



## Article

# My news, your news, and our news: Self-presentational motivations and three levels of issue relevance in news sharing on social media

new media & society  
1–24

© The Author(s) 2024

Article reuse guidelines:

[sagepub.com/journals-permissions](https://sagepub.com/journals-permissions)

DOI: 10.1177/14614448241237487

[journals.sagepub.com/home/nms](https://journals.sagepub.com/home/nms)**Jennifer Ihm** 

Kwangwoon University, Republic of Korea

**Eun-mee Kim**

Seoul National University, Republic of Korea

## Abstract

Research on news sharing has focused on the societal relevance of news as the core value of traditional journalism or the informational characteristics of viral news on social media. In contrast, this study reinterprets news-sharing behaviors as interpersonal communication of news sharers presenting themselves to their personal networks beyond the distribution of societally important information. Through analyzing survey responses from 463 news sharers and the actual news they shared on social media, results suggest that news sharers consider their relationship with their audience and the personal and audience relevance of news to present their ideal selves and please their audience. By expanding the traditional emphasis on the societal relevance and informational characteristics of news, this study develops a theoretical framework to understand news sharing as interpersonal communication. It also provides future directions to conceptualize issue relevance at different levels and capture changed news-sharing behaviors in the era of networked individualism.

## Keywords

Audience-pleasing motivation, issue relevance at three levels, news sharing on social media, self-constructive motivation, self-presentational motivation

---

## Corresponding author:

Jennifer Ihm, School of Media and Communications, Kwangwoon University, Kwangwoon-ro 20, Nowon-gu, Seoul 01897, Republic of Korea.

Email: [ihmsy17@gmail.com](mailto:ihmsy17@gmail.com)

Social media have evolved into comprehensive life platforms, facilitating the organization of various everyday activities, and news engagement is no exception. Individuals increasingly turn to their social media networks as news sources (Costera Meijer and Groot Kormelink, 2015), surpassing those relying on traditional journalism sources since 2021 (Newman, 2023). Individuals also evaluate news content by determining its appropriateness and worthiness for sharing with their social media networks. As a result, journalists and news organizations, who once defined news value based on relevance to society and citizens' informational needs, now optimize news for increased shareability across digital platforms (Harcup and O'Neill, 2017; Lamot, 2022). Researchers have also identified key informational features that encourage widespread sharing among users (e.g. articles with high negativity, novelty, utility, and soft topics (Bright, 2016; Cappella et al., 2015; Kim, 2015; Trilling et al., 2017)).

However, individuals share news not only to disseminate societally important information but also for self-presentational motivations (Ihm and Kim, 2018; Kümpel et al., 2015; Lee and Ma, 2012). Individuals belong to and manage multiple loose networks in the contemporary media environment, rather than hierarchical bureaucracies or tightly knit social groups as in the past (Rainie and Wellman, 2012). Considering the diverse contexts, tastes, and interests of their personal networks (Beam et al., 2018), news sharers cannot select a news article appropriate for every audience based on a single informational feature. Thus, they may evaluate news based on whether the news aligns with their ideal public image or meets audience expectations (Kim and Ihm, 2020). In other words, individuals may assess and share news based on different levels of issue relevance beyond its societal relevance, considering factors such as whether a news issue is personally relevant to themselves or to their audience. In this way, "my news" (news relevant to the news sharer) and "your news" may spread and construct the news sphere beyond "our news" which journalists have traditionally valued and "viral news" which researchers have identified.

This study investigates how social media users consider different levels of issue relevance and share news in distinct ways based on self-presentational motivations. First, applying self-presentation theory, it classifies five news-sharing motivations into two broad types. Second, it conceptualizes three levels of issue relevance and hypothesizes how different levels of issue relevance lead social media users to share news in different ways based on different motivations. Finally, it examines the interaction between users' relationship with the perceived audience and issue relevance in news-sharing motivations. Integrating the interpersonal communication perspective, it expands the understanding of news sharing beyond highlighting news values bestowed by journalists or focusing on the uniform informational features of viral news.

## **Self-presentational motivation and news sharing**

Self-presentation theory asserts that when individuals communicate with others in their daily interactions, they have self-presentational motivations to present themselves in the way that aligns with their ideal selves and pleases their audience (Baumeister, 1982; Baumeister and Hutton, 1987). They create and cultivate "faces" suitable for different situational contexts and "perform" for their audience for better self-presentation (Goffman, 1959).

As a public performance and an interpersonal communication behavior, news sharing on social media also involves self-presentation (Kümpel et al., 2015). Through sharing news, users present themselves to their audience, revealing their emotions, thoughts, or interests related to the news. Like individuals who selectively present themselves in everyday interactions (Goffman, 1959), users choose news that conveys their ideal self-image and meets audience expectations (Ihm and Kim, 2018).

Specifically, technological features and contexts of different social media activate different audience types during news sharing (Kim and Ihm, 2019). Prior research has distinguished two types of social media: open and closed (Choi and Lee, 2017; Kim and Lee, 2016). On open social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, anyone with a connection to a user (e.g. “followers” on Twitter or “friends” on Facebook) can constitute the user’s audience when the user addresses themselves (Choi and Lee, 2017; Kim and Lee, 2016). The audience is not confined to different group chatrooms but is generally open to accessing the focal user’s social media page. Users on open social media lack precise knowledge of whom in their potential audience they can reach or who actually sees their posts because they cannot accurately identify the varied contexts and interests of everyone in their network (Beam et al., 2018), and not everyone in their network may see their posts due to social media filters (Litt, 2012; Picone, 2011). Consequently, news sharers on open social media “imagine” their “potential” audience, mentally conceptualizing the people with whom they are communicating (Litt, 2012; Marwick and Boyd, 2011; Picone, 2011).

Closed social media, such as “KakaoTalk,” the focus of this study, facilitate communication only among invited users within chatrooms created by one of the users (Choi and Lee, 2017; Kim and Lee, 2016). Users can control and manage their audiences in a sophisticated way by inviting them into various closed-group chatrooms tailored to the audience’s specific context and characteristic, such as family, colleagues from work, club members, or middle school alumni (Choi and Lee, 2017). In these closed-group chatrooms, even a small group of as few as three individuals can engage in private conversations.

Because of these technological boundaries on closed social media, news sharers can *perceive* the range and characteristics of their audience with relative precision, in contrast to open social media users who must *imagine* their audience without tangible boundaries. Thus, this study adopts the term “perceived audience” and utilizes it when referring to the specific audience that users encounter and perceive with relative precision on closed social media.

Research has identified five motivations for news sharing on social media that stem from users’ basic motivation of self-presentation to their audience (e.g. Choi, 2016; Lee and Ma, 2012; Picone et al., 2016; Wang and Rzeszutarski, 2023). This section classifies the five motivations into two types of self-presentation motivations of users to their audience: self-constructive motivations and audience-pleasing motivations.

### *Self-constructive motivated sharing*

In their chapter titled “Self-presentation theory: Self-construction and audience pleasing,” Baumeister and Hutton (1987) highlighted “two types of self-presentational motivations can be distinguished. One (pleasing the audience) is to match one’s self-presentation to

the audience's expectations and preferences. The other (self-construction) is to match one's self-presentation to one's own ideal self" (p. 71). *Self-constructive motivations* prompt individuals to present a carefully curated version of themselves to their audience, thereby constructing a public image equivalent to their ideal selves (Baumeister, 1982; Baumeister and Hutton, 1987). Prior research suggests that social media users also share news for this purpose (Ihm and Kim, 2018): they share news articles that reflect their thoughts, interests, or opinions congruent with these ideal selves. The focus of self-constructive motivations in news sharing is on news sharers themselves and their public identities. Research has identified identity clarification motivation and expressive motivation for news sharing on social media in relation to self-constructive motivations (Lee and Ma, 2012; Picone et al., 2016; Wang and Rzeszutarski, 2023).

*Identity clarification motivation* entails seeking personal clarity and conveying one's unique identity (Bazarova and Choi, 2014; Lee and Ma, 2012). By sharing news with their audience, social media users seek to define themselves to others (New York Times, 2012), "communicate a desired image of myself [themselves]" (Apuke and Omar, 2021: 229) and enhance their self-image among their peers or other users (Lee and Ma, 2012; Picone et al., 2016).

When acting based on *expressive motivation*, users express feelings and thoughts and release pent-up feelings (Bazarova and Choi, 2014; Wang and Rzeszutarski, 2023). Users share news based on their powerful urge to convey their inner states from the inside out, such as avid supporters of a politician sharing political news to express their opinions and ideologies (Wang and Rzeszutarski, 2023). In contrast to identity clarification motivation, which is designed to give audiences clear understanding of the news sharer, expressive motivation centers on sharers' pure expression to enforce a public self-image.

### *Audience-pleasing motivated sharing*

*Audience-pleasing motivations* drive people to seek to satisfy audience expectations and receive rewards by garnering favorable opinions of themselves (Baumeister, 1982). Social media users may share news if they believe that sharing it aligns with the audience tastes or interests (Kim and Ihm, 2019). Because they belong to and manage diverse personal networks in the current media environment, they may share certain news in one network if they feel members will appreciate the news and not share it in another network if they feel its members will not. Unlike self-constructive motivations, the primary focus of audience-pleasing motivations lies with the audience. Research has identified relational motivation, informational motivation, and entertainment motivation for news sharing on social media in relation to audience-pleasing motivation (Chadwick et al., 2018; Choi, 2016; Lee and Ma, 2012).

*Relational motivation* involves seeking "to develop and maintain relationships" with their audience (Lee and Ma, 2012: 336). News serves as a valuable tool for initiating and sustaining conversations, prompting users to share news that pleases their audience and demonstrates their concern for them (Choi, 2016; Dafonte Gómez, 2018). Users share controversial news to interest their audience, but avoid sharing excessively controversial news to prevent discomfort and damage to their relationships (Kim and Ihm, 2019).

Additional studies have highlighted relational motivations behind sharing news, such as to communicate with loved ones, connect with like-minded groups (Choi, 2016), and stay connected with others (Lee and Ma, 2012).

News sharing based on *informational motivation* involves sharing informative news to benefit their audience (Picone et al., 2016).<sup>1</sup> For instance, UK (Chadwick et al., 2018) and Dutch social media users (Picone et al., 2016) responded to have shared news to satisfy their audience with useful information.

Finally, *entertainment motivation* prompts users to share entertaining content and please the audience (Picone et al., 2016). Social media have served as a means for entertaining and escaping pressure (Wang and Rzeszotarski, 2023). Correspondingly, users share news because the content is “interesting” and “concerns something fun” (Picone et al., 2016: 925) and because it aligns with their audience’s interests and thus seems likely to entertain and please their audience (Ihm and Kim, 2018).

### Three levels of issue relevance in news sharing

The two types of news-sharing motivations of presenting *themselves* and pleasing the *audience* suggest that users may share news not only because of its societal relevance or specific informational features but also because of their interpersonal needs. Users may prioritize the relevance of news as a communication topic for themselves and the audience over its importance for society. Furthermore, in this era of informational abundance, individual interests and tastes vary greatly, so users may find it challenging to select news that caters to every audience using uniform informational features identified in prior research on viral news (Bright, 2016; Kim, 2015; Trilling et al., 2017). When considering the utility of news content (Berger, 2014), for instance, news itself cannot be deemed useful; news sharers consider *for whom* it is useful. They may share news they consider useful to themselves if it reflects their desired presentation, in line with self-constructive motivations. They may share news they perceive as useful for their audience based on their audience-pleasing motivations even if they consider it not useful for themselves. In other words, the perspective users adopt to assess the relevance of a news article, beyond the news content itself, may strongly correlate to their motivations for news sharing. To explore the nuanced associations between news with varying levels of issue relevance and different self-presentational motivations, and to gain a deeper theoretical understanding of news-sharing behaviors, this study proposes segmenting the concept of issue relevance into multiple levels. Thus, this section conceptualizes issue relevance of a news article at three levels to examine how users share different types of news based on the self-presentational motivation.

#### *Issue relevance at the personal level (personal relevance)*

Personal relevance is “the degree to which the (focal) issue is important to an individual personally” (Kim, 2009: 261). Prior research shows personal relevance is a crucial factor in news consumption. For instance, reading news with high personal relevance increases users’ domain-specific knowledge and attitude extremity (Kim, 2009). When social media users consume news with high personal relevance, the news organization’s

credibility positively influences users' agreement with the news position, but low personal relevance does not moderate the positive influence (Jang, 2023).

Whereas news consumption is a private behavior, news sharing is a public and interpersonal behavior. When users share news, whether the news presents themselves accurately to their audience may hold greater importance than their privately held knowledge, attitudes (Kim, 2009), or opinions about the news (Jang, 2023). When users encounter a news article with a high degree of personal relevance, thus aligning with their identities, they may expect the article to appropriately convey their public image to the audience. Consequently, they may choose to share the article to clarify and express their image to their audience, resonating with their values, beliefs, and thoughts (Ihm and Kim, 2018). When users perceive a news article with low personal relevance, on the contrary, they may believe that the article does not align with the public image they want to project, leading to decrease their self-constructive motivations. Thus, this study hypothesizes a positive correlation between personal relevance and self-constructive motivations for news sharing:

*H1. Personal relevance is positively related to identity clarification motivation for news sharing.*

*H2. Personal relevance is positively related to expressive motivation for news sharing.*

### **Issue relevance at the audience level (audience relevance)**

Some research has explored the relevance of news issues for the audience, but the concept of audience relevance has revolved around the audience as participants in their society or nation. This perspective aligns with journalists' traditional definition and evaluation of news based on relevance to society and as essential information for citizens (Trilling et al., 2017). For instance, previous research has defined relevant news as news about groups or nations that hold importance, influence, and cultural or historical familiarity for the *audience* (Harcup and O'Neill, 2017) or about relevant problems facing the nation today with much *audience* attention (Chew, 1994: 678). These definitions have presupposed that the audiences are citizens or participants who highly engage with news related to their group or nation.

However, news sharers on social media may not consider whether the news concerns the larger society to which they belong. In the era of networked individualism where individuals manage multiple personal networks (Rainie and Wellman, 2012), individuals may instead prioritize based on the personal contexts, tastes, or interests of their audience (Beam et al., 2018). Specifically, users on closed social media possess a relatively precise understanding of their perceived audience compared to users on open social media. Studies have revealed that users on closed social media were more inclined to share news that they perceived as resonating with the perceived audience's interests and preferences, thus meeting the perceived audience's expectations (Ihm and Kim, 2018). Furthermore, they were less likely to share excessively controversial news, as they had a more tangible grasp of their perceived audience's tastes, aiming to avoid displeasing their perceived

audience (Chen and Berger, 2013; Kim and Ihm, 2019). This contrasts with users on open social media who were more prone to sharing more controversial news to garner attention and fame from an imagined audience whose range and influence can extend as far as the user can imagine reaching on the platform (Kim and Ihm, 2019). For these users, the priority may lie in the broader reach and influence rather than in avoiding displeasing an audience they cannot precisely sense. These studies suggest that social media users may share news based on the relevance of their perceived audience (*audience relevance*, hereafter) and that when users on closed social media perceive high audience relevance in a news article, they may decide to share it because they believe it will satisfy and meet the expectations of their perceived audience. Thus, this study hypothesizes a positive correlation between audience relevance and audience-pleasing motivations in news sharing:

*H3. Audience relevance is positively related to relational motivation for news sharing.*

*H4. Audience relevance is positively related to informational motivation for news sharing.*

*H5. Audience relevance is positively related to entertainment motivation for news sharing.*

### **Issue relevance at the societal level (societal relevance)**

The traditional journalistic value of news has emphasized the *issue relevance of news for society* (*societal relevance*, hereafter), suggesting that news should address the important problems of society or the nation to ensure citizens or social participants have vital information to fulfill their duties as citizens (Chew, 1994; Harcup and O'Neill, 2017). Societal relevance does not directly relate to the interpersonal and self-presentational nature of news sharing, and news sharers may be far more concerned with their self-presentation to their audience than societal relevance.

However, research suggests that societal relevance may influence news-sharing behaviors in certain situations. For instance, users are more likely to share content that holds practical value and thus aligns with current societal concerns, such as timely information about where to obtain flu shots or new and innovative products that might interest audiences (Berger, 2014; Kim, 2015). Indeed, users tend to share news with high relevance to society or their nation (Harcup and O'Neill, 2017) and news about domestic issues and geographically close regions (Trilling et al., 2017). These studies suggest that as users share news for self-presentational motivations, they may still consider societal relevance together to construct public images (i.e. self-constructive motivation) that reflect their engagement with current society (e.g. "I am a trendy person who knows about this innovative product") or please their audience (i.e. audience-pleasing motivation) by providing timely information that corresponds with the current societal concerns (e.g. news about flu shots). Considering that societal relevance does not directly pertain to the interpersonal realm of self-presentational motivations, but that users may still take



it into account for certain motivations, this study explores the following research question rather than directional hypotheses on the relationships between societal relevance and news-sharing motivations:

*RQ1. How is societal relevance related to news-sharing motivations?*

### ***Interaction with users' relationship to audience***

Users maintain relationships of diverse quality with their personal networks (Rainie and Wellman, 2012), and they use news sharing as a tool to manage and develop their relationships with them (Lee and Ma, 2012). As a result, in addition to audiences' tastes, interests, and expectations, their news-sharing behaviors may reflect the varied quality of relationships with different audience groups (Kim and Ihm, 2019; Ma et al., 2014). Specifically, prior research on the strength of ties suggests that how a person perceives a tie with another, or the person's feeling of closeness to the other, serves as a fundamental measure of the depth and emotional intimacy in a relationship (Granovetter, 1973; Marsden and Campbell, 1984). This perception not only shapes the essence of the relationship but also predicts the person's behavior toward the other (Kim and Ihm, 2019; Lin and Utz, 2015). For instance, users are more likely to share news with people they feel closer to, because they place more value on such close relationships; they use news sharing as opportunities for active self-presentation to maintain and improve a positive self-image within the close relationships (Kim and Ihm, 2019). Consistently, users are more likely to share news when they perceive more emotional attachment with their social media networks, because they want to maintain these close relationships (Ma et al., 2014).

Users' feeling of closeness to their audiences may also influence news sharing by interacting with the issue relevance of the given news. For instance, in the case of personal relevance, on one hand, users may share a news article with a high personal relevance with their close relationships, driven by self-constructive motivation. Users tend to prioritize close relationships when sharing news (Kim and Ihm, 2019; Ma et al., 2014), so they may actively share news that aligns with their identities to strategically present themselves and maintain a positive public image among their close audience.

On the other hand, driven by self-constructive motivations, users may be more inclined to share such an article with distant audiences. They may recognize that their distant audiences have only vague impressions of them compared to their close audiences and therefore aim to project a strong public self-image. Users may also share news with high audience relevance with distant audiences because they expect the news will please the distant audience and that they will meet the expectations of the distant audience while not taking social risks to share anything where reaction is hard to predict (Berger, 2014; Kim and Ihm, 2019). Given that multiple patterns of interaction are equally plausible, this study investigates the following research question instead of proposing directional hypotheses on the interaction between issue relevance, users' relationship to the audience (i.e. users' feeling of closeness to the audience), and the resulting impact on users' news-sharing motivations:



*RQ2. How do three levels of issue relevance and users' relationship to the audience interact with each other and influence users' motivation for news sharing?*

## Methods

### Sample and procedure

The sample for this study was obtained from general online panel data available from Embrain, an online survey company in South Korea ([www.embrain.com](http://www.embrain.com)), in October 2020. Screening questions were used to retain only those between 20 and 49 years old who lived in the Seoul area and had shared news on KakaoTalk, a social media platform, in the past 3 months (see Supplemental Appendices A and B for demographics and rationales for sample selection). The survey company randomly chose and sent invitation emails to 23,405 Koreans among the company's 1,148,766 opt-in online panels. The chosen individuals were invited to participate in the anonymous survey by clicking a link in the email. Among those who received the link, 17,526 clicked on the survey; 15,792 of these individuals were excluded based on the screening questions. Among the remaining 1,734 who clicked on the survey, 504 completed it (response rate: 29.07%). Responses with invalid or missing data (e.g. malfunctioning news links) were excluded from the analysis, resulting in a sample of 463 individuals.

This study first asked the participants to open their KakaoTalk application, a type of closed social media, and copy and paste the online link of the news item they had mostly recently shared with others on the medium during the past 3 months. For this task, this study provided visual instructions for a KakaoTalk function called "Talk Drawer" which allows users to see all of the links they have actually shared on the platform as a whole and separate them according to the chatroom in which they shared it, with the most recent at the top of each list. The survey also provided the participants with a definition of *news* based on previous research (i.e. daily news articles, online news, news on portal websites, and news relevant to their interests and life; Ihm and Kim, 2018).

Second, participants were asked to indicate the three group chatrooms in the medium in which they had the most frequent communication. A group chatroom was operationalized in the survey as "a chatroom having at least three participants including yourself." The participants were asked to state the characteristics of each chatroom (e.g. size and feeling of closeness with the perceived audience). Then, participants indicated whether they had shared the news and answered questions about the motivations for sharing it in each chatroom and the issue relevance of news at different levels. The 463 individuals reported they had shared news in 981 distinct group chatrooms; thus, they shared news in 2.12 chatrooms on average.

### Measures

**Issue relevance.** To measure personal ( $M=3.94$ ,  $SD=.86$ ), audience ( $M=3.27$ ,  $SD=1.17$ ), and (perceived) societal relevance ( $M=4.04$ ,  $SD=.91$ ), this study added "to you personally," "to this chatroom," and "to the society," respectively, to a previous measure (Kim, 2009): "How important is the issue about (the news item you shared)?"

**Table 1.** Full items of measures.

		Factor loadings ( $\lambda$ )	<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )
Identity Clarification ( $\rho = .80$ )	Because sharing this news increases clarification of my personal identity	.91	2.78 (1.07)
	Because sharing this news conveys my personal identity	.88	
Expressive ( $\rho = .78$ )	Because I wanted to express my feelings and thoughts	.78	3.05 (1.01)
	Because sharing this news releases pent-up feelings	.78	
Relational ( $\rho = .71$ )	Because sharing this news helps to interact with others(s)	.62	3.50 (.88)
	Because sharing this news helps to manage and maintain relationships	.85	
Informational ( $\rho = .70$ )	Because sharing this news benefits other(s) by providing information	.76	3.68 (.74)
	Because this news provides relevant and timely information	.66	
Entertainment	Because this news is entertaining for other(s)	.78	2.94 (1.09)
Note. The question was “Why did you share this news with people in this chatroom?”			
Feeling of closeness ( $\rho = .82$ )	Members of this chatroom and I have close relationships.	—	3.58 (1.16)
	I would categorize members of this chatroom as one of my strong ties		

For societal relevance, this study measured not only news sharers’ perception of the societal relevance of a news item as mentioned above (hereafter “perceived societal relevance”) but also its actual relevance in Korean society (hereafter “actual societal relevance”). The actual societal relevance ( $M = 129.27$ ,  $SD = 459.42$ ) was determined based on the number of news items related to the issue released within a week of the news item’s publication date, as listed on the Korean news database website [www.bigkinds.or.kr](http://www.bigkinds.or.kr) (see Supplemental Appendix C for details).

**News-sharing motivations.** This study used 5-point Likert-type scales from prior research which identified the five motivations for sharing information or news with social media audience (Bazarova and Choi, 2014; Choi, 2016; Lee and Ma, 2012; see Table 1 for full measures). To test the validity of the five motivations, the five-factors model was tested and reached a good fit of reflecting different constructs (Hooper et al., 2008):  $\chi^2(25) = 306.61$ , comparative fit index (CFI) = .97, Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) = .95, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .06, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = .03, coefficient of determination (CD) = .99. The values of participants’ average agreement with statements on each motivation were entered into the analysis (1: *strongly disagree*, 5: *strongly agree*, Identity Clarification:  $M = 2.78$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ; Expressive:  $M = 3.05$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ; Relational:  $M = 3.50$ ,  $SD = .88$ ; Informational:  $M = 3.68$ ,  $SD = .74$ ; Entertainment:  $M = 2.94$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ).

**Relationship to audience.** This study measured users' relationships to their perceived audience in the chatrooms in which they shared the news by employing and averaging the values of a 5-point Likert-type scale on their feeling of closeness with participants in a group chatroom (1: *strongly disagree*, 5: *strongly agree*,  $M=3.58$ ,  $SD=1.16$ , Kim and Ihm, 2019, see Supplemental Appendix D for zero-order correlations and summary of statistics).

## Analysis

Because each participant gave answers about three chatrooms, multilevel modeling was conducted to address the hierarchical structure of the data by concurrently examining the effects of both intra- (responses about each participant's three chatrooms) and inter-individual level factors (responses about each participant) on five news-sharing motivations. In all cases, this study controlled for intra- (e.g. the number of participants in each chatroom, and the average communication frequency from last week in each chatroom) and inter-individual level variables (e.g. gender, age, education, and monthly household income, the number of total registered members in the medium, and the average communication frequency in the medium during the prior week).

Model 1 was a baseline model with all control variables included (see Supplemental Appendix E for Model 1). Model 2 examined how three levels of issue relevance and users' relationship with the perceived audience affect news-sharing motivations. Model 3 examined the influence of the interaction terms between issue relevance and the news sharer's relationship with their perceived audience (see Table 2). For expressive and informational motivations, the log likelihood tests revealed no significant difference between Model 2 and Model 3, so this study reports results based on Model 2 instead of Model 3 (see Supplemental Appendix F for Model 3 of the two motivations).

## Results

H1 and H2 predicted a positive relationship between personal relevance to identity clarification (H1) and expressive motivations (H2). Both were supported: results suggest positive relationships between personal relevance and news sharers' identity clarification ( $b=.08$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and expressive motivations ( $b=.06$ ,  $p<.05$ ). In addition, identity clarification motivation was positively related to audience relevance ( $b=.13$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Expressive motivation was also positively related to audience ( $b=.13$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and perceived societal relevance ( $b=.06$ ,  $p<.01$ ).

H3–H5 hypothesized positive associations between audience relevance to relational (H3), informational (H4), and entertainment motivations (H5). Results indicate positive associations between audience relevance and relational ( $b=.13$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and informational motivations ( $b=.22$ ,  $p<.001$ ). There was no significant relationship to entertainment motivation. Therefore, H3 and H4 were supported, but H5 was not. In addition, relational ( $b=.06$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and informational motivations ( $b=.09$ ,  $p<.001$ ) were positively related to personal relevance.

RQ1 asked about the relationships between societal relevance to news-sharing motivations. Results suggest positive relationships of *perceived* societal relevance to expressive

**Table 2.** Influence of issue relevance and feeling of closeness on news-sharing motivations.

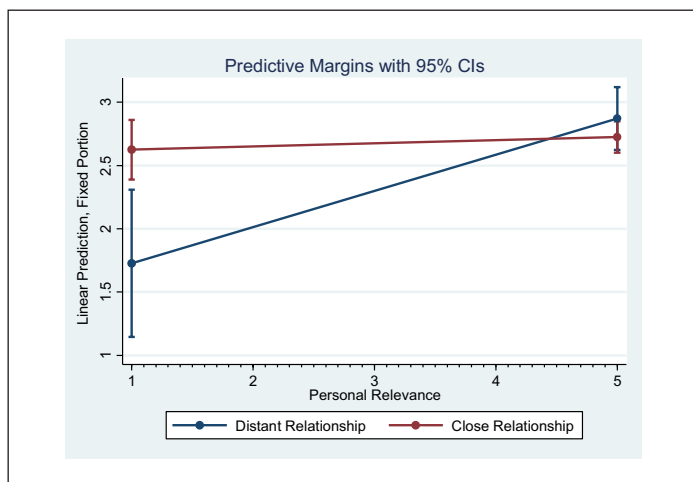
	Identity clarification			Expressive			Relational			
	Model 2		Model 3	Model 2		Model 3	Model 2		Model 3	
	b	(SE)	b	(SE)	b	(SE)	b	(SE)	b	(SE)
Gender	-.31**	(.09)	-.31**	(.09)	-.05	(.09)	-.16*	(.07)	-.16*	(.07)
Age	.07	(.04)	.07	(.04)	.03	(.04)	.11**	(.04)	.11**	(.04)
Education	.07	(.07)	.07	(.07)	.08	(.07)	.01	(.05)	.01	(.06)
Income	.02	(.03)	.02	(.03)	-.01	(.03)	-.01	(.02)	-.01	(.02)
No. of Registered Members	-.00	(.00)	-.00	(.00)	-.00	(.00)	.00	(.00)	.00	(.00)
Comm. Freq. of Medium	.00	(.00)	.00	(.00)	.00	(.00)	.00	(.00)	.00	(.00)
No. of Participants in Each Chatroom	-.00	(.00)	-.00	(.00)	.00	(.00)	.00	(.00)	-.00	(.00)
Comm. Freq. in Each Chatroom	-.00	(.00)	-.00	(.00)	-.00	(.00)	-.00	(.00)	-.00	(.00)
Feeling of Close.	.02	(.02)	.15*	(.08)	.09***	(.02)	.04*	(.02)	.00	(.00)
Personal Rel.	.08**	(.02)	.29**	(.09)	.06*	(.03)	.06*	(.03)	-.12	(.09)
Audience Rel.	.13***	(.02)	.16*	(.07)	.13***	(.02)	.13***	(.02)	.29*	(.07)
Perceived Societal.	-.01	(.02)	-.11	(.08)	.06**	(.02)	-.03	(.02)	-.02	(.08)
Actual Societal.	.00	(.00)	-.00	(.00)	-.00	(.00)	.00	(.00)	.00	(.00)
Personal Rel. * Feeling of Close.			-.05*	(.02)					.05*	(.00)
Audience Rel. * Feeling of Close.			-.01	(.02)					-.04*	(.00)
Perceived Societal. * Feeling of Close.			.03	(.02)					-.00	(.00)
Actual Societal. * Feeling of Close.			.00	(.00)					-.00	(.00)
Constant	1.69***	(.36)	1.16*	(.48)	1.35***	(.35)	2.46***	(.29)	2.49***	(.42)
Inter-individual level variance	.72		.72		.64		.41		.40	
Intra-individual level variance	.10		.10		.06		.07		.06	
Log likelihood	-.2074.05*		-.2069.98*		-.2091.29*		-.2006.83*		-.2003.26*	

(Continued)

Table 2. (Continued)

	Informational		Entertainment	
	Model 2		Model 3	
	b	(SE)	b	(SE)
Gender	-.01	(.06)	-.32**	(.09)
Age	.10***	(.03)	.04	(.05)
Education	.01	(.04)	-.00	(.07)
Income	-.01	(.02)	.01	(.03)
No. of Registered Members	.00	(.00)	.00	(.00)
Comm. Freq. of Medium	.00	(.00)	.00	(.00)
No. of Participants in Each Chatroom	.00	(.00)	.00	(.00)
Comm. Freq. in Each Chatroom	.00	(.00)	-.00	(.00)
Feeling of Close.	.07***	(.02)	.06**	(.02)
Personal Rel.	.09***	(.02)	-.01	(.03)
Audience Rel.	.22***	(.02)	.01	(.03)
Perceived Societal.	.04*	(.02)	-.13***	(.03)
Actual Societal.	-.00	(.00)	.01*	(.00)
Personal Rel. * Feeling of Close.			.08**	(.03)
Audience Rel. * Feeling of Close.			-.05*	(.02)
Perceived Societal. * Feeling of Close.			-.07**	(.02)
Actual Societal. * Feeling of Close.			-.00	(.00)
Constant	1.67***	(.23)	3.39***	(.38)
Inter-individual level variance	.25		.76	
Intra-individual level variance	.06		.01	
Log likelihood	-1433.71*		-2361.94*	
			-.2352.71**	

Note. Feeling of Close: Feeling of Closeness; Personal Rel: Issue relevance at the personal level; Audience Rel: Issue relevance at the audience level; Perceived Societal: Perceived societal issue relevance; Actual Societal: Actual societal issue relevance.  
Log likelihood tests are model fit tests based on previous model.  
\*p < .05; \*\*p < .01; \*\*\*p < .001.



**Figure 1.** Interaction between Personal Relevance and Feeling of Closeness on Identity Clarification Motivation.

( $b = .06, p < .01$ ) and informational motivations ( $b = .04, p < .05$ ), but a *negative* relationship to entertainment motivation ( $b = -.13, p < .001$ ). There was also a positive relationship between *actual* societal relevance and entertainment motivation ( $b = .01, p < .05$ ).

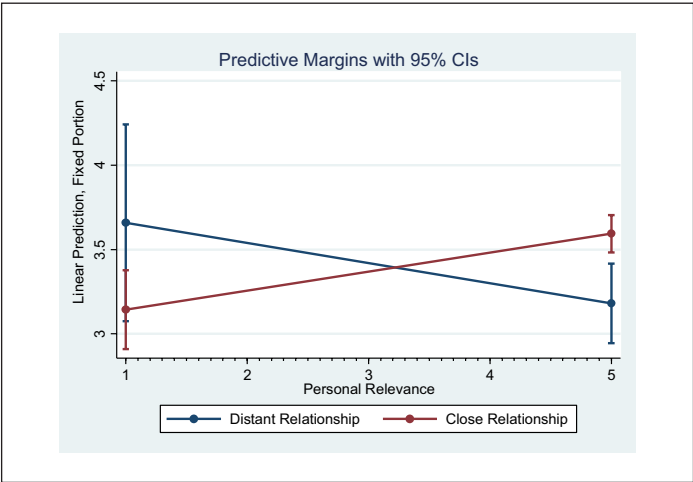
RQ2 asked about the interaction effect between relationship to the perceived audience and different levels of issue relevance in predicting news-sharing motivations. There were no significant interaction effects on expressive or informational motivations. Regarding identity clarification motivation, there was a negative interaction between feeling of closeness and personal relevance ( $b = -.05, p < .05$ ). The personal relevance increased the identity clarification motivation among users with distant audiences, but it did not influence that of users with close audiences (see Figure 1).

Regarding relational motivation, there was a positive interaction between feeling of closeness and personal relevance ( $b = .05, p < .05$ ). The personal relevance increased the relational motivation among users with close audiences, but it did not affect that of users with distant audiences (see Figure 2).

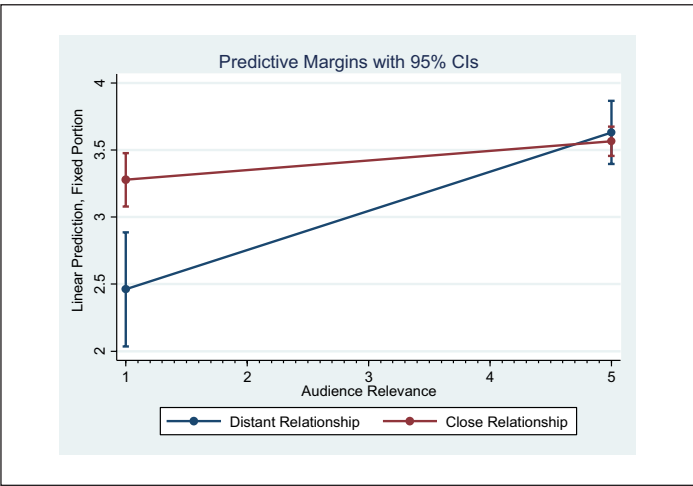
Feeling of closeness had a negative interaction with audience relevance in their impact on relational motivation ( $b = -.04, p < .05$ ). The audience relevance increased the relational motivation among users with distant audiences, but it did not influence that of users with close audiences (see Figure 3).

Regarding entertainment motivation, there was a positive interaction between feeling of closeness and personal relevance ( $b = .08, p < .01$ ). The personal relevance decreased the entertainment motivation among those with distant audiences, but it did not influence that of users with close audiences (see Figure 4).

Feeling of closeness had a negative interaction with audience relevance in their impact on entertainment motivation ( $b = -.05, p < .05$ ). Users with close audiences generally had higher entertainment motivations than users with distant audiences (see Figure 5), but the



**Figure 2.** Interaction between Personal Relevance and Feeling of Closeness on Relational Motivation.

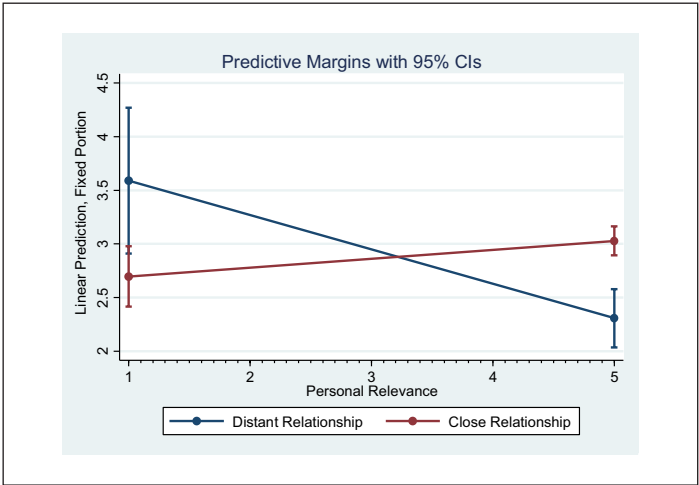


**Figure 3.** Interaction between Audience Relevance and Feeling of Closeness on Relational Motivation.

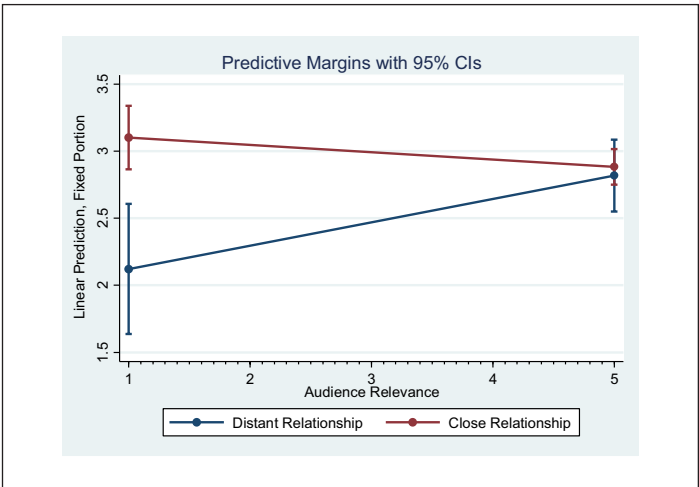
audience relevance did not influence the entertainment motivations of users with both close and distant audiences.

Feeling of closeness had a negative interaction with perceived societal relevance in the impact on entertainment motivation ( $b = -.07, p < .01$ ). The perceived societal relevance negatively influenced the entertainment motivation among users with close audiences, but it did not influence that of users with distant audiences (see Figure 6).





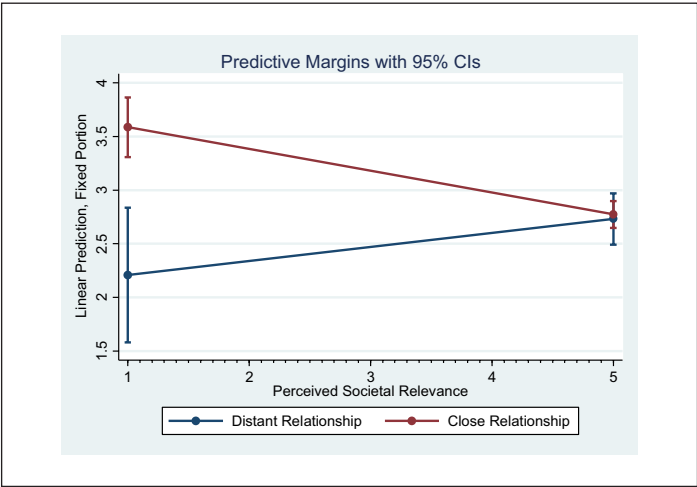
**Figure 4.** Interaction between Personal Relevance and Feeling of Closeness on Entertainment Motivation.



**Figure 5.** Interaction between Audience Relevance and Feeling of Closeness on Entertainment Motivation.

**Discussion**

Considering the networked individualism of the current media environment (Rainie and Wellman, 2012), this study conceptualized three levels of issue relevance that social media users may take into account when they decide to share news. This study hypothesized that personal, audience, and societal relevance may be related to different types of



**Figure 6.** Interaction between Perceived Societal Relevance and Feeling of Closeness on Entertainment Motivation.

self-presentational motivations, but the tests of H1–H4 indicate that news sharers consider both personal and audience relevance almost equally when seeking to satisfy both self-constructive and audience-pleasing motivations. This suggests that news sharers consider not only the news relevance to themselves but also to their perceived audience so that they can *communicate* with their perceived audience. This finding reemphasizes that at the crux of news-sharing behaviors is the reciprocity and mutuality which is the nature of any interpersonal communication process.

Furthermore, both personal and audience relevance were positively related to 4 out of 5 news-sharing motivations, explaining more motivations than societal relevance. Despite journalistic efforts to balance between societal and audience relevance in news (Carey, 2007; Harcup and O’Neill, 2017), the escalating “audience turn” in journalism has resulted in more personal, softer news stories (Lamot, 2022; Swart et al., 2022). Corresponding with this trend, this study captures how users access and engage with news mainly through their personal networks and evaluate its relevance more in the context of their interpersonal communication, rather than societal relevance. In this way, this study contributes to a theoretical conceptualization to news consumption and reproduction within users’ networked media environment, where users belong to and manage their own networks.

The results regarding societal relevance reveal how the societal aspect of news persists for certain news-sharing motivations and intersects with the interpersonal realm of news sharing (RQ1). First, perceived societal relevance was positively correlated to expressive motivation, suggesting it differs from identity clarification motivation. In contrast to identity clarification motivation, expressive motivation involves the direct expression of users’ thoughts and feelings (Apuke and Omar, 2021). Thus, the self-expressive motivation may motivate users with strong opinions or ideologies, such as

fervent supporters of a politician (Wang and Rzeszutarski, 2023) when they encounter news that is relevant to society; these users may share news that they perceive as not only highly relevant for themselves or the perceived audience but also for society. This finding offers theoretical explanations for how hard news, which users with strong opinions may consider crucial for society, spreads even within the highly individualized and polarized current news sphere (Bright, 2016).

Second, perceived societal relevance positively correlated with informational motivation. While informational motivation involves pleasing the audience with informative news, news can be informative when it holds at least some practical value related to current societal issues (Berger, 2014). Thus, users appear to additionally consider societal relevance as a precondition to benefit the audience. This result coincides with prior research that users, specifically young users, evaluate news items based on their individual practicality, considering “what is useful to know” and “what it (the news) can do for them” (Flamingo, 2019). Correspondingly, users may share news when they perceive that the news content is relevant to the society in a way that the news can provide useful information to and benefit their audience.

Finally, perceived societal relevance negatively correlated with entertainment motivation, whereas actual societal relevance positively correlated with it. There was no correlation between entertainment motivation and personal or audience relevance (H5). The measure of actual societal relevance in this study encapsulates both societal importance and popularity because journalists report on a topic when they value its “societal importance” (Harcup and O’Neill, 2017) as well as when they seek to capitalize on its “popularity,” aiming for increased “views” and “likes.” This study sheds light on the mechanisms behind the viral spread of entertainment gossip within the news sphere. Gossip items may not be perceived as societally relevant, even by those who share them, as evidenced by the negative correlation in the result. In other words, users may share gossip items even if they perceive them as *not* societally relevant. However, users may still share them because (1) they personally enjoy the topic and are the ones who construct the popularity of the article or (2) they simply perceive the topic as prevalent in the news landscape. Both aspects emphasize the continued importance and responsibility of traditional news media in shaping the news landscape (Costera Meijer, 2020). The news many journalists report may be shared by many users and change the news landscape simply because the topic is prevalent in the news sphere regardless of whether users perceive the topic as important to society or the topic is actually popular among the users.

Results on interaction terms (RQ2) additionally highlight users’ unique ways of discerning varying levels of issue relevance when sharing news based on different motivations. Regarding personal relevance, when users perceived news as more relevant to themselves, they increased sharing it with a distant audience driven by identity clarification motivation (Figure 1). However, users were more likely to share news with high personal relevance with their *close audience* than with a distant audience, driven by relational (Figure 2) and entertainment (Figure 4) motivations. These results suggest that users employ news with high personal relevance as a means to appropriately convey their public image to distant audiences who may not have formed an impression of them (Kim and Ihm, 2019). Users may also utilize such news as a topic to keep the conversation going and please those with whom they have close relationships (Lee and Ma, 2012).

Regardless of the level of the news' relevance to the perceived audience, users were generally more likely to share news with their close audience than with a distant audience, driven by relational and entertainment motivations (Figures 3 and 5). Regardless of how well the news aligns with the perceived audience, users seem to have higher levels of relational and entertainment motivations with their close audience than with a distant audience to maintain the close, and thus important, relationships (Ma et al., 2014). However, users increased sharing news with a distant audience driven by relational motivation when the news possessed a higher level of audience relevance (Figure 3). With distant audiences, users seem to exhibit more caution in sharing news that matches the perceived audience's interests. As a result, their relational motivation to please distant audiences may have increased only when they became more confident that the news would meet the perceived audience's expectations (Ihm and Kim, 2018). When they perceived news as irrelevant to their perceived audience, their entertainment motivation was also lower with distant relationships than with close relationships, because they may not have wanted to displease their perceived audience with unrelated news (Figure 5).

In terms of perceived societal relevance (Figure 6), users generally maintained higher levels of entertainment motivation to share news with close audiences than with distant audiences. Users seem to be cautious about not irritating their distant audience while aiming to entertain them. However, when the perceived societal relevance increased, users decreased sharing such news with close audiences based on entertainment motivation. This result suggests that users may share news that they regard as irrelevant to society with their close audience, just to entertain them (RQ2), in line with the nature of entertainment news investigated in RQ1.

The interaction effects of users' relationship with their perceived audience represent users' careful management of multiple personal networks in this media environment of networked individualism (Rainie and Wellman, 2012), influencing the news spread beyond the mass media. Prior research has suggested users' inclination to share news with their close audience (Kim and Ihm, 2019; Ma et al., 2014) or to share news with either close or distant audiences based on the news content (e.g. controversial news, Chen and Berger, 2013; Kim and Ihm, 2019). Expanding on prior research, the interaction results provide theoretical insights into comprehending news sharing as an interpersonal communication that entails intricate dynamics of users' relationship with their audience, the relevance of the news to both the users and the audience, and the users' motivation, beyond the information in the news.

To summarize, this study captures the interpersonal nature of news-sharing behaviors, going beyond prior research focusing on the uniform informational features of viral news (Berger, 2014; Bright, 2016; Harcup and O'Neill, 2017; Kim, 2015; Trilling et al., 2017). This study suggests that users do not share news simply because of its informational features. Users go through a complex process of simultaneously considering whether the article conveys users' ideal self-images and matches with the audience's tastes, because news sharing is a communicative and public behavior that involves the audience.

Furthermore, this study sheds light on individual users' new role in evaluating news content and exerting influence on the news landscape. The findings indicate that users take account of personal and audience relevance for most news-sharing motivations, more than societal relevance. This result points to the transformation of the traditional

role of journalists in determining news value with emphasis on societal relevance and shaping the news sphere (Harcup and O'Neill, 2017). In comparison to a traditional journalism perspective, this study suggests that users differentiate personal, audience, and societal relevance along with their relationship to diverse personal networks, inducing distinct news-sharing behaviors, and ultimately shaping the news sphere in an unprecedented manner.

## **Conclusion**

This study investigated how news with different levels of issue relevance and users' relationship to their perceived audience determine news-sharing motivations on social media. It contributes to communication research in three ways. First, this study advances the theoretical understanding of news sharing by expanding on its interpersonal aspects based on self-presentation theory. Unlike prior research focusing on the informational features of viral news (Bright, 2016; Trilling et al., 2017), this study offers theoretical explanations for how such news may spread based on individual users' relationships with their perceived audience and their self-presentational motivations. Bridging the realms of interpersonal communication and journalism scholarship, this study deepens our understanding that individual users disseminate news that is relevant to themselves or their personal audience rather than societally important news or viral news that journalists or researchers have identified. In this way, this study underscores the underlying mechanisms that "my news" and "your news" spread and influence the construction of the news landscape.

Second, this study redefines the concept of issue relevance at three distinct levels and advances the theorization of analyzing news content. Prior research has focused on news values or newsworthiness defined and evaluated by journalists or news organizations (Harcup and O'Neill, 2017; Schultz, 2007). Enriching such research, this study introduces three levels of issue relevance to theorize a transformed understanding of users' assessing and differentiating news content. Consequently, it presents an innovative theoretical framework of three-layered issue relevance for analyzing news content and discerning the role of individual users in assessing, constructing, and disseminating news on social media (Costera Meijer, 2020; Westlund, 2015).

Finally, this study contributes to journalism scholarship by providing novel insights into the audience in online news sharing. Journalism studies have captured the increasing importance of audience in the news industry, addressing how journalists consider satisfying the news audience and increasing audience engagement (Costera Meijer, 2020; Lamot, 2022; Swart et al., 2022). Advancing this audience turn in journalism research, this study investigates how common users reckon with their news audience in their own ways by distinguishing the relevance of the news content and having different motivations. In this way, this study directs attention to future research on different dimensions of (individual users') news audience and broadens the scope of news audience research beyond the traditional point from journalists and news organizations.

This study has several limitations. First, the sample for this study was active social media users who had shared news on social media in the past 3 months. Although an increasing number of users share news via social media, results from this study may not apply to many social media users who do not share news. Second, this study is based on

cross-sectional survey data. Participants must have considered the issue relevance of the news and their perceived audience before they decided whether to share news, but future studies using longitudinal data may further contribute to our understanding of news-sharing behaviors and motivations. Finally, this study used many single-item measures for focal variables. Although we adapted the measures from prior research (Bazarova and Choi, 2014; Kim, 2009; Lee and Ma, 2012), research suggests that “more items lead to better construct representation” (Eisinga et al., 2013: 641). Future research may construct multiple items for these measures to capture the nuanced mechanism of news sharing.

As the way individuals relate to one another changes, moving from hierarchical structures to more loosely connected networks (Rainie and Wellman, 2012), the way they relate to one another through news also changes. This study emphasizes that news diffusion concerns the relationship not only between individuals and news content but also among individuals themselves. By shifting the focus from newsworthiness or viral features of news to the interpersonal nature of news sharing, this study highlights the diverse ways in which users evaluate news content for the interpersonal communication and fosters the theorization of the audience turn in journalism. In this way, this study develops a comprehensive theoretical understanding of how “my news,” “your news,” and “our news” may spread and construct the news sphere in the current media landscape.

## Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: This work was supported by the Korea News Agency Commission in 2020. This work was supported by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea and the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF-2021S1A5B8096358). This work was conducted by the Research Grant of Kwangwoon University in 2022.

## ORCID iD

Jennifer Ihm  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7039-4162>

## Supplemental material

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

## Note

1. Research has addressed other aspects of informational (e.g. sharing news for information storage, Lee and Ma, 2012) and entertainment motivations (e.g. sharing news for personal pleasure, Bazarova and Choi, 2014), but we focus on and measure only the aspects relevant to self-presentational motivations for the purpose of this study.

## References

- Apuke OD and Omar B (2021) User motivation in fake news sharing during the COVID-19 pandemic: An application of the uses and gratification theory. *Online Information Review* 45(1): 220–239.
- Baumeister RF (1982) A self-presentational view of social phenomena. *Psychological Bulletin* 91(1): 3–26.

- Baumeister RF and Hutton DG (1987) Self-presentation theory: Self-construction and audience pleasing. In: Mullen B and Goethals GR (eds) *Theories of Group Behavior*. New York: Springer. pp. 71–87.
- Bazarova NN and Choi YH (2014) Self-disclosure in social media: Extending the functional approach to disclosure motivations and characteristics on social network sites. *Journal of Communication* 64(4): 635–657.
- Beam MA, Child JT, Hutchens MJ, et al. (2018) Context collapse and privacy management: Diversity in Facebook friends increases online news reading and sharing. *new media & society* 20(7): 2296–2314.
- Berger J (2014) Word of mouth and interpersonal communication: A review and directions for future research. *Journal of Consumer Psychology* 24(4): 586–607.
- Bright J (2016) The social news gap: How news reading and news sharing diverge. *Journal of Communication* 66(3): 343–365.
- Cappella JN, Kim HS and Albarracín D (2015) Selection and transmission processes for information in the emerging media environment: Psychological motives and message characteristics. *Media Psychology* 18(3): 396–424.
- Carey JW (2007) A short history of journalism for journalists: A proposal and essay. *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 12: 3–16.
- Chadwick A, Vaccari C and O’Loughlin B (2018) Do tabloids poison the well of social media? Explaining democratically dysfunctional news sharing. *new media & society* 20(11): 4255–4274.
- Chen Z and Berger J (2013) When, why, and how controversy causes conversation. *Journal of Consumer Research* 40(3): 580–593.
- Chew F (1994) The relationship of information needs to issue relevance and media use. *Journalism Quarterly* 71(3): 676–688.
- Choi B and Lee I (2017) Trust in open versus closed social media: The relative influence of user- and marketer-generated content in social network services on customer trust. *Telematics and Informatics* 34(5): 550–559.
- Choi J (2016) Why do people use news differently on SNSs? An investigation of the role of motivations, media repertoires, and technology cluster on citizens’ news-related activities. *Computers in Human Behavior* 54: 249–256.
- Costera Meijer I (2020) Understanding the audience turn in journalism: From quality discourse to innovation discourse as anchoring practices 1995–2020. *Journalism Studies* 21(16): 2326–2342.
- Costera Meijer I and Groot Kormelink T (2015) Checking, sharing, clicking and linking: Changing patterns of news use between 2004 and 2014. *Digital Journalism* 3(5): 664–679.
- Dafonte Gómez A (2018) Audience as medium: Motivations and emotions in news sharing. *International Journal of Communication* 12: 2133–2152.
- Eisinga R, Grotenhuis MT and Pelzer B (2013) The reliability of a two-item scale: Pearson, Cronbach, or Spearman-Brown? *International Journal of Public Health* 58: 637–642.
- Flamingo (2019) How young people consume news and the implications for mainstream media. Report for Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. Available at: <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/our-research/how-young-people-consume-news-and-implications-mainstream-media> (accessed 29 November 2023).
- Goffman E (1959) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Doubleday Anchor.
- Granovetter MS (1973) The strength of weak ties. *American Journal of Sociology* 78: 1360–1380.
- Harcup T and O’Neill D (2017) What is news? News values revisited (again). *Journalism Studies* 18(12): 1470–1488.



- Hooper D, Coughlan J and Mullen M (2008) Structural equation modeling: Guidelines for determining model fit. *Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods* 6(1): 53–60.
- Ihm J and Kim EM (2018) The hidden side of news diffusion: Understanding online news sharing as an interpersonal behavior. *new media & society* 20(11): 4346–4365.
- Jang JW (2023) Proximate or primary source? How multiple layers of news sources on social media predict news influence. *Social Science Computer Review* 41(1): 201–216.
- Kim C and Lee JK (2016) Social media type matters: Investigating the relationship between motivation and online social network heterogeneity. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 60(4): 676–693.
- Kim EM and Ihm J (2019) More than virality: Online sharing of controversial news with activated audience. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 97(1): 118–140.
- Kim EM and Ihm J (2020) Online news sharing in the face of mixed audiences: Context collapse, homophily, and types of social media. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 64(5): 756–776.
- Kim HS (2015) Attracting views and going viral: How message features and news-sharing channels affect health news diffusion. *Journal of Communication* 65(3): 512–534.
- Kim YM (2009) Issue publics in the new information environment: Selectivity, domain specificity, and extremity. *Communication Research* 36(2): 254–284.
- Kümpel AS, Karnowski V and Keyling T (2015) News sharing in social media: A review of current research on news sharing users, content, and networks. *Social Media+ Society* 1(2): 1–14.
- Lamot K (2022) What the metrics say. The softening of news on the Facebook pages of mainstream media outlets. *Digital Journalism* 10(4): 517–536.
- Lee CS and Ma L (2012) News sharing in social media: The effect of gratifications and prior experience. *Computers in Human Behavior* 28(2): 331–339.
- Lin R and Utz S (2015) The emotional responses of browsing Facebook: Happiness, envy, and the role of tie strength. *Computers in Human Behavior* 52: 29–38.
- Litt E (2012) Knock, knock. Who's there? The imagined audience. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 56(3): 330–345.
- Ma L, Sian Lee C and Goh DHL (2014) Understanding news sharing in social media: An explanation from the diffusion of innovations theory. *Online Information Review* 38(5): 598–615.
- Marsden PV and Campbell KE (1984) Measuring tie strength. *Social Forces* 63: 482–501.
- Marwick AE and Boyd D (2011) I tweet honestly, I tweet passionately: Twitter users, context collapse, and the imagined audience. *new media & society* 13: 114–133.
- New York Times (2012) The psychology of sharing. [PDF presentation media kit] Insights. Available at: <http://nytmktg.whsites.net/mediakit/pos/>
- Newman N (2023) Overview and key findings of the 2023 Digital News Report. Report for Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, 14 June. Available at: <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2023/dnr-executive-summary> (accessed 8 November 2023).
- Picone I (2011) Prodisusage as a form of self-publication. A qualitative study of casual news produsage. *New Review of Hypermedia and Multimedia* 17: 99–120.
- Picone I, De Wolf R and Robijt S (2016) Who shares what with whom and why? News sharing profiles amongst Flemish news users. *Digital Journalism* 4(7): 921–932.
- Rainie H and Wellman B (2012) *Networked: The New Social Operating System* (Vol. 10). Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Schultz I (2007) The journalistic gut feeling: Journalistic doxa, news habitus and orthodox news values. *Journalism Practice* 1(2): 190–207.
- Swart J, Groot Kormelink T, Costera Meijer I, et al. (2022) Advancing a radical audience turn in journalism. Fundamental dilemmas for journalism studies. *Digital Journalism* 10(1): 8–22.

- Trilling D, Tolochko P and Burscher B (2017) From newsworthiness to shareworthiness: How to predict news sharing based on article characteristics. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 94(1): 38–60.
- Wang L and Rzeszutarski JM (2023) Understanding motivational factors in social media news sharing decisions. *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-computer Interact* 7(CSCW1): 1–30.
- Westlund O (2015) News consumption in an age of mobile media: Patterns, people, place, and participation. *Mobile Media & Communication* 3(2): 151–159.

### Author biographies

Jennifer Ihm (PhD Northwestern) is an associate professor of School of Media and Communications at Kwangwoon University. Her research interests include how information and communication technologies (ICTs) can contribute to more community engagement and how online engagement can extend to offline environment ([www.jenniferihm.com](http://www.jenniferihm.com)).

Eun-mee Kim (PhD Northwestern University) is a professor of the Department of Communication at Seoul National University. Her research interests include the use of digital media and its social and cultural implications.