

Effects of Fabricated Social Media Posts as Post-Event Misinformation in Eyewitness Recall Among Indian College Students

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Abstract:

Eyewitness testimony has been found to be prone to reconstruction errors and error-prone by post-event information in decades of psychological research despite its fundamental role in criminal justice. The classic misinformation effect has been well documented with manipulations of the text or with doing an interview with the victim, but with the rise in social media as a source of post event information, new questions have arisen that have not been studied extensively, especially as they relate to the accuracy of the recalled details of a crime, not just the identification in a lineup. Existing research has tended to be with Western populations and with self directed suspect searches and has not explored whether fabricated social media content that circulates after the crime can affect eyewitness memory of Indian populations. This study is a between subjects experimental study to fill the gap. The participants will be collage going students, aged 18-25 years. They will be shown a short staged crime video before the experimental group is given a fake social media post claiming a false detail from police while the control group is not exposed to such a post. The participants will then be asked to fill out a free and cued recall questionnaire with a rating of their confidence of their answers. Participants exposed to the bogus post are thought to come to remember the bogus detail and to express overconfidence even though it may be less accurate than what participants who are not exposed to the bogus post report remembering. The findings will further expand the research on the misinformation effect to the Indian social media environment and implications for investigative practice, media literacy and assessing the reliability of eyewitness testimony in a digital world.

Keywords:

Eyewitness Memory, Misinformation Effect, Social Media, Forensic Psychology.