'Neill, 2020). misinformation can have a wide range of consequences, from causing confusion and mistrust to physical injury or even death (Treen, Williams & O'Neill, 2020). It can spread through various channels including social media, news channels and even word of mouth (Lewandowsky & Van Der Linden, 2021). Misinformation often relies on people's fears and prejudices and can be difficult to correct once it has been widely disseminated (Scheufele & Krause, 2019).

Misinformation on Twitter can undermine trust in public institutions, media organisations, and even scientific research, with serious consequences for public health and safety (Scheufele & Krause, 2019). Misinformation can spread quickly on Twitter and lead to harmful beliefs and actions. For example, misinformation about vaccinations can lead people to forego important vaccinations (Roozenbeek & Van Der Linden, 2019). Misinformation can also lead to echo chambers where people are only exposed to information that reinforces their existing beliefs (Roozenbeek & Van Der Linden, 2019). This can reinforce wrong ideas and make fruitful discussion difficult. Misinformation can also contribute to social and political conflict, as people who believe in different things can become entrenched in their positions and undermine finding common ground (Scheufele & Krause, 2019).

Twitter has proven to be an effective distribution channel for disinformation (Keller, Schoch & Yang, 2020). Studies show that fake news is shared more frequently on social media than on news media stories (Al-Zaman, 2021). The power of fake news and disinformation depends on how far it can penetrate the social sphere (Jeronimo & Esparza, 2022). Jeronimo & Esparza, (2022) assert that to understand the spread of false information two aspects are important which are technology and trust.

Social and digital communication technologies, such as social networks and blogs, are powerful tools for users to publish, distribute, and consume information, and are more decentralised than previous mass media technologies (Al-Zaman, 2021). Therefore, in many countries, it seems that misinformation and misleading information reach the public more easily through digital social media. The democratisation of online content production has greatly reduced the traditional control of information by the news media (Osterbur & Kiel, 2021). Through digital media, it is possible to reach a global audience. Editors and publishers were the main gatekeepers of information in the mass media era, but technology platforms and algorithms are the new gatekeepers (Osterbur & Kiel, 2021). Twitter plays a unique role in spreading information. Social media, especially Twitter, has become a major entry point for news in many countries (Boon-Itt & Skunkan, 2020)

2.3. MISINFORMATION ON TWITTER

The validity of information has long been a source of concern for businesses and society, affecting both traditional and online media. In social networks, the extent and consequences of transmission of information are so rapid and magnified that distorted, erroneous, or fraudulent information has a significant potential to generate real-world consequences for millions of users within minutes (Figueira & Oliveira, 2017). There is no doubt that the public has access to an abundance of information as well as a plethora of services via the internet. Because of the instantaneous nature of social media platforms such as Twitter, it is unsurprising that individuals, government entities and non-governmental organisations use them to ensure immediate awareness in circumstances of breaking incidents like hurricanes or tornadoes or terrorist invasions. However, misinformation is a dilemma in all mainstream press, however, it is amplified

throughout social networking sites because of the rapidity and simplicity with which it can be spread: the digital platform allows individuals to disseminate information quickly without verification of truth. It can have a catastrophic effect on the smooth operation of public order and a negative impact when it devalues and delegitimises the message and perspectives of public institutions and experts.

Propaganda on Twitter involves the dissemination of misleading or biased information, ideas, or narratives to influence public opinion and promote a specific agenda. Twitter is strategically utilised as a social media platform to manipulate public sentiment towards political, ideological, or commercial objectives. This propaganda on Twitter can manifest in various forms, including false news articles, deceptive media content, manipulated facts, and the amplification of partisan perspectives (Caldarelli, De Nicola, Del Vigna, Petrocchi & Saracco, 2020). Tactics employed include emotional appeals, disinformation, spreading conspiracy theories, and the use of bots or coordinated accounts to artificially enhance the impact of the propaganda message. Twitter's rapid and extensive reach makes it an ideal platform for propagandists to reach a wide audience. The aim of propaganda on Twitter is to shape public perception, create discord, influence elections, or manipulate public discourse in favour of a specific ideology, political candidate, or interest group (Jones, 2019).

It is crucial for Twitter users and individuals on other social media platforms to critically assess the information they encounter, verify sources, and remain vigilant about the potential impact of propaganda. Propaganda on Twitter involves the dissemination of biased or deceptive information, ideas, or stories to shape public opinion and advance agendas (Jones, 2019). This manipulation takes place through the calculated use of Twitter and similar social media platforms, with the aim of swaying public sentiment towards political, ideological, or commercial goals (Jones, 2019).

Propaganda on Twitter can appear in various forms, such as false news articles, misleading visuals, distorted facts, and the amplification of partisan perspectives (Jones, 2019). Tactics utilised include emotional appeals, spreading disinformation, promoting conspiracy theories, and employing bots or coordinated accounts to artificially boost the impact and reach of propaganda messages (Jones, 2019). Given Twitter's fast-paced and expansive nature, it provides fertile ground for propagandists to target large audiences effectively. The ultimate objective of Twitter propaganda is

to influence public perception, create divisions, impact elections, or manipulate public discourse in favour of specific ideologies, candidates, or interest groups (Jones, 2019). To guard against the influence of misleading narratives, Twitter users and those on other social media platforms must critically assess the information they encounter, verify sources, and exercise caution (Jones, 2019). Remaining vigilant and discerning can help mitigate the impact of propaganda and its potential consequences.

Being exposed to misinformation could reduce trust in the media industry including Twitter. Such exposure of misinformation makes it tougher to know the difference between facts and fictions. When one becomes conscious and believe that some of the things are possible to be fake, it is easier to discount or select what is legitimate information. As much as misinformation on Twitter is a human behaviour which is difficult to control, one cannot stop people from using Twitter. Such misinformation undermines the accuracy and reliability of Twitter as a tool to disseminate information. It is difficult to know the real information when one is online. While understanding that fake news and information have been around for quite some time, it is exacerbated by the evolvement of technology and social media which makes it harder to know what is and what is not accurate information. Here different types of misinformation below:

2.3.1. Satire

The author describes this as made-up narratives that are not meant to be taken seriously, normally they are written in a way of joking about news or celebrities. Satire on Twitter involves using humour, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to critique and comment on various topics, often related to politics, society, or culture, through short and succinct tweets (Su, McKasy, Cacciatore, Yeo, DeGrauw & Zhang, 2022). These satirical posts are carefully crafted to ridicule, question, or reveal the absurdities, inconsistencies, or faults within a specific subject, event, person, or trend. Given Twitter's character limit, satirical content on the platform often relies on clever wordplay and wit to effectively convey its message within the confined space (Su et al., 2022). Such tweets can come in the form of parody accounts, fabricated news stories, satirical takes on current happenings, or amusing reinterpretations of commonly known phrases or ideas.

It is important to acknowledge that while satire aims to amuse and provoke contemplation, there are instances when it might be misunderstood or taken out of context (Su et al., 2022). This potential for confusion becomes more pronounced when tweets are shared without appropriate background or without recognising the satirical intention they carry. Twitter has emerged as a favoured platform for satire due to its immediate nature and extensive reach, enabling satirical content to swiftly capture attention and circulate widely (Su et al., 2022). However, like any type of humour, the effectiveness of satire remains subjective, and what one individual find amusing and thought-provoking, another might view as offensive or unsuitable.

2.3.2. Clickbait

This is a type of fake news that is eye catching with misleading headlines designed to get people to click on certain hyperlinks to view. Clickbait on Twitter involves creating tweets in a sensational or deceptive way with the aim of luring clicks, interactions, and visits to a specific link or material (Hamza, & Laith, 2022). The primary objective of clickbait is to tempt users into clicking a link or engaging with a tweet by utilising exaggerated, provocative, or intriguing language, all without providing substantial or accurate details about the content they will encounter (Jain, Mowar, Goel & Vishwakarma, 2021). Clickbait tweets commonly utilise eye-catching phrases, compelling questions, attention-grabbing statements, or emotionally charged appeals to arouse the interest of users and prompt them to click on the linked content (Jain et al., 2021). However, upon clicking, users may discover that the actual content does not live up to the expectations set by the tweet.

Clickbait can serve various purposes, such as directing traffic to websites, boosting engagement metrics (such as retweets, likes, and comments), or promoting products or services (Bazaco, et al., 2019). Although it can create initial interest, clickbait might also lead to user dissatisfaction if the real content fails to match the promised excitement or significance (Hamza, & Laith, 2022). Users of Twitter should exercise caution when encountering clickbait, as it's crucial to critically evaluate the accuracy and credibility of the promoted content before clicking the link or getting more involved. Moreover, Twitter's guidelines discourage the use of misleading or deceitful tactics to manipulate user behaviour, meaning that certain forms of clickbait could potentially violate the platform's rules and regulations (Jain et al., 2021; Hamza, & Laith, 2022; Bazaco et al., 2022).

2.3.3. Propaganda

This refers to false information written to advance political agenda. Propaganda encompasses information, concepts, or messages that are meticulously crafted and spread with the intent of influencing and moulding public viewpoints, attitudes, beliefs, or actions toward a specific purpose, notion, group, or person. It serves to champion a distinct ideology, political stance, merchandise, facility, or even to control individuals' interpretations of occurrences, individuals, or matters (Pavlíková, Šenkýřová, & Drmola, 2021).

The methodologies of propaganda often entail employing persuasive and manipulative strategies, like evoking emotions, amplification, dissemination of false information, selective presentation of facts, and repetition (Baumann, 2020). The underlying aim of propaganda is to establish a one-sided narrative that advocates for a specific agenda while minimising contradictory perspectives or intricacies (Guess, & Lyons, 2020). However, throughout history, governments, establishments, political collectives, and advertisers have historically employed propaganda to attain their objectives. It manifests in diverse forms, including speeches, posters, adverts, social media entries, news articles, and more (Pavlíková et al., 2021). Propaganda can be subtle or conspicuous, and its efficacy hinges on the willingness of the intended audience, the credibility of the source, and the techniques used to convey the message (Baumann, 2020; Guess & Lyons, 2020). Exercising critical evaluation and inquiry is vital to discerning genuine information from propaganda, as the latter frequently endeavours to manipulate perceptions and behaviours, rather than providing an impartial and comprehensive understanding of a subject (Pavlíková et al., 2021).

2.3.4. Mistakes

A mistake happens, and sometimes certain information could be presented wrongly and unintentionally. All these different types of false information take a centre stage on all social media platforms, especially on Twitter. A lack of information on Twitter continues to be at the top of the agenda in the public eye. Thus, this problem led to the public viewing the Twitter solely as an entertainment platform. The following are the effects of misinformation on Twitter: A mistake is an error or an inaccurate action or choice arising from oversight, confusion, lack of knowledge, or similar reasons. It represents a departure from what is deemed precise, correct, or intended (Hassonah, Al-Sayyed, Rodan, Ala'M, Aljarah & Faris ,2020). Mistakes can emerge across

different spheres of life, encompassing personal, work-related, academic, and daily activities. Their seriousness can range from minor and inconsequential slip-ups to more substantial missteps that carry potential repercussions. Mistakes are inherent to the human journey of learning and growth. They present chances for personal development, self-enhancement, and the acquisition of fresh insights. Mistakes can serve as valuable sources of lessons and wisdom, aiding individuals in honing their skills and decision-making abilities (Naseem, Razzak & Eklund, 2021). Responses to mistakes can differ, certain individuals may interpret them as learning opportunities, striving to rectify them, while others might experience frustration or embarrassment (Kumar, Singh, Dwivedi & Rana, 2020).

In numerous contexts, admitting and taking accountability for mistakes holds significance for individual progress and the preservation of trust and credibility in both professional and social relationships. Mistakes can manifest as isolated incidents or as sequences of actions resulting in undesirable outcomes. Identifying mistakes, comprehending their origins, and working to avert their recurrence constitute pivotal stages in the journey of self-improvement and continual learning (Mohapatra, Ahmed & Alencar, 2019).

2.3.5. False Perception

Twitter is flooded with misinformation, often misleading the public into making decisions, generating negative emotions, and posing serious threats to the community's safety and social order. A false perception is an insight that people have about a person or organisation, which are not true or is inaccurate (Mena, 2020). Similarly, Kumar and Shah (2018) define false perceptions as a false or inaccurate perception that the public have about a particular person. Misinformation when spread, particularly by a person who has many followers, the public tend to believe it, therefore, getting people to have the wrong ideas or perceptions about that person (Mena, 2020). Developing the wrong ideas about a person is a big drawback of misinformation. However, when a strong person with many followers misleads people about an incident, the tweeps will believe it without question and probably starts sharing and retweeting about it as well. The public change their perceptions of the person being tweeted about and become misled by the information without researching the facts

themselves. Therefore, twitter is sometimes and not always used to frame an issue or people by misleading the public.

False perceptions occur when individuals distort or misinterpret reality, forming beliefs or judgments that do not align with objective facts or evidence. These perceptions are subjective and can be influenced by personal biases, cognitive biases, limited information or incorrect interpretations. They can manifest in various aspects of life, such as personal relationships, social interactions, politics, science, and other domains. There are several reasons why false perceptions (which include amongst others the biases and prejudices) means that people may have biases or prejudices based on their personal experiences, cultural background, or societal conditioning (Mena, 2020). These biases can lead to distorted perceptions of people, events, or situations, resulting in inaccurate judgments. Moreover, limited Information is one of the reasons that contributes to false perceptions in a sense that inadequate or inaccurate information can contribute to false perceptions (Mena, 2020). When individuals have only partial knowledge or rely on biased or unreliable sources, they may draw incorrect conclusions or make unfounded assumptions.

Humans are susceptible to cognitive biases, which are systematic errors in thinking. Hence, these biases can affect how information is processed, leading to inaccurate perceptions (Meel & Vishwakarma, 2020). Examples include confirmation bias (favouring information that supports existing beliefs), availability bias (relying on easily accessible information), or anchoring bias (overreliance on initial information received). It includes emotions that can influence perceptions and lead to false interpretations. For instance, individuals experiencing fear, anger, or sadness may perceive neutral situations as threatening or negative. Emotional states can colour one's perspective and result in distorted perceptions of reality (Meel & Vishwakarma, 2020).

False perceptions also take part in terms of social influence, wherein people's perceptions can be shaped by the opinions, attitudes, and behaviours of others. Social norms, peer pressure, or groupthink can influence individuals' perceptions, even when they contradict objective reality. One cannot ignore cognitive processes whereby human cognition involves various mental processes, including attention, memory, and reasoning (Hopp, Ferrucci & Vargo, 2020). Errors or limitations in these processes can

contribute to false perceptions (Hopp, Ferrucci & Vargo, 2020). For example, selective attention may cause individuals to focus on specific details while disregarding others, leading to an incomplete or biased perception of reality. Therefore, it is crucial to recognise false perceptions and strive for objectivity by seeking diverse perspectives, questioning assumptions, critically evaluating information sources, and being mindful of personal biases. Developing critical thinking skills and engaging in open-minded discussions can help mitigate false perceptions and foster a more accurate understanding of the world.

The PeoplesBank (2019) shows that fake news, also known as information disorder, makes it difficult to discern what is genuine and may constitute one of the major threats to personal security. Understanding the subtleties of false news may assist users identify it and limit its negative impacts. The PeoplesBank further conceptualises fake news, in general, as a false story that is produced and marketed as if it were genuine. Historically, fake news was mainly propaganda disseminated by people in authority to instil a particular belief or support a particular stance, even if it was wholly untrue. Because of social media such as Twitter, anybody with an agenda may now disseminate lies as if they were true. People can be hired to post false news on someone else's behalf, or automated systems, sometimes known as bots, can publish auto-generated erroneous information (PeoplesBank, 2019). The reasons why people generate and spread false news are as varied as individual perspectives. The PeoplesBank describes the following concepts which are related to fake news as follows:

2.3.5.1. Misinformation: Some people share erroneous information without intending to cause damage. People who disseminate disinformation think it is real before distributing it to other people. Misinformation is defined as erroneous or inaccurate information that is disseminated with no aim to deceive.

2.3.5.2. Disinformation: People may transmit false information to damage or manipulate others. Disinformation refers to genuine lies that individual utter to gain power, control, or cause chaos.

2.3.5.3. Malinformation: Information that, while genuine, is distributed maliciously or misconstrued out of perspective. Confidential information disclosure or fact manipulation to fit a misleading narrative are two examples.

2.3.6 Reputational Injury

Misinformation can cause injury to individuals by spreading false allegations, causing reputational damage, or encouraging assault or harassment (Wang, Mckee, Torbica & Stuckle, 2019). Because of the dissemination of incorrect data regarding them, individuals may become victims of online abuse or face real-life consequences. This can have serious emotional, psychological, and social consequences for people and communities (Suarez-Lledo & Alvarez-Galvez, 2021). Reputational injury, alternatively referred to as reputational harm or damage, pertains to the adverse effect on the reputation of an individual or an entity, be it an organisation, caused by multiple factors like unfavourable incidents, deeds, expressions, or public viewpoints (Samoilenko, Icks, Keohane & Shiraev, 2019). This situation arises when the way the public views a person, business, or entity undergoes a negative transformation, resulting in the erosion of trust, credibility, and favourable opinion.

Most importantly, allegations and accusations are at the centre of causing reputational injury to organisations, governments and individuals. Because social media can serve as a medium through which individuals or collectives can make accusations or claims of misconduct against an individual, entity, or business, potentially resulting in negative repercussions (Durán, 2023). Allegations encompass declarations or assertions concerning an individual, entity, or circumstance, indicating the occurrence of something unfavourable or unlawful (Schoemaker, 2019). These assertions might rely on evidence, suspicions, or accounts from witnesses, yet they are not conclusively verified facts. Similarly, accusations involve stronger assertions that distinctly attribute a specific action or behaviour to someone or something (Gardiner, 2021). These claims carry a more pronounced insinuation of misconduct and could include assigning fault or accountability (Gardiner, 2021). Like allegations, accusations might lack evidence for support when initially stated. At the end, both allegations and accusations may lead to reputational injury.

It arises from negative publicity wherein, media reporting, posts on social media platforms, or news articles that spotlight improper conduct, scandals, or contentious actions have the potential to damage a reputation (Chun, Argandoña, Choirat & Siegel, 2019; Durán, 2023). Be that as it may, Negative publicity on social media pertains to the adverse focus, critique, or unfavourable remarks directed at an individual, brand, business, or group via diverse social media channels. This encompasses the sharing

of content that presents the subject in an unfavourable manner, possibly harming their image, trustworthiness, and how they are viewed by the public (Durán, 2023). However, the danger of negative publicity which might case reputational injury is that unfavourable attention received on social media platforms can lead to significant outcomes, such as a decline in customers, reduced sales, a compromised reputation, and lasting harm to brand loyalty (Intelligencer, 2019). It is essential for organisations to take proactive measures, handle grievances, offer precise details, and establish transparent communication to minimise the effects of adverse publicity.

2.4. A DEFAMATION OF CHARACTER

Defamation is the type of criminal activity consisting of the unlawful and intentional publication of words or actions relating to another person that harms or harms the status, reputation, character and or reputation of another person, (Algburi & igaab, 2021). As everyone has the right to express themselves, some people abuse this right by ruining people's character by defaming influential and powerful people by spreading wrong information about them. For example, the Daily Sun published that the recent late rapper AKA abused his girlfriend Nadia Nakai without proof, and this made trends on Twitter for months, tweeps labelling him as an abuser, which both said it was false accusation, leading to the users seeing him as an abuser (Seleme, 2022). Be that as it may, the Fourth Industrial Revolution, referred to as the "4IR" has given people around the world uninterrupted access to conversations both important and trivial in near real-time, enabling people to be exposed to a huge amount of unfiltered information and created a huge task, distinguishes between reliable sources, misinformation and fake news, while ensuring that the constitutional right to freedom of expression is respected (Kasabova, 2021). The 4IR can be described as a current and ever-evolving environment where disruptive technologies and trends are changing the way our society works (Mhlanga, 2022). Advanced surveillance technology and unlimited virtual connectivity trend has increased online activity and connectivity, allowing articles and opinions to gain ill repute and attention at an unrivalled rate.

The evolution of social media has resulted in significant changes to social networks in a variety of ways. They provide a space for social media users to discuss information, voice their opinions, and share common interests. Some facts and ideas, on the other hand, may have a negative influence on the person referenced in the article, and that

person may become the subject of defamation. Although defaming people on Facebook or Twitter is prohibited in Thailand, most individuals who use social media are unaware of this (Arreerard & Senivongse, 2018).

Social media defamation is a sort of libel in which a single entity makes a harmful and false statement of fact (rather than an opinion) about another individual and publishes it on any social network or platform wherein people can see it (Arreerard & Senivongse, 2018; Rafii, 2023). It might be a tweet, manipulated photographs and videos, comments on other people's postings or public boards, or something else. The possibility of defamatory information and false comments reaching a large audience has grown dramatically in the past few years, thanks to the advent of social networks, content aggregation sites, and online discussion. Some websites or social media platforms such as Twitter are even designed to facilitate the dissemination of startling material without any type of fact-checking or oversight. In today's social media age, bloggers, journalists and internet users may distribute inaccurate information about a person or business more easily and profitably than ever before (Rafii, 2023). Adultery or legal concerns including other unsuitable aspects are occasionally regulated in online material. However, most of the information is uncontrolled for defamatory aspects. As a result, it is critical that consumers, sharers, and potential victims grasp the reality of online defamation and defamation legislation (Rafii, 2023).

Defamation of character on Twitter involves spreading false and damaging statements about someone, which can harm their reputation (Wahyuni, 2020). This occurs through tweets or retweets that convey defamatory information to a wide audience on the platform. Defamation can take the form of slander (spoken defamation) or libel (written or printed defamation) (Wahyuni, 2020). It talks to the statement made about the individual must be factually false, rather than an expression of opinion or subjective interpretation. Moreover, the false statement must have caused or be likely to cause damage to the person's reputation, potentially affecting their personal or professional life (Wahyuni, 2020). It is important to recognise that defamation laws can vary across countries and regions (Wahyuni, 2020). If someone believes they have been a victim of defamation on Twitter, it is advisable for them to seek guidance from a legal

professional who is familiar with defamation laws in their jurisdiction (Wahyuni, 2020). This can help them understand their rights and explore potential legal remedies.

2.4.1. Decision-Making Mistakes

When people are exposed to erroneous information, they may make judgments based on wrong or partial facts (Wahyuni, 2020). This has major implications in a variety of domains, including individual wellness decisions, monetary choices, political engagement, and more. Misinformation can induce people to take behaviours that are harmful to their own or others' well-being (Wahyuni, 2020). Twitter can be a powerful tool for communication and information sharing, but it can also lead to various decision-making mistakes due to its unique characteristics and the way people interact on the platform (Ibrohim & Budi, 2019).

Some decision-making mistakes caused by Twitter also include Confirmation Bias: Twitter's algorithm tends to show you content that aligns with your existing beliefs and preferences, leading to confirmation bias. This can hinder your ability to consider diverse perspectives and make well-rounded decisions (Ibrohim & Budi, 2019).

Echo Chambers: Twitter's structure can create echo chambers, where users are primarily exposed to opinions and information that mirror their own. This can prevent you from being exposed to alternative viewpoints and result in decisions based on incomplete information (Mery, 2020).

Misinformation and Fake News: The rapid spread of information on Twitter can lead to the dissemination of misinformation and fake news. Making decisions based on inaccurate information can have serious consequences (Mery, 2020).

Impulsive Reactions: The brevity of tweets can encourage impulsive reactions without considering the full context. This can lead to hasty decisions that are not thoroughly thought out (Ibrohim & Budi, 2019).

Lack of Context: Due to the character limit, tweets often lack sufficient context, making it easy to misinterpret someone's intention or message. This can lead to misunderstandings and poor decision-making (Mery, 2020).

Mob Mentality: Twitter can sometimes encourage mob mentality, where groups of users collectively attack or criticise individuals or ideas. This can lead to decisions

made under the influence of groupthink rather than individual critical thinking (Mery, 2020).

Public Pressure and Shaming: The public nature of Twitter can expose individuals to public pressure and shaming, which might influence decisions that prioritise avoiding negative attention over sound judgment (Ibrohim & Budi, 2019).

Short-Term Focus: Twitter's fast-paced nature can promote a short-term focus on immediate reactions and trending topics, diverting attention from more important long-term considerations (Mery, 2020). Anonymity and Rudeness: The anonymity provided by Twitter can lead to a lack of civility and politeness in discussions. Engaging in heated debates or making decisions in a confrontational manner can hinder productive decision-making (Ibrohim & Budi, 2019).

2.4.2. Misinformation in the Public Sector

Misinformation in the public sector may be very hazardous. False information regarding illnesses, treatments, immunisations, or preventative measures can cause anxiety, dread, and distrust (Wahyuni, 2020). It might discourage people from practicing recommended health behaviours like immunisation and good cleanliness, which can promote disease transmission and weaken attempts to manage crises (Wahyuni, 2020). Misinformation in the public sector caused by Twitter, like any other platform, can have significant consequences. Social media platforms like Twitter can spread information quickly and widely, which can be both beneficial and harmful (Linvill & Warren, 2020). Here are a few ways that Twitter can fuel misinformation in the public sector:

Rapid spread: Twitter allows information to spread quickly due to its real-time nature and ability to repost posts. This can lead to the rapid dissemination of false or misleading information before the facts can be verified (Linvill & Warren, 2020). Reflector chamber: Twitter's algorithm can create feedback chambers in which users are exposed to information that matches their existing beliefs. This can reinforce misinformation as users are less likely to encounter opposing views or corrections (Linvill & Warren, 2020).

Limited background: Twitter's character limit can lead to oversimplification and dissemination of information without the right context. Complex questions can lead to

overly simplistic or misleading statements, contributing to misinformation (Yadav & Kumar, 2023).

Lack of verification: Unlike traditional media, Twitter lacks a rigorous editorial process and fact-checking process. Anyone can post information without verification, which makes it easier for misinformation to spread (Yadav & Kumar, 2023).

Virality and Clickbait: Misleading or sensational tweets are more likely to go viral, gain attention, and engage (Linvill & Warren, 2020). It can trick users into posting provocative or fake content to get their attention. Effects of Bots and Trolls: Automated bots and scammers can manipulate discussions by spreading misinformation, amplifying certain views, and creating the illusion of widespread support for a particular story (Linvill & Warren, 2020). Confirmation bias: People tend to trust and share information that is consistent with their pre-existing beliefs. Misinformation that confirms these stereotypes is more likely to be spread.

Lack of accountability: Because of the anonymity and pseudonyms are often present on Twitter, it can be irresponsible if misinformation is spread. Individuals cannot face consequences for sharing false or harmful information (Linvill & Warren, 2020).

2.4.3. Manipulation and Influence

Disinformation can be intentionally conveyed to manipulate and influence others. False information may swiftly spread on social media, reaching a large audience and affecting public opinion (Tandoc, Lim & Ling, 2020). Trolls and foreign entities, for example, may use disinformation to foment unrest, undermine democratic procedures, or push their own objectives (Tandoc, Lim & Ling, 2020). Manipulation and influence are both concepts associated with individuals' efforts to shape the thoughts, behaviours, and choices of others, although they vary in terms of their purpose and methodology.

2.4.3.1. Manipulation:

Manipulation entails employing cleverness, deception, or forceful strategies to control or mislead someone for personal benefit, frequently without their knowledge or agreement (Susser, Roessler & Nissenbaum, 2019). It commonly employs tactics that exploit emotions, weaknesses, or lack of knowledge (Aral, & Eckles, 2019). Manipulation is often driven by self-centred motives and typically centres on attaining a specific outcome advantageous to the manipulator (Aral, & Eckles, 2019). This could

involve untruths, emotional manipulation, gaslighting, leveraging guilt, or other forms of psychological pressure.

2.4.3.2. Influence:

In contrast to manipulation, influence refers to the capability to sway someone's viewpoints, decisions, or actions through convincing arguments, rational discourse, credibility, and respect (Conway, Chan & Woodard, 2020). Influence can be positive, ethically sound, and considerate. It often encompasses presenting facts, logical reasoning, emotional appeals, and shared values to motivate someone to contemplate and potentially adopt a particular stance or course of action (Conway et al., 2020).

To sum up, manipulation encompasses employing deceitful or forceful tactics to dominate others for personal gain, often at their detriment. Influence involves persuading others through ethical and considerate means to consider and potentially embrace a specific viewpoint or behaviour. The contrast between the two hinges on the intention and method used to realise the desired result.

2.5. TWITTER'S RESPONSE IN ADDRESSING MISINFORMATION

Misleading content on Twitter is raising red flags on the legitimacy of Twitter in information dissemination. The concern is that people continue to post, tweet and re-tweet information without verifying its authenticity. This continuous and malicious information that could damage the business and individual's image has led to Twitter taking some steps to conscientise users about its feature to prevent misinformation (Bhatia, 2023). To limit the amplification of misinformation, Twitter has introduced "labelling content" feature. From this feature, Twitter may label tweets to give users a notice to share additional context (Bhatia, 2023). The labelled tweets have less visibility. The second option to deal with misinformation is to have "Twitter moments". This is when Twitter is aware of misinformation and would update the moment with corrections (Zannettou, 2021). On some occasions Twitter may delete the 'moment' and post retraction (Zannettou, 2021). Regardless of all measures and mechanisms put forward by Twitter to limit the spread of misinformation, the spread of misinformation is still prevalent to date. This is because of the behaviour of the people which is an external factor that makes it difficult for Twitter to contain the dissemination

of misinformation (Stevens & Palomares, 2022). Thus, it is difficult to eradicate misinformation despite all the features introduced by Twitter.

Regardless of all measures and mechanisms put forward by Twitter to limit the spread of misinformation, the spread of misinformation is still prevalent to date. This is because of the behaviour of the people which is an external factor that makes it difficult for Twitter to contain the dissemination of misinformation (Naeem & Ozuem, 2022). Thus, it is difficult to eradicate misinformation despite all the features introduced by Twitter. Twitter has added newness in the interaction process (Bovet & Makse, 2019). Twitter has positive effects which are inevitable (Al-Rakhami & Al-Amri, 2020). Therefore, the positive influence of this social media platform has reshaped the new world in political, artistic and charitable actions, (Duffett,2017). Twitter is trying to eradicate the spread of misinformation by implementing the following: Labelling content, prompt you when you engage with a misleading tweet, community notes, block or mute users and using a birdwatch initiative (Jones, Hecht & Vincent, 2022).

2.5.1. Labelling Content

Misleading information on Twitter is a tweet proven false and claims that cannot be verified. Twitter is placing a warning label above the tweets and provide links to Twitter curated pages or trusted external sources to provide addition information about the tweet. For allegations that do not meet the removal criteria set out in the guidelines of Twitter, it may label the tweets to provide readers with notice, (Sharevski, Alsaadi, Jachim & Pieroni, 2021). Twitter uses labelled tweets to reduce visibility, and they are displayed in all languages provided by Twitter. This attempts to eradicate the spread of misinformation.

Labelling content on Twitter involves attaching informative tags or markers to specific tweets or accounts. Labelling content on Twitter involves adding informative tags or warnings to specific tweets or accounts to provide context, extra details, or alerts regarding potentially misleading, sensitive, or harmful content (Darwish, et al., 2020). The purpose of these labels is to help users make more informed decisions about the content they come across on the platform. Twitter utilises various types of labels based on specific criteria and categories of content. The labels provide users with more context and warnings to help them understand the content better and make informed decisions about its credibility and potential impact (Darwish, Stefanov, Aupetit &

Nakov, 2020). The labelling process can be carried out by Twitter itself or by authorised fact-checkers, journalists, or other trusted sources. The primary purpose of labelling content on Twitter is to tackle issues like misinformation, disinformation, and potentially harmful content (Darwish, Stefanov, Aupetit & Nakov, 2020). The labels serve to offer users additional information, corrections, or alerts regarding the content's accuracy, disputed claims, sensitive topics, or potential violations of Twitter's policies (Sharevski, et al., 2021).

Labels can come in various forms, such as text-based warnings, explanatory notes, or links to external sources for further information (Ibid). They can be applied to individual tweets, profiles, or trending topics. The specific mechanisms and criteria for labelling are determined by Twitter's policies and guidelines. It is important to understand that labelling content on Twitter is an ongoing endeavour aimed at promoting transparency, combating misinformation, and empowering users to make more informed choices when interacting with the platform's content (Sharevski, Alsaadi, Jachim & Pieroni, 2021).

Some typical types of content labels on Twitter are as follows:

2.5.1.1. Misleading Information: These labels are assigned to tweets that contain false or deceptive information, especially concerning public health, elections, or significant events. The labels may offer fact-checking details or direct users to reliable sources for accurate information (Garcia & Berton, 2021).

2.5.1.2. Sensitive Content: Labels are used for tweets that contain potentially sensitive material, such as explicit language, graphic images or videos, or content that may be disturbing or offensive. They act as a cautionary notice to users before accessing the content (Garcia & Berton, 2021).

2.5.1.3. Manipulated Media: When tweets contain media elements like photos, videos, or audio that have been altered or manipulated in a misleading manner, Twitter may apply labels to indicate that the content has been tampered with. These labels help users understand that the media may not represent the original or accurate context (Garcia & Berton, 2021).

2.5.1.4. State-Affiliated Media: Labels are employed to identify accounts or tweets associated with media organisations or government entities that are controlled by the

state. These labels inform users about potential biases or affiliations of the sources (Garcia & Berton, 2021).

2.5.1.5. Election-Related Content: During election periods, Twitter may use labels for tweets containing information related to elections, such as tweets from candidates, political parties, or news accounts. These labels often provide additional context or information about the elections (Garcia & Berton, 2021).

2.5.2. Prompt You When You Engage with a Misleading Tweet

Twitter prompts when engaging in misleading tweets. When attempting to share a tweet that has been labelled for policy violations. It does so by helping a person find additional context and consider whether to expand the tweet to other Twitter users. When users attempt to retweet a tweet with a misleading information label, they are prompted to direct them to authoritative information before further tweeting (Providel & Mendoza, 2020).

2.5.3 Block or Mute Users

Mute is a feature that allows Twitter users to remove an account's tweets from their timeline without unfollowing or blocking that account (Basak, Sural, ganguly & Ghosh, 2019). The block option on Twitter is a feature that the users or Twitter itself to stop users from spreading misinformation by blocking them from the app, if their sole purpose is to tarnish people's names or violate their space (Torkey, Nabi & Said, 2019). Twitter implemented the mute or block users' option to be able to eradicate any information a tweep tweets that is misleading or violating other people's rights. However, the tweeps can do that themselves or report the account to Twitter.

Muting users on Twitter is a feature that allows you to manage the content you see without blocking or unfollowing them. By muting a user, you prevent their tweets and retweets from appearing in your timeline or notifications. However, they can still engage with your tweets, follow you, and send you direct messages.

To mute a user on Twitter, follow these steps:

Desktop:

- ➢ Log in to your Twitter account.

- ➢ Visit the profile of the user you want to mute.

- Click on the three-dot menu icon (more options) next to the "follow" button on their profile.

- Choose "Mute @username" from the drop-down menu. Replace "@username" with the user's actual Twitter handle.

- The user will now be muted, and their tweets will no longer show up in your timeline or notifications.

Mobile (Twitter app):

- Open the Twitter app on your mobile device and log in.

- Go to the profile of the user you wish to mute.

- Tap on the three-dot menu icon (more options) at the top-right corner of their profile.

- Select "Mute @username" from the options presented. Replace "@username" with the user's actual Twitter handle.

- The user will be muted, and their tweets will no longer appear in your timeline or notifications.

It is important to remember that muting a user is a private action, and they would not receive any notification about being muted. Furthermore, muting does not affect your ability to view their profile, and they can still see and interact with your tweets. If you want to unmute a user later, you can follow the same steps mentioned above. instead of selecting "mute @username," you will find an option to "unmute @username." Choosing that option will restore their tweets and retweets to your timeline and notifications.

2.5.4. Use Birdwatch Initiative Launched by Twitter

Twitter expanded access to birdwatch, a community-based fact checking initiative that first went public in October 2020. The service has so far been tested with a small group of 10,000 contributors who have taken the time to tweets and rate comments to add context to potentially misleading tweets (Drolsbach & Prollochs, 2023). Birdwatch was launched to create a system that would deal with misinformation on the platform much more quickly, by reporting tweets to Twitter to review (Droslsbach & Prollochs, 2022).

Therefore, birdwatch people can identify information in tweets that may be misleading and tweets information that provide helpful context. In that way people can be stopped if reported that they are spreading wrong and misleading information.

Birdwatch is an experimental initiative introduced by Twitter to tackle misinformation and enhance the accuracy of information shared on the platform. It operates as a community-driven system where users can contribute by adding contextual notes to tweets that contain misleading or false content. Here's a breakdown of how Birdwatch functions:

2.5.4.1. Participation: Twitter users can choose to participate in Birdwatch by applying to become contributors. The application process involves sharing information about their Twitter account and agreeing to follow community guidelines.

2.5.4.2. Adding Notes: Once accepted, contributors gain access to the Birdwatch interface, enabling them to provide additional context through notes attached to specific tweets. These notes can consist of factual corrections, explanations, or references to credible sources that counteract any potential misinformation in the tweet (Drolsbach & Prollochs, 2023).

2.5.4.3. Ranking and Feedback: Birdwatch employs a ranking mechanism to highlight the most useful and reliable notes. Contributors can rate the notes provided by others, and the system takes these ratings into account to prioritise annotations with higher credibility (Jones, Hecht & Vincent, 2022).

2.5.4.4. Transparency and Accessibility: Twitter emphasises transparency by making all Birdwatch notes publicly accessible. This allows users to view the extra context provided by contributors, promoting open dialogue and enabling users to assess the credibility of the information presented (Jones, Hecht & Vincent, 2022).

It is important to note that birdwatch is an experimental initiative, and Twitter is still evaluating its effectiveness and impact. The objective is to leverage collective knowledge and community collaboration to address misinformation and foster the sharing of accurate information on the platform (Prollochs, 2022).

While birdwatch has the potential to be a valuable tool in combating misinformation, it also presents challenges. Ensuring the accuracy and impartiality of contributed notes,

avoiding biases, and preventing system abuse are ongoing concerns that Twitter actively addresses. However, by involving the Twitter community in the annotation process, birdwatch encourages an engaged and proactive user base, fostering a shared responsibility for maintaining an informed and trustworthy online environment.

2.6. SUMMARY

This chapter has discussed and critiqued misinformation predicaments which could damage the reputation and image of individuals or company. It gaudily shows that misinformation has no good to both businesses and individuals. Twitter is one of the critical platforms used by the public and businesses for information dissemination. It is very convenient in disseminating information. However, its convenience is halted and threatened by individuals who share inaccurate information. Subsequently, the legitimacy of information is questionable because of the spread of misinformation. Users no longer know what and what not to believe. Despite measures put forward by Twitter to limit the spread of misinformation, human error and behaviour are factor that are uncontrollable. To make matters worse, one can open a bogus Twitter account just to frame someone or pretend to be someone or organisation with bad intentions. The next chapter addresses the research methodology of the study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to expound on the kind of research design and methodology the study adopted during the process of data collection. It focused on justifying why certain research design and methodology were used throughout the study. Therefore, research design, methodology, population and sampling, data collection and data analysis amongst others, are discussed under this chapter. The following section elaborates on the research design of the study.

3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design refers to the overall strategy chosen to integrate the various components of research in a consistent and logical way (Landers, Collmus & Armstrong, 2018). This is done to ensure that you are effectively addressing the research problem. It forms a blueprint for collecting, measuring, and analysing data (Burns & Groove, 2003). The exploratory research design was used in this study because it thoroughly explores the phenomenon to investigate new ideas by creating meaning, building understanding, and considering all the possibilities of the phenomena. This addressed the aim of the study, which sought to explore the tweeps' perception of misinformation on Twitter.

Exploratory research holds significant importance in the research journey, encompassing the collection of initial data, extraction of insights, and generation of concepts, all aimed at shaping more specific and precise research inquiries or hypotheses. Its role is central across diverse domains such as academia, business, and scientific research. Frequently, exploratory research results in the creation of hypotheses or research queries. These initial hypotheses can subsequently undergo testing through more stringent research approaches in later stages. Exploratory research proves especially valuable in comprehending subjects qualitatively. It permitted the researcher to grasp subtleties, emotions, and personal experiences that quantitative research techniques could miss. To conclude, the exploratory research was a vital cornerstone for this study in a more extensive investigations by offering preliminary understandings, shaping research inquiries, and steering the entire research process. Its significance rests in its capacity to shed light on unexplored

domains and steer future research undertakings. The next section focuses of research methodology.

3.3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used the qualitative research approach because it aims to explore the tweeps' perception of misinformation on Twitter. Through this approach, the researcher was able to define and describe the insights from the participant and establish themes, be able to pinpoint those themes. It also permitted the researcher to theoretically explore the subject under investigation through critical analysis. Hence, the themes were established from the interviews. Aspers and Corte (2021) define qualitative research as a process of naturalistic research that seeks a deeper understanding of social phenomena in the natural environment. Thus, it focuses on reasons, not on the content of social phenomena, and utilises the direct experience of people as meaningful agents in everyday life.

3.3.1. Population and Sampling

The population of the study are social media users in Limpopo Province. However, in the context of the study, a non-probability sampling method was employed, particularly the purposive sampling technique to select Twitter users. The purposive sampling technique suggests that the researchers use their knowledge and judgement about the subjects of the study to sample the participants (Goddard & Melville, 2012). Purposive sampling is selecting the one(s) whose characteristics are defined for a purpose the study (Andrade, 2021). Meanwhile, this technique is relevant to this study because the researcher comprehends the required attributes of the participants. Purposive sampling was applied by selecting the users of Twitter who provided relevant information to fulfil the research objectives. The researcher, therefore, had four groups, which ultimately resulted in a total of 20 participants. Additionally, these participants were selected based on their proximity to the researcher as well as their active participation on Twitter.

3.3.2. Data Collection Method

This section describes how the researcher collected data for the study. According to Goddard and Melville (2012), data acquisition process requires appropriate tools by researchers. Du Plooy (2017) asserts that data collection could involve who, what,

how and where data should be collected. More recently, Ribeiro-Navarrete, Saura and Palacious-Maeques (2021), describe data collection as a procedure for gathering, estimating, and examining precise data for research in accordance with established standards. In this study, the researcher used focus group interviews as a data collection method, because focus group interviews are appropriate in this study as it seeks to gain an in-depth understanding of the subject under investigation from the participants. The researcher used focus group interviews because it allowed for initial information about the phenomena of the tweep's perceptions of misinformation on Twitter. Thus, the researcher interviewed 20 participants. Four groups made up of five members were moderated for the purposes of collecting data in this study. The researcher worked with a moderator to facilitate the group interview sessions. However, during the interviews, notes were taken, and interviews were audio recorded for the verification of facts. The interview sessions were recorded with the consent of all participants. The researcher transcribed the recorded version of the interview. Nevertheless, during the interview session, the interview guide with listed key questions was used. The researcher served as an interviewer for the purposes of collecting data for the study. The recorded files of the interview session were kept safe and used in secret to protect the identities of the participants.

(a) Advantages of focus groups

Focus groups stand in stark contrast to alternative approaches that involve individual data collection, as they foster unscripted participant interactions. The nature and breadth of data that arise from group dynamics tend to be more profound and comprehensive than what can be garnered from one-on-one interviews (Gundumogula & Gundumogula, 2020). The approach of using focus groups also deeply probes into the thoughts and sentiments of group participants regarding the subject matter (Teacher, 2021). Adequate pre-session groundwork aids in gathering pertinent and comprehensive data pertaining to the desired topic (Akyildiz & Ahmed, 2021). Focus groups offer a strong potential for extensive exploration of subjects, aiming to generate substantial information aligned with specific goals and hypotheses (Akyildiz & Ahmed, 2021). The expenses associated with focus groups are relatively modest when weighed against alternative research methodologies (Gundumogula & Gundumogula, 2020).

In-depth insights and rich qualitative data

A key benefit of utilising focus groups is their capacity to reveal deep insights and provide abundant qualitative data (Scheelbeek, Hamza, Schellenberg & Hill, 2020). This approach enables researchers to explore complex subjects, emotions, and experiences that might be difficult to gather effectively using methods like surveys (SIS International Research, 2023). In focus groups, participants have the liberty to express their thoughts, emotions, and perspectives in their own words (Akyildiz & Ahmed, 2021). This facilitates the collection of intricate and comprehensive information, which can be immensely valuable in aiding researchers and decision-makers to develop a thorough comprehension of the subject matter (Teacher, 2021).

Group dynamics and synergy

Another essential benefit of employing focus groups is the interchange of concepts among attendees, resulting in the emergence of fresh viewpoints (Scheelbeek et al., 2020). By exchanging thoughts and personal encounters, participants can foster a collaborative effect that facilitates a more profound grasp and all-encompassing perspectives (SIS International Research, 2023). Moreover, focus groups allow researchers to witness social dynamics and the ways in which participants either endorse or challenge one another's viewpoints. This aspect can yield valuable insights into the societal norms, values, and convictions that influence their stances (Teacher, 2021).

Flexibility and adaptability

Incorporating focus groups into research can swiftly produce valuable insights regarding consumer conduct. This approach empowers researchers to promptly assess participant reactions and sentiments as they unfold, furnishing a distinct comprehension of preliminary receptions towards a product, idea, or advertising initiative (SIS International Research, 2023). Moreover, focus groups facilitate the opportunity for subsequent inquiries, elucidation, and more thorough exploration of participant feedback (Teacher, 2021). This process contributes to a more extensive appreciation of consumers' perspectives and interactions.

Cost-effectiveness and efficiency

Amidst the array of benefits offered by focus groups, it's worth highlighting that, in contrast to alternative research methods, this approach can serve as an economical way to gather substantial and all-encompassing information (SIS International Research, 2023). While the per-participant expense might surpass that of extensive surveys, the insights and intricate understanding gained from focus groups can be exceptionally valuable in grasping complex matters and aiding decision-making efforts (Teacher, 2021; Scheelbeek et al., 2020). Conducting focus group interviews can yield valuable data at a reasonable expense, while also enabling researchers to observe participants' nonverbal cues and engage with them on a profound level (Study Smarter, 2023).

(b) Disadvantages of focus groups

In contrast to one-on-one interviews, focus groups are less effective at delving deeply into the utmost intricacies of a specific matter. A notable drawback of focus groups lies in the potential for participants to withhold their genuine and individual viewpoints regarding the subject (Chron, 2023). There might be reluctance to share thoughts, particularly if they clash with the perspectives of fellow participants (Ibid).

Focus groups typically involve a small cohort of individuals, and the insights and viewpoints collected might not adequately reflect the broader population (Scheelbeek et al., 2020). This could restrict the applicability of the findings and complicate the derivation of meaningful deductions. In contrast to individual interviews, focus groups are less proficient in delving deeply into specific subjects (Teacher, 2021). Typically, when a focus group deliberates on a topic, there tends to be superficial coverage and a profusion of divergent thoughts. An additional potential drawback of focus groups is the possibility of groupthink. Group dynamics in such settings can induce conformity to the prevailing opinions, stifling diverse viewpoints and constraining the group's creativity (Sim & Waterfield, 2019).

Adroit moderators can help mitigate this peril by fostering inclusive discussions and encouraging a range of perspectives. Relative to questionnaires and surveys, focus groups incur higher costs due to participant compensation. The role of moderators holds considerable sway over the outcomes of focus group discussions (Chron, 2023).

Their influence, whether deliberate or inadvertent, can result in inaccurate information. Moderators also wield the capacity to guide participants toward specific conclusions regarding ideas or products. Focus groups demand significant time investment in terms of planning and coordination (Teacher, 2021). This can be a disadvantage for businesses seeking prompt insights and decisions. Furthermore, the time required for participant recruitment and compensation adds to the overall financial outlay of conducting focus groups (Study Smarter, 2023).

3.3.3. Data Analysis

Data analysis is the cardinal phase of the research process as data without expeditious analysis and interpretation is meaningless (Lee, 2021). Data analysis refers to the process of systematically applying statistical and or logical methods to describe, illustrate, compress, summarise, and evaluate data (Dalkin, et al,, 2021). Data analysis can involve statistical methods, often in which the analysis is a continuous interactive process, with data being collected, and analysed continuously and at about the same time (Warmenhoven, et al,r, 2021). In this study, a reflexive thematic analysis was used to analyse data collected through focus group interviews. The researcher ensured that the six stages of reflexive thematic analysis were observed before finalising the research report, which are as follows:

a. Familiarisation of Data

Braun and Clarke (2018) posit that it is crucial to deeply engage with the data so that you become well-acquainted with both the extensive scope and profound intricacies of the content. This phase highlights that the researcher should become familiar with the data gathered from the audio recordings that were subsequently documented by the focus group. Braun and Clarke (2018) assert that this phase is one of the most significant phases in interpretative qualitative studies; hence, every word in the data should be provided through online observations and focus groups should be transcribed with correct spelling and grammar. The collected data, which were interviews, were transcribed carefully with correct spelling, as this step influences other steps of the analysis. The researcher read through a data several times before coding and searching for meanings. This phase required the researcher to study the collected data methodically and vigorously to become familiar with data which was

transcribed from audio recording which were later documented from the interviews conducted.

b. Generating Codes

The researcher created a list of ideas on the study content or what is in the data and what interest could be found in them as indicated by (Braun & Clarke, 2018). In this phase, the researcher documented all participants' information and made use of a framework to generate codes. Saldana (2018) asserts that the formation of codes can be influenced by the type of analysis, whether it is inductive or theoretical, as well as by the specific nature of the questions you have in mind. In this regard, it is essential to start the process manually from the overall set of data and pay complete and equal attention to all data and identify aspects of the data that may create repeated patterns in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2018). During this phase, the researcher recorded all participants' meetings, reflection logs, and used a coding framework to generate the code. The researcher starts the whole process strategically from the data set and identifies important factors that may or may not be repeated in the analysis. After the researcher familiarises herself with the collected data, a list of ideas is generated. This step involves generating the initial code from the collected data. Codes that define a characteristic of the raw data. All actual code snippets have been encoded and put together into each code. The analytics codes explain the tweeps perceptions of misinformation on Twitter.

c. Constructing Themes

This phase re-focuses on the analysis of themes, rather than codes, which involves "sorting the different codes into potential themes and collating all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes" (Braun & Clarke, 2018:9). The researcher had to know the codes so that data is not misinterpreted or miscoded when analysing it through the theme. The researcher was guided by Braun and Clarke (2018), to write a brief explanation or clarification of each set of code names separately. Byrne (2022) guided the researcher to be able to name each code by clearly writing a brief description of the term. Furthermore, these authors explain how codes convert to topics and subtopics of code in the same process, researchers should write them and extract topics from them if necessary. After the data is encrypted and collated, the

different codes are sorted and identified into trusted topics. The collection of all relevant encrypted data extracts in the identified topics has been completed. The researcher then analysed the codes and thought about how to combine different codes to form complete themes. The topics were then organised into topics.

d. Reviewing Potential Themes

This involves the reviewing and refining of themes. Internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity should be considered when there is evidence that themes are not themes and other themes might complement each other (Braun & Clarke, 2018:11)'. Data grouped within themes should exhibit meaningful coherence, with themes being distinctly and clearly differentiated from one another.(Braun & Clarke, 2018). Therefore, the researcher had to re-read every research document to see if there are no themes that repeat or can be combined with other themes. This step guided the researcher to review the analysed data to ensure its validity and reliability for the purposes of error correction and subject modification. The researcher then had to re-read all the collected data to check if there are any duplicate topics and how to create a new topic. Topics developed from the collected data will then be reviewed and enhanced. The researcher begins to modify the themes to refine them and keep the interesting and outstanding themes intact. All excerpts collected for each topic are read and reviewed to see if they form a coherent pattern.

e. Defining and Naming Themes

The researcher defined and refined themes while analysing the data. Braun and Clarke (2018:12), state that "this is done by going back to collected data extracts for each theme and organising them into a coherent and internally consistent account, with accompanying narrative". Themes have been identified and refined. The researcher then listed the topic names and clear activity definitions that briefly described the nature of each topic. Each time, the researcher analysed it and wrote it down. Marketing-related topics, including defining the nature of each topic and identifying aspects of the data collected by topic, were retained.

f. Producing the Report

The final analysis of the themes is completed, and the analysis will be drafted and presented by the researcher. "It is important that the analysis (the write-up of it, including data extracts) provides a concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive, and interesting account of the story the data tell i.e., enough data extracts to demonstrate the prevalence of the theme" (Braun & Clarke, 2018:12). The researcher made a final analysis and wrote the report, in this case, the analysis for the dissertation. The researcher provided a succinct, coherent, logical, and interesting account of the story of the collected, within, and across the themes. This step allowed the researcher to give the reader an overview of the entire study through a discussion supported by a review of the literature. The researcher conducted the final analysis and wrote the report, in this case the thesis analysis. The next section elucidates on the quality criteria.

3.3.4. Quality Criteria

3.3.4.1. Credibility

This type of quality criteria seeks to establish whether qualitative results are credible from the potential participants in the research (Assaker, 2020). This is because the nature of the qualitative research is to describe the phenomena of interest from the potential research participants, the researcher only asked important questions and provide necessary options which link with the literature to demonstrate the veracity of the findings against the literature. The researcher ensured that the credibility of this study was adhered to by giving the participants an opportunity to be the judges regarding to whether the findings of the study correspond with their perceptions for validation and approval.

3.3.4.2. Transferability

Transferability relates to the part application of research. This implies that the readers of the research report should have an option to survey whether the discoveries of the research are transferable to their own setting. This is characterised as a transferable judgement. This explains the extent to which the results of qualitative research could be moved to different settings with other participants. The researcher facilitated the transferability through a thick description of the phenomenon. Transferability raises

the standard so that the results of qualitative research can be generalised or transferred to other contexts or setting (Slevin & Sines, 1999), while Kuipers and van Nierop (2021) opines that transferability refers to the extent to which the results of a qualitative survey can be transferred to a situation or setting with other respondents.

3.3.4.3. Dependability

Dependability refers whether the results would be the same if something is observed twice (Byerly, 2021). In this case, the research is concerned with how changes occur and how it affects the methodology thereof. Perhaps, this is linked with reliability. Therefore, to ensure the dependability of the study, the study adopted a pre-test or piloting prior to the data collection process to ensure that relevant information is collected. Additionally, a desktop study (literature review) also assisted in ensuring the dependability of the study.

3.3.4.4. Conformability

Confirmability denotes the extent to which the results of the study could be corroborated and supported by other scholars (Ravan & Alitajer, 2019). Thus, to ensure this the researcher theoretically documented the literature and thoroughly rechecked and re-evaluated the information throughout the process of the study. Moreover, the researcher described and searched for prior literature to make informed arguments that are documented and used by other scholars for their own interests. The section below highlights and discusses ethical considerations for the study.

3.4. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical consideration is crucial in a study. As such, it is important for the study to take note of ethical considerations by lessening damage to the participants in the honest and truthful way of collecting and gathering data. Ethics determine what is right and morally acceptable as well as what is wrong and unacceptable in society (Suri, 2020). Ethics in the study promoted the aim of the study. Thus, it supported crucial social and moral values, such as doing no harm to others. Ethics are concerned with values that require mutual respect and fairness. Therefore, the participants were respected throughout the data collection process. Their values, culture and beliefs were not tempered with nor be violated.

3.4.1. Informed Consent

The researcher asked for a permission from the participants after they have been truly and clearly informed about the purpose of the study, and the researcher also informed the participants that they are not forced to participate in the study as it is voluntary, and there will be no form of awards in the form of money or gift. The researcher obtained ethical certificate. Clear language that participants can understand was used to explain the purpose and procedures of the study to ensure that participants can make informed decisions about whether to participate. Participants were informed that they had the right to participate or decline to do so.

3.4.2. Gaining Permission to Conduct the Study

The researcher applied for an ethical clearance letter from the Turfloop Research and Ethics Committee of the University of Limpopo and was granted. it was important for the university to consider the researcher's proposal and see if the research can be conducted without harm or risk to participants. The study observed all the important steps of research ethics outlined by the University of Limpopo

3.4.3. Confidentiality and Anonymity

The researcher did not disclose the names and identities of the participants. The participants were treated with respect, and their dignity was maintained. All participants remained anonymous in the study. All participants were interviewed in groups of four in the comfort of their chosen places to ensure privacy. All the participants were not under any pressure or discomfort to force or threaten them to participate.

3.4.4. Aftercare of the Participants

The researcher ensured that the participants did not experience harm. The safety of the participants was always prioritised.

3.5. SUMMARY

Chapter three focused on the research methodology of the study. Methods, techniques, and tools used to define, gather and interpret data, topic and the research problem. The next chapter focuses on data analysis and the outcome of the study.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Marshall and Rossman (2017), describe data analysis as the procedure that brings order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data. This process is time consuming but essential as it provides interpretation, the sense of the data that is collected and analysed (Perez De Souza, 2020). Thematic analysis is employed to analyse the qualitative data collected through virtual interviews. As such, the researcher focused on the six stages of reflexive thematic analysis to analyse the data, which was transcribed for convenient analysis. The themes presented in this chapter were generated from the objectives of the study as well as the data itself.

4.2. PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

The presentation of the findings is shown in comprehensive interviews conducted with the third-year students at the University of Limpopo, Turfloop Campus, Faculty of Humanities, School of Languages and Communication Studies and the community of Mankweng. The participants results are presented.

The following results/themes were captured in this chapter:

A. Conceptualisation of Twitter
B. The Perceptions of Misinformation
C. Dissemination of Information on Twitter
D. The Reliability of Twitter in Information Dissemination
E. The Potential of Twitter
F. The Frequency of Twitter Usage
G. The Trustworthiness of Information from Twitter
H. Validation of Twitter's Information
I. Character's Assassination from Twitter

4.2.1. Group 1

4.2.1.1. Conceptualisation of Twitter

In this theme, the researcher attempted to gather information from the participants to understand what they know about Twitter. The following are the perceptions of Twitter from the participants. It commences with group one to give the perceptions of Twitter.

During the interview, participant A indicated that "*when I hear the word twitter, I think of a bird, and I think of honesty; honesty to a certain extent, because a lot of people feel like they can say whatever they want without any consequences on twitter, and they get to be themselves*". On the other hand, participant C indicated that "*Tweeter is about fun, really. People making fun of each other. It is just a social platform, I don't really take it as some platform that where serious things could be engaged or you can get information, but you never really know how or be sure about how authentic that information is*". While participant E believes that "*Twitter is a social media platform that shares the most truthful information*". These are some of the views of the participant in group one. The suggestion here is that Twitter is a social media platform that is used to share information be it truthful information or otherwise. Moreover, participant F said that "*there's a lot of toxicity on tweeter. There's a lot of exposing shaming also.*"

4.2.1.2. The Perceptions of Misinformation

One of the participants (participant C) from group one highlighted that "*to mind when I see the word misinformation. It's inaccurate information which is mainly used to deceive and it's inconclusive. At least 40% of information that is spread on Twitter is reliable*". Participant F said the following when asked about the concept of misinformation that "*misinformation to me is an institution or a person hearing information that is misleading to the society, and information that one is sharing is not correct and is not true*". Meanwhile, participant A posits that "*the concept of misinformation is people have been misinformed on Twitter very much so, and the information was believed to be true for some reason. But yeah, it happens*". Therefore, the consensus contained in these views is that misinformation is bad and often misleading with bad intentions. Additionally, participant B said "*Well, the thing is with twitter now, ever since Elon bought it, twitter has changed, and they now have some sort of like a tag. Like when someone says something that is like misinformation, they have a tag now that says, no, this is not true*". Meanwhile, participant E indicated that misinformation is "*a false information that is shared deliberately to lead people astray*".

4.2.1.3. Dissemination of Information Through Twitter

In this theme, the researcher attempted to solicit the views from the participant in terms of information dissemination through Twitter. The question asked was, do you think Twitter can be used to spread information? Participant B indicated that "*yes, because of a lot of celebrities are using Twitter to share their whereabout on weekends and weekdays*". On the same breath, participant A said "*yes, because most of the countries, even now the president*

of South Africa disseminates the message very quickly about his trips and his engagements". The consensus here corroborates literature review that Twitter can be used as a tool to disseminate information (Liu, 2019). Participant E indicated that "*you can use Twitter to spread important information as long as you can authentic the relevance and the importance of that information through giving authenticity to the information that is being spread. For some reason, that is possible, but it can also open a door for people who are spreading other kinds of information that are not really helpful to other people who are using Twitter scams and all those things*".

4.2.1.4. The Reliability of Twitter in Information Dissemination

This theme shows the views of the participant whether the information shared on Twitter could be reliable or not. Thus, participant A said the following "*I think it is reliable because most of the things shared on Twitter are true*". While participant B indicated that "*I give it 90%, most of the things that are shared on Twitter are very much true and you can bet those guys are journalists, they can uncover anything*". Contrary to the latter views' participant B said "*the reliability of Twitter cannot be authentic. It will depend on how you make up your background check of the information you have received on Twitter*". The gist from these views is that Twitter is a reliable source of information.

4.2.1.5. The Potential of Twitter

Under this theme the researcher asked the participant whether they knew about the potential of Twitter in information sharing. In that participant A said, "*no I always thought Twitter will be something to play around like Facebook, later I realised that it's very important social media platform*". Participant C implied that, "*no, I didn't, Twitter was just some of those apps. You go like, am I missing anything out? Why am I not on Twitter? Why is everyone on Twitter? Because really, I feel like there's nothing more important on Twitter that you can find it on any other social media platform. But of course, the trend will always get people to use more of a particular app than the other*". Meanwhile B indicated that, "*no, I did not know its potential when I first started using it. I think it was 2013. I think how old was I in? I was what, 20 years old? And honestly, it was just a place where anyone can just say whatever. You can just speak your mind, even if it's something very terrible*". Therefore, one could make a conclusion from these perceptions that according to the participant, Twitter was used for entertainment, but, recently, they have recognised the significance of Twitter to be a professional platform for engagement and information sharing.

4.2.1.6. The Frequency of Twitter Usage

Under this theme, the following are the views from the participant in terms of Twitter usage. Therefore, participant E showed that "*I do not tweet a lot, I just follow people, read news and that's it*". While participant B said, "*I don't tweet, I just share and like*". Participant A indicated that "*I don't treat more often I don't tweet often I mainly just retweet I mainly just grow through my feed is really content that I tweet*". The suggestion contained herein is that most of the participant usually use Twitter to read and retweet.

4.2.1.7. Trustworthiness of Information from Twitter

Participant A agree that "*not everything is true because there are lots of fake accounts*". While Participant C indicated that "*I believe only 90% of the things there, but most of things are true there*". These are mixed reaction and perceptions from the participant. Such perceptions indicate that Twitter could be in both ways in terms of trusting what is being said on Twitter which could be trusted or otherwise. On the other hand, participant C indicated that "*No, I don't believe everything, but I believe information that is corroborated. Meaning somebody else can justify or agree with the said tweet*". Participant B said "*I don't believe it. But some information, when you see it, you want to authenticate on other platforms*". The implication of these analysis is that Twitter could be trusted and not trusted depending on how one sees it.

4.2.1.8. Validation of Twitters' Information

The question asked under this theme was, how do you validate the authenticity of a tweet? The participant provided the following views. participant E indicated that "*I first check the profile and also check the people who are following that persons' account*". Moreover, participant B showed that "*I check the source, who's who tweeted is very much important for one to validate the tweet*". Participant A said, "*I do not know, I just tweet, have some entertainment*". Participants under this theme did not comment much. The conclusion that could be drawn from this theme is that the participants are normally on Twitter and do not take further efforts or actions to validate what is being tweeted.

4.2.1.9. Character's Assassination from Twitter

It is indicated on literature that one of the disadvantages of Twitter is that it tends to destroy the personality of Twitter users. This is necessarily because people could tweet wrong information. To better affirm the views from literature, participant B indicated that "*yes,*

because it has done a lot to many celebrities and politicians and some of the tweets made some people not to respect them". Similarly, participant A corroborate the views from participant B by implying that "*Yes, twitter can assassinate the character of a person, especially what they call black Twitter. It's mainly used to expose, to spread, and to demoralise characters. Usually, they shame people, and they intend on embarrassing each other and if not used carefully, it can destroy you. It can affect you psychologically*". While participant A summarises this by indicating that "*Yes, it can. Twitter can assassinate the character of a person because you see something about someone on Twitter, you hear a lot about people saying, I had this about this particular human being on Twitter, and it is really up to the person to believe or no*t". Therefore, these views support the literature which has indicated that at times certain information on Twitter could damage the reputation of a person.

4.2.2. Group 2

4.2.2.1. Conceptualisation of Twitter

During the interview, participant M indicated that "*when I hear the word Twitter, I think of what's trending at the moment, looking at the current affairs which maybe on the entertainment industry, political affairs, gossip and job hunting*". On the other hand, participant N indicated that "*Twitter is all about trolling, tweeps provoking others into displaying emotional responses or tweets*". While participants O, P and Q see Twitter as like any other social media platform especially Facebook wherein if you are what the society perceive as beautiful you get a lot of followers, likes and comments.

4.2.2.2. The Perceptions of Misinformation

All the participants M, N, O, P and Q highlighted that when they think of misinformation, false information comes to mind. Misinformation is false information, information that is misleading, information that is not accurate which may have a negative outcome for a person or the community at large. This corresponds to the literature that indicates misinformation as a fallacious and misleading information that could endanger peoples' lives.

4.2.2.3   Dissemination of Information through Twitter

During the interview participant P indicated that "*Yes, Twitter can spread information of importance, because everything that is tweeted about on twitter especially in accounts such as eNCA, they are also shown or talked about on television or radio*". Participant M also

avers that "*yes, Twitter can be used to spread important information, because Twitter has a large audience, it is one of the largest social media platforms right now in the world*". Moreover, participant N showed that "*Yes, Twitter can spread important information, because that is where I get news from every day. I know what is happening in my country and other countries through Twitter*". Therefore, there is a general consensus shared by the participants that Twitter is another platform that is used by organisations and people for information dissemination.

4.2.2.4. The Reliability of Twitter Information Dissemination

Participant Q indicated that "*it really depends on the source of such information because some sources are easily persuaded and manipulated into misinforming the public. I usually believe verified pages that I know are run by reliable sources like your media accounts like News 24*". While participant N agrees that "*Yes, it is reliable because all the tweets or stories that circulated or trended on Twitter were also talked about on Radio, I know this because I am a fan of Khaya FM*". Participant P specified that "*Twitter is not reliable, and I don't take anything that is being tweeted seriously*". There are different perceptions, however, one suggests that the reliability of Twitter depends on what people deem reliable.

4.2.2.5. The Potential of Twitter

The question asked was did you know the potential of Twitter when you first started using? Participant M indicated that "*my initial thoughts were that Twitter was just like any other social media platform, and it was just going to die like Mxit did*". On the other hand, participant N shared that "*no I just wanted to be on the platform just like all my friends and I was 15 at that time and now my perspective have changed that now I'm grown and in the field of media, I know when to tweet and when not to tweet, for example they are some cases when you can comment about racism and some cases where you cannot*". Participant O, P, and Q showed that "*No they didn't know the potential of Twitter when they first started using it to them it was just an app they had just to fit in*". Majority of the participants did not realise the significance of Twitter, thus, at a later stage they discovered that Twitter is essentially a paramount platform for engagements.

4.2.2.6. The Frequency of Twitter Usage

Participant Q indicated that "*I tweet every day, I am always on Twitter if I have literally nothing to do at that moment*". Participant M indicated that "*I don't tweet a lot, but I am always on Twitter for job hunting*". Participant O showed that "*I don't tweet a lot like I used to, I am on that app browsing and checking gossip*". While on the other hand participant P indicated that "*I am on Twitter almost every day tweeting, sharing and retweeting mainly about soccer and what would be trending at that time*".'

4.2.2.7. Trustworthiness of Information from Twitter

Participant Q indicated that "*I don't believe anything that is being tweeted, the only tweets I believe have to come from a verified account*". Participants P indicated that "*No I rely on information I see on television other than that I don't*". Whereas participant M indicated that "I don't believe anything being tweeted, because people have their own opinions and perspectives about what's trending". The suggestion that could be drawn here is that Twitter cannot be trusted because many share what they believe is right without verification at times.

4.2.2.8. Validation of Twitter's Information

Participant Q indicated that "*I check if the account has been on Twitter for how long, so usually trust those accounts but also accounts that have been on Twitter for long time does mean that the information being tweeted is true*". While participant M indicated that "*to validate the authenticity of a tweet through verified accounts and I believe that verified accounts cannot spread false information*". Participants N indicated that "*I check the sources and sometimes I have to go to the websites. For example, I check the websites of the company that tweeps are tweeting about on Twitter*".

4.2.2.9. Character Assassination from Twitter

Participants M indicated that "*Yes Twitter can assassinate a character of a person for example, if someone is envious of someone's success, they can use Twitter to spread wrong information about that person*". On the other hand, participant P indicated that "*Yes by people spreading false information about that person*". Whereas participant N indicated that "*Yes it can assassinate a person's character a lot of people have been victims of that, especially by people who are solely using this platform to troll people. Today they are trolling this one, tomorrow another person*".

4.2.3. Group 3

4.2.3.1. Conceptualisation of Twitter

During the interview, participant G indicated that "*when I hear the word Twitter, I think of way people engage with one another and the platform's postings. What comes to my mind also is that Twitter serves as a gauge of one's brand popularity*". While participant H indicated that "*I know Twitter as a communication tool used by the middle and upper class*". Participant I indicated that "*when I hear of Twitter, I think users interacting on a tweet or video they see on the platform*". While on the other hand participant J indicated that "*what comes to my mind when I hear the word Twitter, I immediately think of that sign of a bird, a platform where only students from private schools have simply, because of the advantage to speak and write good English*". Participant K shared that *"what comes to my mind when I hear the word Twitter is the trending topics growing up black be like*".

4.2.3.2. The Perceptions of Misinformation

One of the participants (participant H) highlighted that "*misinformation for me is what has been recently termed fake news. Otherwise associated with previously well-known concepts such as propaganda and bias information*". Participant G said the following: "*Misinformation is an information that is not true, that is malicious and harmful to the public*". Meanwhile, participant J posits that "*misinformation is spreading false information about a person, a brand or an issue with nothing, but the intent to destroy*". Additionally, participant I said that "*misinformation involves incorrect information people use to lie in order to cause harm*". Meanwhile, participant K indicated that "*misinformation involves disinformation and malicious information that are generally problems that all social media platforms face*".

4.2.3.3. Dissemination of Information Through Twitter

During the interviews, participant G indicated that "*yes it can, you get accurate news and latest information of the things happening around the world. It also helps to keep up with the current events and trends*". While participant H indicated that "*yes, but it all depends on the intentions of the sender. If the intention was to communicate information without any evil agendas, Twitter can definitely be used to communicate important information to people*". Participant I said, "*yes Twitter can communicate information of importance to the users"*. Meanwhile, participant K indicated that "*no, Twitter is all about fun topics engaging with people you don't know about having almost the same life experiences growing up*".

4.2.3.4. The Reliability of Twitter in Information Dissemination

During the interviews participant G indicated that "*although the majority of tweets are true, the platform is also frequently if not accidentally exploited to promote rumours and misleading information*". Participant H indicated that "*this is a platform whereby everyone is allowed to voice their opinions, and you are not required to prove anything before you post, as much as some information can be trusted and relied on. Some information is pure propaganda, smear campaigns and witch hunting. On this basis therefore Twitter cannot be the most reliable source of information. We can side the resent even happened on the first of April where it was Twittered that President Ramaphosa is arrested, only to be told its April fool prank*". Additionally participant J indicated that "*not much reliable as not everyone has access to this platform due to lack of data*". Therefore, drawing from these views, Twitter cannot be reliable.

4.2.3.5. The Potential of Twitter

During the interviews participant G indicated that "*yes I started using it in 2017, I knew it as a social media tool that can be used to receive news frequently and get you connected with people all over the world as long as you follow*". While participant H indicated that "*no, I didn't know its potential. I used it because most influential people, educated elite and businessman were on this platform*". Participant J said that "*no, I didn't know the potential of Twitter when I first started using, but it still feels the same way to me even today. If you are not good in writing in English, you just won't get followers or engage in any tweet. I think Twitter is for the content creators more like TikTok, but without you saying something or doing something on a video, Twitter involves writing*". Moreover, participant I indicated that "*no I didn't know its potential, but now I do*". This shows that Twitter has gained popularity, and it has later been recognised by the participants as the most important platform for information sharing.

4.2.3.6. The Frequency of Twitter Usage

This theme looks at the tweep's usage of Twitter, how often do they find themselves on the platform. Therefore, participant G indicated that "*I am on Twitter at least three times per day*". While participant H indicated that "*I do not tweet that much one or twice a month*". Participant J also indicated that "*I tweet whenever I feel like saying something*".

4.2.3.7. Trustworthiness of Information from Twitter

Participant J posits that "*no people lie just to be relevant*". While participant G said that "*no people can create a false narrative of the story just to gain attraction and get likes*".

Participant H indicated that "*no, based on the fact that even if we want to take this platform for spreading only important information, not everyone is going to be on board. I scrutinise the information first before I can consider it*". The perceptions here are that Twitter cannot be trusted, to trust Twitter one has to do a thorough background check of what is being tweeted.

4.2.3.8. Validation of Twitter's Information

Participant H indicated that "*I try to corroborate the tweet with mainstream media like news 24 or SABC news, that's if its breaking news, but if it's just a fact from old sources I will have to consult articles encyclopaedias*". Participant G indicated that "*I validate the authenticity of a tweet by checking spelling errors if the spelling is wrong, I know that is tweet its fake, but again spotting fake accounts is no longer simple, because people now can buy verification signs, so it's challenging to distinguish between a real account and a fake one*". Participant J indicated that "*I do further research on google about the topic trending*". The suggestion contained here is that most participants find out more about the information at hand to trust it.

4.2.3.9. Character's Assassination from Twitter

The question asked here is that can Twitter assassinate a character of a person, participant J indicated that "*for me I think its a 50/50 chance because not every person believe what a tweet says, so meaning that those that gets their daily updates on Twitter might believe, but those that don't won't believe*". Participant H indicated that "*yes, I am writing some very demeaning false information about someone can destroy that person's public image and few people turn not to care of validating these false accusations, so to many you may be regarded as whatever you have be smeared with for example, rapists*". Participant G showed that "*yes Twitter can assassinate the character of a person based on the information they tweet about, that is why I conduct my own research before I spread the information*".

4.2.4. Group 4

4.2.4.1. Conceptualisation of Twitter

During the interview, participant R indicated that "*when I hear the word Twitter what comes to my mind is football and political issues trends*". On the other hand, participant S indicated that "*Twitter is a social media platform that mainly focuses on breaking news or latest news*". While participant T indicated that "*Twitter is a dynamic platform that plays a significant role in shaping online conversations, spreading of information and connecting people across the globe*". Participant U indicated that "Twitter involves connecting and networking with different people from different parts of the world".

4.2.4.2. The Perceptions of Misinformation

During the interview, participant R indicated that "*misinformation is an inaccurate information or information that is distorted to be lies in order to deceive someone*". While participant S indicated that "misinformation is talking about something or someone without facts, it's just basically fake news". On the other hand, participant T indicated that "*misinformation refers to false information that is spread unintentionally*". The responses shared here concurs with literature that generally, misinformation is fallacious with bad intent.

4.2.4.3. Dissemination of Information Through Twitter

During the interview participant T indicated that "*yes, Twitter can be used as a platform to spread information, because of its ability to wide range of people*". Participant S indicated that "*yes, it is easier and faster, because you can retweet certain information within seconds*". On the other hand, participant R indicated that "*yes, because most companies, individuals and government have registered their official accounts on Twitter to spread information*". While participant U indicated that "*yes, absolutely. Stats are showing that social media is a big part of our everyday use and information travels faster on Twitter*". Obviously, like any other social media platform, information dissemination is one of the elements that exists on the platforms like Twitter.

4.2.4.4. The Reliability of Twitter in Information Dissemination

During the interview participant T indicated that "*Twitter can be a valuable source information dissemination, but its reliability depends on the critical thinking and verification*

practices of users". Participant R indicated that "*tt is reliable if a person follows reliable accounts on Twitter*". Participant S indicated that "it is *very reliable, news travels fast and businesses grow in terms of attracting new customers*". The gist shared in this instance is that Twitter is a reliable source of information perhaps, because most people use it for important information consumption.

4.2.4.5. The Potential of Twitter

During the interviews, participant R indicated that "*no, I thought it was something for entertainment, until I realised deeply that it can be used for information sharing*". On the other hand, participant T indicated that "*I was not aware at first, but now I think it is the best to use it for useful information and also to build brands*". While participant U indicated that "*no, I found Twitter slightly complicated. It took me some time before I could understand how it works*". Therefore, the respondents simply show that they did not know about the significance of Twitter in information sharing until they get into the nitty-gritty of Twitter and begin to understand and acknowledge its significance.

4.2.4.6. The Frequency of Twitter Usage

Participant U indicated that "*I tweet on a weekly basis, but rest assured I am always on Twitter checking lasted trends*". Participant R indicated that "*I mostly tweet on political issues and football, so once or twice every month*". Participant T indicated that "*I go to Twitter every day, but tweet once in a while*". Participant S highlighted that "*I usually tweet every week*".

4.2.4.7. Trustworthiness of Information from Twitter

Under this theme the question asked was that do you believe anything that is being tweeted on Twitter. Participant T indicated that "*not everything that is being tweeted is true that's why I choose the kind of content to follow and always verify*". Participant R indicated that "*not really, I believe certain information because there is too much fake news on social media*". Participant S indicated that "*no, I don't trust anything being tweeted on Twitter*". Participant U indicated that "*no, people sometimes tweet their thoughts and not facts, so you cannot believe everything you read*".

4.2.4.8. Validation of Twitter's Information

Participant U indicated that "*I validate a tweet by an account that is verified*". Participant R indicated that "*I do a background check either on google or on Television news*". Participant S also indicated that "*I check if the account is verified and if it is not, I don't believe anything*".

While participant T indicated that "*I verify a tweet by thinking critically, making my own research before I could retweet or comment*". The consensus shared here is that the participants are responsible and check the validity of information before disseminating it.

4.2.4.9. Character's Assassination from Twitter

During the interviews participant R indicated that "*yes, because false information can lead to bad consequences and destroy people*". Participant S indicated that "*yes, people can create fake accounts to sat they are who they are not and start spreading false information about their rivalry*".

4.3. DEMOGRAPHICS

Twenty participants from the University of Limpopo, Turfloop Campus, School of Languages, and Communication Studies, Faculty of Humanities, Department of Communication, Media and Information Studies, third year students and postgraduate students in Media Studies class and people around the community of Mankweng took part in this study. The participants were between the ages of 21 to 25, ten females and ten males, and all students and people from the community of Mankweng and Polokwane who took part in the study live in the Limpopo Province. The study sampled 10 students and 10 community members to get their perspectives on the tweeps perceptions of misinformation. Same questions were asked to both sampled group in order to achieve the purpose of the study. All the participants use social media platforms. The age group balance in this study is essential as the researcher worked with young adults, this group is diverse and informed in terms of technical aspects and most of them are active on social media. The gender balance creates unbiased information, this is done so that all genders can be represented in this study

One of the most critical elements of research is data collection (Makalela, 2019). Data collected from the participants is crucial in giving meaning, refuting literature or agreeing to the literature. The researcher has relied primarily on the qualitative data, and he has used an interview schedule as an instrument to collect data. This section, therefore, seeks to assess the results collected from the participants. The results provided below are analysed using a reflexive thematic analysis. Therefore, the researcher has provided implications of the results and linked the results to the objectives of the study. The findings from the interview schedule represent the views, and perceptions from the participants regarding the objectives of the study. These findings assisted the researcher to make informed analysis,

draw necessary suggestions and conclusions. Moreover, the findings are categorised in terms of focus groups. The researcher sampled four focus groups. The groups were made of five participants each.

4.4. THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

This section covers the theoretical analysis of this study. It tests and compares the information collected from the participants against the literature or theory. This is done so that the findings could support or refute the theoretical assumptions of this study. As a matter of recapitulation, the study adopted the following theories: Practice Theory and Liberal Theory.

Practice Theory

This theory firmly believes or assumes that media is practised in the society, and it explains how it could be used in governments and private sectors (Couldry, 2012). Moreover, it also reveals the importance of society because it rejects the general tendency to treat the media separately from social life, and ethnographic cases after cases reveal the relationship between media practices and the cultural framework of reference (Raviv, Lieth & Bar-Tal, 2019). Therefore, in reality and from the research findings of this study participants treat and view twitter as part of their daily entertainment amongst others. Although some participants indicated that they do not know the significance of Twitter, they recognise its part of social life which corroborates some elements of the theory.

Practice theory acknowledges and assumes that practices are inherently social, with media activities frequently encompassing interactions within social contexts (Magaudda, & Mora, 2019). This can encompass conversations about a TV program among friends, the sharing of content on social media platforms, or engagement in online communities. Hence, it was very clear from the research findings that the Tweeps use Twitter for various reasons such as entertainment, trends, #tags or newsfeed amongst others. These foundational beliefs assisted the researcher to employ the practice theory in examining how media becomes a part of individuals' daily routines, its role in shaping identities, and its reciprocal relationship with larger social frameworks and cultural environments. However, the researcher narrowed it down to focus on Twitter as part of the media platform.

Liberal Theory

Liberal theory underscores the importance of the media in fulfilling the needs of the public (Clemons, 2022). It contends that the media should supply information that is pertinent and beneficial to individuals, enabling them to make well-informed choices and participate actively in their communities (Clemons, 2022). This encompasses activities like investigative reporting, verifying facts, and ensuring that influential organisations are held responsible. This, therefore, resonates with the findings of this study. The findings of indicate that Twitter users (tweeps) get a profound information of Twitter. Irrespective of the propaganda and misinformation shared on the platforms.

Liberal theory promotes the idea of a diverse and varied media landscape, which is crucial for the well-being of a democratic society (Tomaz & Trappel, 2022). It asserts that the media should include a broad spectrum of perspectives and voices, ensuring that citizens have access to a multitude of viewpoints to make informed choices (Servaes, 2020). Therefore, Twitter is one platform that provides a leeway to the users to share any pertinent information and choices through its multiple features such as #tags and trending stories (Figenschou & Fredheim, 2020). In that case the finding from the participants demonstrate that participants or tweeps use Twitter to make informed decisions regarding the newsfeeds.

To sum it up, liberal theory has a pivotal role in influencing the foundational principles and values of media systems in democratic nations. It highlights the significance of free speech, diversity, openness, and responsibility as fundamental elements of a thriving and operational media environment that serves the needs of a democratic society (Tomaz & Trappel, 2022). This is highlighted in summary through the research findings of this study. The findings indicated that tweeps must be responsible and not careless in disseminating information. Liberalism places a high premium on individual independence and the capacity of individuals to exercise their own preferences (Servaes, 2020). Hence, the findings showed that tweeps are independent individuals who share information on their own personal terms. In terms of media, this implies that individuals should have the liberty to select and engage with the media content they prefer, enabling them to develop their own viewpoints. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that implementing liberal principles in media can be intricate and may involve managing multiple conflicting interests and considerations. It is not a coincidence that this theory was selected to guide this study.

4.5. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Throughout this study a notable issue on Twitter involves the swift dissemination of false or misleading information, which is a significant challenge. Because Twitter operates in real-time and allows easy information sharing, inaccurate content can rapidly gain popularity (Szeto, et al., 2021). This jeopardises the reliability of information accessible to users. Therefore, it is imperative for both users and Twitter as a platform to proactively counteract misinformation by implementing fact-checking, content moderation, and educating users. Hence, this study provided some recommendations on how one could avoid misinformation. This study also showed that indeed, Twitter is a robust platform with considerable capacity for sharing information (Al-Rakhami & Al-Amri, 2020). Nevertheless, it is equally vital to recognise and confront the barriers and difficulties linked to it. While Twitter provides a valuable platform for information sharing and access, it also presents a set of challenges (Can & Alatas, 2019). These challenges encompass the danger of misinformation, the possibility of oversimplification, and the necessity for users to assess sources thoughtfully. To fully utilise Twitter's potential, users must be well-informed, discerning, and mindful of the platform's limitations and hurdles. Users and Twitter experts can promptly rectify inaccurate information by providing precise data, citing references, or offering clarifications in response to tweets.

Twitter, functioning as a vehicle for sharing information, unquestionably offers the public a distinctive chance to actively join and take part in conversations about a broad spectrum of topics they find interesting (Can & Alatas, 2019). This proactive effort supports the accuracy and trustworthiness of shared information on the platform and enhances the quality of informed and factually correct online discussions. Moreover, Twitter, as a corporation, should persist in its endeavours to combat misinformation and foster a more healthful and informative online space. Twitter serves as a platform for a broad spectrum of users, including regular individuals, influencers, journalists, politicians, and automated bots (Al-Rakhami & Al-Amri, 2020). This diversity in user types increases the potential for misinformation to emerge from various origins, complicating the process of distinguishing truth from falsehood.

Prominent individuals, encompassing politicians, celebrities, and experts, bear an obligation to employ Twitter with ethical and responsible conduct, and considering the influence of their statements on the platform. Twitter has played a pivotal role in facilitating hashtag trends, wherein users unite around a shared subject or purpose (Dobrin, 2020). This has

resulted in societal and political transformations by increasing awareness and galvanising backing for diverse concerns (Dobrin, 2020). Therefore, Twitter has been crucial in enabling the emergence of hashtag movements, where users come together over a common topic or goal (Akdemir, 2021). These trends have incited societal and political shifts by intensifying awareness and rallying support for a range of issues. Moreover, the accessibility of Twitter renders it an open platform for public dialogue (Dobrin, 2020). Anyone with internet access can establish an account and participate in discussions, fostering inclusivity and a variety of viewpoints. One thing about Twitter is that individuals could directly interact with public figures, celebrities, experts, and organisations on Twitter (Thelwall & Thelwall, 2020). This direct engagement promotes transparency and responsibility, allowing people to inquire, seek clarification, and demand accountability for what others say and do.

4.6. SUMMARY

This chapter focused on analysing data collected, presenting the findings of the study, and discussed them. The chapter presented essential information about the study and the research problem. The views from the participants were analysed and themes were developed to discuss the opinions of the participants.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter encapsulates all-inclusive of the study, giving a summary of the findings, aims, and limitation of the study, recommendations, and the conclusion of the research paper. The previous chapter has provided research findings and analysis of data from the study area and target population which has implored information about the tweeps perceptions of misinformation on Twitter. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to briefly provide a summary and recommendations of the study.

5.2. RECAP OF THE AIM AND OBJECTIVES

5.2.1. Aim of the study

The study aimed to explore the tweeps' perceptions of misinformation on Twitter in Limpopo.

5.2.2. Objectives of the study

- ❖ To expose the effects of tweeps' perceptions of misinformation on Twitter.
- ❖ To evaluate the effectiveness of Twitter in eradicating misinformation.
- ❖ To recommend regulatory framework to circumvent dissemination of misinformation on Twitter.

5.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The purpose of the study was to scrutinise the tweeps' perceptions of misinformation on Twitter. The study has revealed and exposed the dynamics that Twitter could play as a tool to disseminate information of importance. Consequently, understanding the relationship between Twitter and misinformation could assist in enhancing the activities of Twitter to ensure accountability and transparency in their content. The study collected data using focus group interviews which allowed for group discussions and allowed the researcher to ask follow-up questions in some instances. The study has employed purposive sampling its participants.

Twitter could be effective and compelling medium of communication. Twitter is open for people to openly make known their grievances. Twitter as one of the social media platforms is characterised as quick, cheap, employs a restricted number of words and hashtag for trending issues. Twitter gives the community space where individuals (who share common interface) can communicate, inform and come up with arrangements to form this world distant better.

The participants in this study were mostly young people who are well acquainted with the use of Twitter. The participants gave their opinions and views about Twitter. Below are the key findings from the study.

Theme #1 Conceptualisation of Twitter

Twitter functions as a space where real-time sharing of information, conversations, networking, and interaction occur. It has been utilised for expressing personal thoughts, spreading news, conducting marketing activities, promoting activism, and a wide array of other purposes. Individuals or the respondents have the option to include images, videos, GIFs, and hyperlinks within their tweets, enhancing the variety and appeal of the content they share. Major findings of this study show that majority of the respondents concur that Twitter is one such a platform that is important in information sharing and keeping people informed.

Theme #2The Perceptions of Misinformation

The notion regarding misinformation pertains to how individuals perceive and comprehend erroneous or incorrect data that spreads through different mediums, frequently via media, communication avenues, or social platforms. This idea centres on how people interpret and form assessments about information that might lack accuracy, dependability, or truthfulness. Grasping the way people perceive misinformation holds great importance today flooded with information. This is because it shapes how individuals shape their viewpoints, choices, and engagement with their surroundings. It underscores the significance of critical thinking, media knowledge, and conscientious sharing of information. The key finding from the respondents under this theme is that majority of them have revealed comprehensive awareness about misinformation, hence, they have indicated that misinformation is false, inaccurate and misleading information.

Theme #3 Dissemination of Information on Twitter

Sharing of information on Twitter entails investigating how data is distributed, disseminated, and received within the confines of the social media platform. Therefore, Twitter is recognised for its immediacy, enabling users to instantly distribute information. This expedites the rapid spread of news, occurrences, and trends, establishing it as a favoured platform for the swift release of breaking stories and updates. However, when examining how information spreads on Twitter, it is crucial to acknowledge the platform's advantages in immediate updates and interaction, along with its difficulties concerning false information

and conciseness. Moreover, one should factor in the influence of notable users and the worldwide extent of the platform. The major finding from the respondents is that most of the respondents has similar views which corroborates literature that Twitter could be used for information sharing.

Theme #4 The Reliability of Twitter in Information Dissemination

Twitter possesses the potential to serve as a valuable information reservoir, particularly for immediate updates and direct interaction with trustworthy origins. Nonetheless, individuals must exercise prudence, assess information thoughtfully, and validate its precision through cross-referencing reliable sources before embracing and disseminating it. The findings under this theme have been a mixed reaction, however, one could draw that majority of the respondents indicated that although Twitter could be a reliable source of information dissemination, there is a need to do a fact-check before one could retweet. This is essentially to avoid sharing misinformation.

Theme #5 The Potential of Twitter

Key finding from the respondents is that majority of them did not really pay attention to Twitter as a platform for information sharing. Most of the respondents indicated that they use Twitter for fun or entertainment.

Theme #6 The Frequency of Twitter Usage

There is news, entertainment and updates on Twitter. Most of the respondents have indicated that they normally do not use Twitter that much. They only and normally check trends, follow and entertainment on Twitter.

Theme #7 Trustworthiness of Information from Twitter

Trust in Twitter relies on various elements, and it is crucial to evaluate its dependability for each specific situation. This study discovered that majority of the respondents have indicated that not everything or information could be trusted on Twitter. However, there is a lot of information that could be trusted on Twitter.

Theme #8 Validation of Twitters' Information

Validation of information is crucial because it reduces the risk of sharing and consuming wrong information. Because information that gets circulated on Twitter could potentially lack thorough source verification, creating challenges in confirming its precision, there is a need to validate information. Majority of the respondents have indicated that they check and validate information before they could spread it to avoid conflicts.

Theme #9 Character's Assassination from Twitter

Character assassination involves purposefully and maliciously harming someone's reputation, credibility, or societal status by spreading false or deceptive details, rumours, or accusations. This includes disseminating adverse or defamatory remarks about a person with the goal of damaging their public perception, personal connections, or professional esteem on Twitter. Character assassination can take place through diverse methods, such as spoken words, written materials, social media, or different types of media. It can result in significant repercussions for the individual in question, impacting their personal and vocational existence, relationships, and overall state of being. Key finding of this study is that majority of the respondents agree that the misinformation that is shared on Twitter could potentially damage the reputation of individuals and or organisations which is also highlighted in literature.

5.4. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study covered and focused on the opinions of Twitters users about misinformation on Twitter. The study also focused on its target population in collecting data. The limitation of the study was the fact that the study only focused on people with much understanding of Twitter. Also, the study was limited due to its specific focus on University of Limpopo students and the community of Mankweng and around Polokwane, and the study was limited due the fact that it only focused on young people.

5.5. RECOMMENDATIONS

This study suggests few recommendations that are not final but could assist in limiting the spread of fake news and misinformation on Twitter. In the event one comes across false news, try banning the web page or source that is promoting disinformation or malicious phony stories, so you never come across them again. If one discovers a friend or friend sharing a bogus news story, inform them nicely. Handling the waters of information disorder

is difficult if you confront the perpetrator with hatred, they can bring it down. A respectful dialogue is always the most effective way to proceed. Even if they spread misleading news, the individuals in your life most often have good intentions. Here are few recommendations that the researcher suggest could mitigate the effects of misinformation.

5.5.1 Take a look at the source: Consider the source of the information. A local blog is not as reliable as a large academic publication. What does the source mean? What are their goals? The phrase both from a layman's terms and academically, the ideal of "Take a look at the source" on Twitter typically implies examining the primary or foundational material from which something originates or is formed. In the realm of Twitter or social media at large, it may indicate the suggestion for someone to revisit the initial post, article, image, or video that is being talked about or referenced. This advice is often given when there is a requirement to authenticate information, grasp the context, or develop an accurate viewpoint about a specific subject. If "Take a look at the source" has evolved into a distinct term or feature on Twitter since my last update, one must therefore, look at the most recent Twitter documentation or reliable news sources to get the latest details.

5.5.2. Source Credibility: This study recommends that source credibility is a crucial aspect that could reduce misinformation on Twitter. Information credibility, also referred to as information dependability or trustworthiness, pertains to the extent to which information can be regarded as precise, trustworthy, and worthy of reliance (Ecker & Antonio, 2021). Therefore, credible information is grounded in well-substantiated evidence, originates from authoritative sources, and aligns with established facts and principles. In simpler terms, credible information is information that can be trusted and confidently relied upon. Additionally, in an era of easy access to information through the internet and social media, the assessment of information credibility is crucial to avoid spreading and acting upon false or misleading information. Developing the ability to evaluate the credibility of information is a key skill in critical thinking and informed decision-making.

5.5.3. Sources of Support: Examine the sources mentioned in the article. Are they credible in their own right? Are they even real? This is just to verify the legitimacy of the sources whether it is endorsed by legitimate organisations. As part of recommendations "Analysing the sources cited in the article particularly on Twitter" entails carefully assessing and evaluating the references, citations, or origins of information presented in a written work,

such as an article or research paper. This process includes investigating the origins of the information, appraising the trustworthiness and dependability of these sources, and ascertaining whether they offer satisfactory evidence to corroborate the assertions or viewpoints put forth in the article. Analysing sources mentioned in an article or on the feeds, trends on Twitter is a crucial exercise in cultivating critical thought and conscientious information assimilation. This practice aids readers in steering clear of misinformation, validating assertions, and shaping knowledgeable perspectives grounded in trustworthy and dependable information.

5.5.4. Several Sources: Do not rely just on one article. The more information you research from numerous sources, the more probable it is that you will be able to form appropriate judgments. Consider multiple sources and opinions, such as news from other nations or authors from various backgrounds. Fundamentally, incorporating numerous sources within an article contributes to crafting content that is both more precise, all-encompassing, and dependable. This practice showcases a dedication to upholding journalistic ethics and guarantees that readers are informed from a diverse range of viewpoints. The consideration of multiple sources on Twitter is crucial for a range of purposes, mainly centred around guaranteeing precision, establishing credibility, and offering a comprehensive viewpoint.

Diverse sources can possess differing perspectives, enabling readers to attain a more well-rounded and thorough grasp of the subject. This discourages bias and promotes the cultivation of critical thinking. This study recommends that various sources might offer extra context, historical details, or insights that add to a more profound comprehension of the topic. It further shows that depending solely on one source heightens the likelihood of disseminating misinformation or presenting skewed perspectives. Therefore, referencing information across multiple sources helps reduce this risk. One other aspect of looking at different sources on Twitter is to ensure transparency, hence, it will permit readers to delve deeper into the information if they wish, fostering honesty and encouraging an investigative approach.

5.5.5. Examine the Author: Who is the writer? Investigate them to discover if they are a trustworthy author, if they've established an excellent track record in the online community, if they have a certain goal, or whether the person tweeting is real. Do they write in their area of expertise?

5.5.6. Examine the Date: Check that the publishing date is current and not a rehash of an older piece. While not always a guarantee of credibility, up-to-date information is often more reliable than outdated information. In a time characterised by swift information sharing, staying up to date assists individuals in distinguishing between accurate information and false data or misleading news. The world is in a perpetual state of change. Staying updated with current news enables individuals to adjust to shifts in technology, culture, society, and various other domains. Having a good understanding of present industry patterns, economic advancements, and fluctuations in the market is crucial for professionals to make well-informed choices in their careers and enterprises. Nonetheless, it is vital to engage with news intake using a discerning perspective. Not all origins hold the same level of trustworthiness, and partiality can impact the way news is conveyed. Broadening the range of sources and verifying information are necessary methods to guarantee a comprehensive and precise grasp of contemporary occurrences.

5.5.7. Comments: Even if the story, video, or post is genuine, be wary of the comments that follow. Frequently, bots or persons recruited to spread harmful, confused, or incorrect information may post links or remarks in reply. Reviewing comments on Twitter is important for various reasons, as it provides a window into the opinions of the public, fosters interaction, and establishes a space for conversations. Remarks on Twitter offer a glimpse into the way the public responds to a specific tweet or subject. Reviewing comments aids in assessing the overall sentiment, encompassing positivity, negativity, or a combination thereof. Frequently, users utilise comments to rectify errors or offer supplementary context. This practice plays a role in averting the dissemination of false information. Therefore, it is crucial to understand that while reviewing comments can be beneficial, not every comment is necessarily helpful or correct. Certain conversations might take a negative turn or involve trolling. Engaging in a thoughtful and discerning manner is advised to ensure a positive encounter.

5.5.8. Examine Your Biases: Maintain objectivity. Could your personal prejudices have influenced your reaction to the article? We humans frequently have the difficulty of just reading information that corroborate what we already believe. Test yourself by reading publications you would not ordinarily read.

5.5.9. Examine the Funding: Sponsors and advertising in respectable newspapers can influence a story or source. Check to see if the piece was funded, and if so, who financed it. Moreover, analysing funding might imply the concept of scrutinising the monetary support or assistance behind specific accounts, trends, or movements present on Twitter. In the realm of social media and digital platforms, investigating funding could involve delving into the entities providing financial backing or sponsorship for content, campaigns, or trends. This becomes especially pertinent when assessing the genuineness, partiality, or incentives associated with specific online engagements.

5.5.10. Repost with caution: Fake news depends on followers to repost, retweet, or transmit fake information. If you are unsure about the validity of a piece of content, consider twice before distributing the information with others. Therefore, exercising care when reposting implies that individuals should exercise caution and mindfulness when distributing or reposting content on social media or other platforms. This advice serves as a reminder to assess the content's accuracy, credibility, and potential impact before sharing it with others. The intention behind this phrase is to prompt people to be conscious of the information they are disseminating and to verify the content's authenticity, thus preventing their involvement in the propagation of false information or potentially harmful material.

5.6. FUTURE RESEARCHERS

Policymakers

This study seeks to inform policymakers in government that they have a vital role in tackling the issues presented by misinformation in the contemporary digital era in terms of policy formulation. Fundamentally, policymakers must possess a thorough grasp of misinformation's essence, the workings of digital media, and the possible effects on society. Their efforts should be directed at cultivating an environment that esteems accurate information and equips individuals with the means to thoughtfully assess the information they come across. Hence, policymakers have the option to explore various regulatory approaches, ranging from holding platforms responsible for content to mandating clear labels for information that lacks verification. Additionally, Education regarding media literacy, critical thinking, and digital citisenship should be of utmost importance for policymakers. A well-informed and perceptive public is more adept at recognising and mitigating misinformation. Therefore, this study would assist the policymakers to make an informed decision in terms of tackling misstatement in a way of coming up with different

legislation to deal with misinformation on different platforms such as Twitter, amongst others.

Scholars and Academics

Upcoming scholars and academics exploring misinformation on Twitter need a thorough grasp of the platform's distinctive dynamics and the obstacles it presents in spreading and combatting inaccurate content. The complexity of misinformation on Twitter necessitates researchers to glean insights from diverse fields such as communication studies, computer science, psychology, sociology, and data science. Moreover, researchers need to recognise the common existence of fake accounts and automated bots that magnify misinformation. It is crucial to identify and differentiate these from authentic accounts. They could use this study to refer to their own future research and use this study as a guideline to their research. They could also use this study to identify some weaknesses if need be and add to the body of scientific research of their studies.

Society and Twitter Users

Having a comprehensive comprehension of the different facets of misinformation on Twitter is essential for society to navigate the platform's information landscape with greater effectiveness. This study seeks to provide that user of Twitter and the society contribute to the fight against misinformation by carefully assessing information prior to sharing it. It is the responsibility of everyone to refrain from disseminating content that is either unverified or deceptive. The study further adds that the society should understand how tweets gain momentum through retweets, likes, and hashtags, resulting in the swift dissemination of both correct and incorrect information. Therefore, recognising the prevalence of misinformation, which includes false or deceptive information, on Twitter like other platforms, is crucial. It is essential to understand that not all content shared on Twitter is reliable, making critical thinking indispensable.

5.7. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that Twitter is effective in South Africa. Twitter provides the society with a platform for connecting and exchanging information. Due to its public influence, the data disseminated on Twitter must be accurate and have a source of information that individuals can refer to if they have doubts about the information. Twitter, as a tool of information dissemination, gives the public the opportunity to engage or participant on the

issues of interest. Due to its immediate character, extensive outreach, and ease of use, Twitter possesses significant potential as a medium for disseminating information.

This study shows that Twitter is recognised for its rapid updates, enabling users to swiftly exchange and access details on unfolding news, occurrences, and advancements in real time. This characteristic positions it as a prime platform for remaining current. Having millions of users actively engaged across the globe, Twitter presents an extensive audience for disseminating information which is inevitable. Therefore, this widespread global presence guarantees swift and diverse distribution of information. Twitter also has a feature of using #*hashtags* aids in organising content and making it accessible to users who have an interest in particular subjects. These characteristic streamlines and directs the sharing of information. One other feature is having "*trending*" function which was just highlighted in literature to highlights the most widely talked about subjects. This offers a glimpse into ongoing events and topics that have captured public attention. However, it has become blatant currently that numerous journalists and media sources utilise Twitter to disseminate headlines, reports, and perspectives, rendering it a valuable platform for staying well-informed about contemporary occurrences. Even researchers have the capability to examine trends and user emotions on Twitter, allowing for in-depth analysis.

Although Twitter presents considerable possibilities for disseminating information, it is crucial to recognise the obstacles, including the risk of misinformation, the concise nature of messages potentially leading to oversimplification and the necessity for judiciously evaluating sources. When employed prudently and conscientiously, Twitter can function as a potent instrument for sharing information, initiating conversations, and linking individuals worldwide. This analysis is supported by the research findings of this study because most of the respondents concur that Twitter is a useful tool in information dissemination. This study also discussed how Twitter could potentially reduce misinformation working together with the individuals.

Users and experts can promptly rectify incorrect information by providing accurate data, references, or clarifications in response to tweets. This guarantees that accurate information is readily accessible to counteract false claims. Twitter provides verified profiles for public figures, organisations, and specialists. Verified accounts serve as trustworthy information sources, lowering the risk of false or unreliable information originating from counterfeit or untrustworthy sources. The trending topics and hashtags on Twitter empower users to track

and converse about various subjects. Hence, in the findings some of the respondents indicated that they check #hastags to know the current trends. If misinformation gains traction, users can collaboratively refute inaccurate assertions and offer precise context. Twitter implemented cautionary labels for content that is deceptive, furnishing users with extra context or details to authenticate claims.

While Twitter provides mechanisms to counter misinformation, it also depends on users to be thoughtful evaluators of information, to authenticate claims prior to sharing, and to report erroneous content. The combined endeavours of users, specialists, and the platform itself play a role in diminishing the influence of misinformation on Twitter.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM

TITLE: TWEEPS' PERCEPTIONS OF MISINFORMATION ON TWITTER IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA.

NAME: Miss PK Gafane

Student number: 201720883

Email Address: koketsogafane@gmail.com

1) INTRODUCTION

You are invited to participate in this research study undertaken for a Master of Arts Study at the University of Limpopo.

Before you are part of this study you should fully understand what is involved.

If you have any questions that are not fully explained in this leaflet, feel free to ask the researcher

If you agree to volunteer to participate, you will be asked to sign the consent form.

2) THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

The aim of this is to explore the tweeps' perception of Black Twitter as the modern fourth estate. You have specifically been selected for participation in this study based on your experience as part of social media user, specifically Twitter.

3) EXPLANATIONS AND PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED

A theme of questions would be asked by the researcher and the interview will last from 30-40 minutes. The researcher will be conducting face-to-face interviews. Although the researcher might be taking some notes and using a sound recorder to record as not all things the participants say will be able to note down. Because there will be a sound recorder, please be sure to speak up so that in the recorder your comments are audible.

4) RISK AND DISCOMFORT INVOLVED

The researcher will not involve any form of discomfort, be it physical, emotional or psychological discomfort.

5) POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF THIS STUDY

Participation in this study will give you the opportunity to reflect on your views and experiences as a Twitter user. I understand that if I do not want to take part in this study, it will not be held against me. I may withdraw at any time.

Ethical approval

This study is authorised by the Research Committee which grants ethical clearance before the commencement of research to oversee the research conducted at the University of Limpopo in relation to ethical issues. The study adheres to the guidelines of the ethical committee of the University of Limpopo.

You are free to discuss your participation in this study with the researcher contactable via email (koketsogafane@gmail.com).

6) INFORMATION

I have read the information contained in the consent form. Any question I have asked has been answered to my satisfaction and if I have further questions concerning this study, I should contact the researcher.

7) CONFIDENTIALITY

All the responses obtained whilst conducting the study are regarded as confidential. The result will be published or presented in such a way that you still are unknown.

8) FEEDBACK

If you would like to be invited to a meeting where the findings will be presented or if you are interested in obtaining a summary of the findings, please indicate how you would like to receive the summary preferably via email.

9) CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

I hereby wish to take part in this study

I have agreed to take part in this study voluntarily.

A person obtaining informed consent

    (Number of participants)

Researcher   **Date**

(Patricia Koketso Gafane)   **.......................**

Please tick a box

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the Information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without given reason

3. I agree to take part in the above study without duress

4. I agree to interview /sampled group/ consultation being audio recorded

5. I agree to use the anonymised quotes in publication

....

Number of participants   Date

....

Name of researcher   Date   Signature

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Date of the interview

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATIONS STUDIES

 DEPARTMENT OF MEDIA STUDIES, COMMUNICATIONS AND

   INFORMATION STUDIES

Name of the interviewer ...PK Gafane...

Position .....Interviewer..

Date ....

Good morning. I am Patricia Koketso Gafane. This interview is conducted to gather data for an MA thesis. The aim of the session is to find from you as a Twitter user the perceptions of Misinformation on Twitter. I believe that you are in a good position to provide the necessary information because you are using a Twitter account.

If you agree, our conversation will be recorded so that I can capture all the details as I execute an attentive conversation with you. I also guarantee the confidentiality of your comments.

Please answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge.

1. Please state your age

   ....

2. Please state your gender

   ....

3. Do you know anything about Twitter? Please explain

   ....

4. Do you know anything about the concept of Misinformation? Briefly state your perceptions about it.

....

5. Do you think Twitter can be used to spread information of importance?

....

6. Have you ever used Twitter? If so, did you find it useful?

....

7. How many followers do you have?

....

8. What are the positive effects of Twitter ?

....

9. What are the negative effects of Twitter ?

....

10. Do you think Twitter is effective as a watchdog platform for ordinary people?

....

11. Do you think Twitter is a suitable platform for public debate?

....

12. Who shapes the public agenda on Twitter?

....

13. In your view, what do you suggest can be done to improve the reliability of information obtained on Twitter?

....

APPENDIX C: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

University of Limpopo
Department of Research Administration and Development
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TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

MEETING: 25 July 2023

PROJECT NUMBER: TREC/359/2023: IR

PROJECT:

Title:	The tweeps' perceptions of Misinformation on Twitter in Limpopo province, South Africa.
Researcher:	PK Gafane
Supervisor:	Dr E.J Malatji
Co-Supervisor/s:	N/A
School:	Languages and Communication Studies
Degree:	Master of Arts in Media Studies

PROF D MAPOSA
CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: REC-0310111-031

Note:
i) This Ethics Clearance Certificate will be valid for one (1) year, as from the abovementioned date. Application for annual renewal (or annual review) need to be received by TREC one month before lapse of this period.
ii) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee, together with the Application for Amendment form.
iii) PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

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APPENDIX D: EDITING CERTIFICATE

Topic : **THE TWEEPS' PERCEPTIONS OF MISINFORMATION ON TWITTER IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**

To : **TO WHO IT MAY CONCERN**

From : **Reneilwe Malatji**

Date : **25 October 2023**

Subject : **Editing Patricia Koketso Gafane's dissertation**

Student no : **201720883**

I hereby declare the above-mentioned dissertation to be accurately edited.

The editing process involved looking at the work in three distinct ways:

- Editing for structure to helps the reader follow the logic of the writer's argument.
- Editing for language and style to ensure good use of grammar as well as consistency in writing style such that the reader will be able to concentrate on the content.
- Proof reading in order to eliminate spelling errors, inconsistent formatting and other irritating distractions such that the document should be able to allow the reader to remain focused on the writing. I am confident that the edited version of Gafane's dissertation will make it relatively straightforward and proficient enough to evaluate.

Sincerely

Reneilwe Malatji

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APPENDIX E: TURNITIN REPORT (DIGITAL RECEIPT)