Research Square

Preprints are preliminary reports that have not undergone peer review.
They should not be considered conclusive, used to inform clinical practice,
or referenced by the media as validated information.

Legal Awareness and Responsible Responses to AI Generated Misinformation in Bangladesh

Dr Kazi Abdul Mannan

drkaziabdulmannan@gmail.com

Center for Academic & Professional Career Development and Research (CAPCDR)
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7123-132X

Nusrat Zahan Nishi

Shanto-Mariam University of Creative Technology https://orcid.org/0009-0009-0516-4075

Research Article

Keywords: AI misinformation, legal awareness, media literacy, online verification, reporting, correction, Bangladesh

Posted Date: November 17th, 2026

DOI: https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-11753203/v1

License: This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.
Read Full License

Additional Declarations: The authors declare no competing interests.

Legal Awareness and Responsible Responses to AI Generated Misinformation in Bangladesh

Nusrat Zahan Nishi
Department of Law, Shanto-Mariam University of Creative Technology, Dhaka, Bangladesh
Email: nusratzahan2727@gmail.com
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0009-0516-4075

Prof. Dr Kazi Abdul Mannan
Department of Business Administration, Shanto-Mariam University of Creative Technology, Dhaka, Bangladesh
Email: drkaziabdulmannan@gmail.com
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7123-132X

Abstract

Generative artificial intelligence can produce convincing misleading text and synthetic media, raising questions about how people assess and respond to online information. This study examines self-reported awareness of possible legal consequences and three distinct responses to potentially false content: considering harm before forwarding, reporting deceptive material and correcting or removing content later found false. It analyses 385 adult, AI-aware questionnaire records from a Bangladesh sample comprising law students, graduates, legal professionals and other respondents. Because the questionnaire does not measure the frequency of exposure to AI misinformation or observed social media activity, the study assesses stated awareness and self-reported practices rather than exposure or actual conduct. Items are analysed separately using descriptive distributions, paired comparisons and exploratory Spearman correlations with Holm adjustment. Legal-consequence awareness was endorsed by 244 respondents (63.4%); consideration of harm by 269 (69.9%); reporting by 268 (69.6%); and correction or removal by 259 (67.3%). Awareness and reporting showed a small positive rank correlation ($\rho = .138$), whereas the relationships with harm consideration and correction were uncertain after adjustment for three tests. Differences between correlation coefficients require direct comparison; statistical significance in one association alone does not demonstrate a difference across practices. The findings do not show that legal awareness causes responsible behaviour. The article integrates information credibility, media literacy and the theory of planned behaviour as perspectives for a future study with measured exposure, validated items and observed verification tasks.

Keywords: AI misinformation; legal awareness; media literacy; online verification; reporting; correction; Bangladesh

1. Introduction

Social media makes it possible to share information and participate in public discussion quickly. The same features can distribute inaccurate or misleading claims at scale. Generative AI adds the ability to produce fluent text and convincing synthetic images, audio and video, potentially making some claims harder to evaluate. Yet AI-generated material is not inherently

false, and misinformation cannot be identified from the presence of AI alone. Assessing the claim, source and context remains essential. Research on misinformation distinguishes the production of false content from the social processes through which it is distributed and believed.[1]

The response to questionable information is not a single act. A user may check the source before sharing, consider potential harm, flag a deceptive post, or correct something already shared. These actions occur at different points and may be influenced by available evidence, the platform, confidence in verification and the consequences of a correction. Recognising potential legal consequences is relevant to the research question, but it is not identical to knowing the law or demonstrating responsible action.

This study asks whether self-reported awareness that harmful false content can have legal consequences is associated with distinct reported responses to potentially misleading online content. It treats considering harm before forwarding, reporting deceptive material and correction or removal as separate items. A single average of these heterogeneous questions would obscure differences between a prospective judgment, use of a reporting mechanism and a conditional response after discovering an error.

The analysis is anchored in the actual questionnaire. The originally proposed title refers to exposure to AI misinformation, but the workbook does not record exposure frequency, an exposure period or a particular misleading item. The revised title reflects what was measured. AI awareness is recorded for all participants; that screening variable is not a measure of misinformation exposure. Likewise, the study does not claim to observe participants' social media accounts or verify whether they performed any action.

The objectives are to describe the recorded sample and responses, compare legal-awareness and behaviour-related endorsements within respondents, and examine exploratory associations between the legal-awareness item and three separately measured practices. The questions are: How frequently are legal-consequence awareness, harm consideration, reporting and correction endorsed? How do these endorsements coexist within the same respondents? Are the three reported practices similarly associated with legal-consequence awareness? What can and cannot be inferred for media literacy, law and future research?

The 385 records describe a mixed sample dominated by law students and graduates. They do not establish representativeness of all social media users in Bangladesh. Section 2 develops the conceptual foundations, Section 3 describes the data and analytical choices, and Section 4 reports the results. Sections 5–7 discuss interpretation, implications and limitations.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Foundation

The literature connects credibility assessment with media literacy, behavioural intention and the legal context of online communication. This section distinguishes the measured survey responses from broader constructs that would require a validated instrument or direct observation.

[1] David MJ Lazer and others, 'The Science of Fake News' (2018) 359 Science 1094; Soroush Vosoughi, Deb Roy and Sinan Aral, 'The Spread of True and False News Online' (2018) 359 Science 1146.

2.1 AI misinformation and information credibility

Misinformation is commonly understood as false or misleading information; intent to deceive is not necessarily established by the fact that information is false. Synthetic media can be harmless, artistic, educational or deceptive depending on context and presentation. A realistic appearance does not establish authenticity, while a label that a post is AI-generated does not by itself prove that its factual content is wrong. Research on online credibility stresses evaluating the source, message and surrounding evidence instead of relying on surface appearance alone.[2]

A user deciding whether to share a claim may face incomplete information and limited time. Source checking and corroboration are practical ways to gather evidence, but no single technique guarantees that a claim is true. A study of the spread of true and false news demonstrates the importance of examining online distribution as a social process rather than reducing it to the qualities of individual users.[3]

2.2 Media literacy and verification

Media literacy includes the ability to access, analyse and evaluate media content.[4] For AI-generated media it can include recognising that a convincing image or video could be manipulated, looking for the original source and comparing independent evidence. Self-reported awareness and a stated willingness to check are not objective tests of the ability to identify synthetic media.

Evidence on educational interventions is promising but context dependent. Guess and colleagues found improvements in discernment in studies in the United States and India, while Badrinathan's Indian field experiment did not find a significant average improvement from a different short intervention. These different designs and outcomes do not permit a single universal claim about training.[5] The present survey contains no intervention or performance test and cannot evaluate whether training improves detection or sharing decisions.

2.3 Theory of planned behaviour

The theory of planned behaviour proposes that attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control can contribute to behavioural intentions.[6] It provides a useful lens for asking why a person who values accuracy might nevertheless share an unverified claim: the person's intentions and behaviour may also depend on social expectations, perceived ability to

[2] Lazer and others (n 1); Miriam J Metzger, 'Making Sense of Credibility on the Web: Models for Evaluating Online Information and Recommendations for Future Research' (2007) 58 Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology 2078.

[3] Vosoughi, Roy and Aral (n 1).

[4] Sonia Livingstone, 'Media Literacy and the Challenge of New Information and Communication Technologies' (2004) 7 The Communication Review 3.

[5] Andrew M Guess and others, 'A Digital Media Literacy Intervention Increases Discernment between Mainstream and False News in the United States and India' (2020) 117 Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 15536; Sumitra Badrinathan, 'Educative Interventions to Combat Misinformation: Evidence from a Field Experiment in India' (2021) 115 American Political Science Review 1325.

[6] Icek Ajzen, 'The Theory of Planned Behavior' (1991) 50 Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes 179.

verify and circumstances at the time of sharing. The present questionnaire does not measure a complete planned-behaviour model, so this article uses the theory to guide interpretation without claiming to test or validate its structural paths.

Research on accuracy prompts also illustrates a distinction between attitudes and attention. Experimental findings suggest that directing attention to accuracy can affect the quality of sharing decisions in tested settings.[7] Those results do not establish that awareness in this cross-sectional dataset changes behaviour, or that a particular prompt would work in Bangladesh.

2.4 Legal awareness and responsible responses

Legal-consequence awareness in the questionnaire is a respondent's agreement that creating or sharing harmful false content can have legal consequences. It is not a test of actual legal knowledge, and the question does not specify a statute, legal threshold, intent or factual scenario. The other items ask about considering potential harm before forwarding unverified AI-generated content, reporting deceptive material when a mechanism exists, and correcting or removing content once it is known to be false. Each differs in timing, context and the opportunity to act.

Legal awareness must be distinguished from support for restrictions on speech. Not every false, disputed, satirical or AI-generated statement is automatically unlawful; legal consequences depend on applicable law and the particular facts. The study measures a general awareness statement and cannot determine whether any respondent violated the law or whether any specific content would be unlawful. Proportionate governance also requires attention to lawful expression and access to information.[8]

A further measurement issue is the meaning of reporting. A participant may flag a post as inaccurate, abusive or misleading, but the questionnaire does not say which platform or form of report is involved. A report also depends on the respondent recognising content as deceptive and being able to use a mechanism. Consequently, agreement with the item is neither a count of reports nor an assessment of their accuracy. A well-designed follow-up could ask whether a participant saw a suspect item during a stated period, what action was available and what they actually did.

Correction raises a different issue. A person must first discover that previously shared material is false, then be able and willing to change or remove it. Silence in this context could arise because the person did not encounter such a situation, could not correct the content, or did not wish to do so. The present item does not separate these possibilities. Analyses based on actual episodes would help explain when correction occurs and whether it reaches the same audience as the original post.[9]

---

[7] Gordon Pennycook and others, 'Shifting Attention to Accuracy Can Reduce Misinformation Online' (2021) 592 Nature 590.

[8] UNESCO, *Guidelines for the Governance of Digital Platforms: Safeguarding Freedom of Expression and Access to Information through a Multi-Stakeholder Approach* (UNESCO 2023).

[9] Vosoughi, Roy and Aral (n 1).

2.5 Analytical framework

Information credibility highlights source evaluation, media literacy concerns the skills and conditions for critical assessment, and the theory of planned behaviour draws attention to the relationship between intentions and action. They are complementary perspectives rather than evidence that awareness automatically causes a particular behaviour. The analysis retains legal-consequence awareness and the three responses as individual items. It does not treat them as validated latent scales, test mediation or claim that the questionnaire directly measures exposure.[10]

The exploratory correlation family comprises the associations of MSB1 with MSB2, MSB3 and MSB4. Pairwise comparisons of the correlations use within-respondent bootstrap intervals so that differences are assessed directly. This is an exploratory analysis: the supplied materials do not establish a preregistered hypothesis family.

3. Methodology

This section describes the sample recorded in the workbook, how the questionnaire items are interpreted, ethical safeguards and statistical procedures. The approach preserves the differences between awareness, reported behaviour and actual exposure.

3.1 Design and population

The study analyses a cross-sectional questionnaire. The unit is the individual record; the questionnaire does not supply observed posts, platform logs, a misinformation stimulus or direct evidence of legal outcomes. Current status categories are law student, law graduate, advocate or legal professional, and other relevant respondent. The mixed sample should not be described as a probability sample of all Bangladeshi social media users. Cross-sectional associations cannot establish the order of awareness and reported practice or show that one causes the other.[11]

3.2 Sample and provenance

The workbook contains 385 records. Each is coded as consenting, adult eligible and AI-aware, and the respondent identifiers are unique. The supplied materials do not document recruitment dates, sampling frame, invitations, response rate or independent duplicate-screening procedures. The sample size corresponds to a common planning figure under specified assumptions, but the number itself does not establish random selection or population representativeness.[12]

The researcher identified the numerical responses as real survey data. The Codebook labels the identifier sequence and optional contextual-comment field as synthetic. Their preparation and

[10] Godfred O Boateng and others, 'Best Practices for Developing and Validating Scales for Health, Social, and Behavioral Research: A Primer' (2018) 6 Frontiers in Public Health 149; Klaas Sijtsma, 'On the Use, the Misuse, and the Very Limited Usefulness of Cronbach's Alpha' (2009) 74 Psychometrika 107.

[11] Erik von Elm and others, 'The Strengthening the Reporting of Observational Studies in Epidemiology (STROBE) Statement: Guidelines for Reporting Observational Studies' (2007) 4 PLOS Medicine e296.

[12] William G Cochran, *Sampling Techniques* (3rd edn, John Wiley & Sons 1977).

relationship to the source records should be documented in the data-provenance record; contextual comments were excluded from the analysis. A label attached to an identifier is not, by itself, an independent verification of how numerical responses were collected.

3.3 Questionnaire and measures

Responses use a five-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. MSB1 concerns awareness of possible legal consequences for creating or sharing harmful false content. MSB2 concerns considering possible harm before forwarding unverified AI-generated material. MSB3 concerns reporting or flagging deceptive content where appropriate mechanisms are available. MSB4 concerns correcting or removing material later found false. MSB5 asks whether legal and media-literacy awareness improves the respondent's responsible behaviour; it expresses a belief about a relationship and is not a measured effect.

The DVI items address awareness that convincing fake media can be created, source checking, corroboration, an asserted link between deepfake awareness and intention to verify, and avoidance of unverifiable content. Their content is distinct from a record of exposure or an objective assessment of detection. Exact wording appears in Appendix A. No instrument adaptation, pilot, scale validation or fieldwork date is asserted without documentation.[13]

3.4 Screening and data collection

All focal numerical items have valid responses in the 385 supplied rows. Optional text and unrelated missing values do not determine the analysis denominator. Respondent status and location are reported as recorded; neither establishes the identity, social media activity or prior exposure of a respondent. Recruitment mode, dates, nonresponse and exclusions are not available, and no response rate is calculated.

3.5 Statistical analysis

For each item the analysis reports counts across the five response categories, the number endorsing agree or strongly agree and a pointwise Wilson interval. Neutral responses belong to the non-endorsement group and are not equated with opposition. Confidence intervals and p-values describe uncertainty under assumptions not secured by an undocumented sampling design; they do not justify national estimates.[14]

Three paired contrasts compare endorsement of the legal-awareness item with each behaviour-related item using exact McNemar tests and Holm correction across the three tests. Whole-respondent percentile bootstrap intervals are pointwise and preserve the paired records. Different item wording and contexts mean that paired differences do not rank the importance or effectiveness of legal awareness and behaviour.[15]

---

[13] Boateng and others (n 10).

[14] Cochran (n 12).

[15] Quinn McNemar, 'Note on the Sampling Error of the Difference between Correlated Proportions or Percentages' (1947) 12 Psychometrika 153; Sture Holm, 'A Simple Sequentially Rejective Multiple Test Procedure' (1979) 6 Scandinavian Journal of Statistics 65; Bradley Efron and Robert J Tibshirani, *An Introduction to the Bootstrap* (Chapman & Hall 1993).

Spearman rank correlations estimate the associations between legal-awareness responses and the three practice items. Holm correction covers these three tests; the bootstrap confidence intervals remain pointwise. To assess whether association patterns differ across practices, differences between dependent correlations are estimated by resampling complete respondent records. These direct comparisons are exploratory, with pointwise intervals; neither a small p-value nor a non-significant result establishes causality or equivalence.[16]

For paired differences, each resampled record contains both responses, maintaining the original respondent-level pairing. This preserves the dependence that would be lost by treating the two endorsement proportions as independent samples. Spearman correlations use the ordered numeric responses with tied ranks; they describe monotonic association, not the effect of moving a participant between categories. A separate bootstrap is used for differences between correlations because all three share the same awareness item and the same respondents. The confidence intervals do not adjust for the selection of comparisons after seeing the data, so they are interpreted as exploratory.

3.6 Measurement limitations

The items are not treated as a single validated behavioural or legal-knowledge scale. The legal question uses a general statement about possible consequences, while the practice items depend on differing opportunities and contexts. Reporting may be conditional on an available mechanism, and correction depends on later learning that material was false. Respondents may interpret these conditions differently. Self-report may also be influenced by recall, social desirability or how the item is understood.[17]

3.7 Ethical considerations

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Center for Academic & Professional Career Development and Research (CAPCDR), an external institutional body, under approval reference CAPCDR: SMUCT/LLB/SS-0020260908-25. External ethical review was sought because Shanto-Mariam University of Creative Technology does not have an institutional ethics committee responsible for reviewing this type of research.

4. Results

The following results describe the 385 coded records and self-reported responses. They do not measure the frequency of exposure to AI misinformation or independently observed sharing, reporting or correction.

[16] Holm (n 15); Douglas G Altman and J Martin Bland, 'Absence of Evidence Is Not Evidence of Absence' (1995) 311 BMJ 485; Ronald L Wasserstein and Nicole A Lazar, 'The ASA Statement on p-Values: Context, Process, and Purpose' (2016) 70 American Statistician 129.

[17] Philip M Podsakoff and others, 'Common Method Biases in Behavioral Research: A Critical Review of the Literature and Recommended Remedies' (2003) 88 Journal of Applied Psychology 879; Sijtsma (n 10).

4.1 Respondent profile

Table 1 summarises the current-status and location categories recorded in the workbook. It does not establish representativeness or identify the respondents' social media activity.

Table 1. Recorded respondent status and location

Measure	Category	Count (%)
Status	Law student	227 (59.0%)
	Law graduate	81 (21.0%)
	Advocate or legal professional	47 (12.2%)
	Other relevant respondent	30 (7.8%)
Location	Dhaka	159 (41.3%)
	District town	82 (21.3%)
	Upazila-rural area	72 (18.7%)
	Other city corporation	63 (16.4%)
	Other	9 (2.3%)

N = 385. Categories are as recorded in the supplied workbook; social media use and misinformation exposure are not identified.

Law students account for 227 records (59.0%), law graduates for 81 (21.0%), advocates or legal professionals for 47 (12.2%) and other respondents for 30 (7.8%). Results are therefore interpreted as responses from this mixed, law-oriented sample.

4.2 Legal awareness and reported responses

Table 2 presents the five MSB items separately. The last item is a belief about the role of literacy rather than an independently estimated effect.

Table 2. Legal awareness and responsible-response items

Item	Counts 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5	Endorsed n (%)	95% CI (%)
MSB1	1 / 28 / 112 / 177 / 67	244 (63.4%)	58.5–68.0
MSB2	0 / 13 / 103 / 198 / 71	269 (69.9%)	65.1–74.2
MSB3	0 / 12 / 105 / 175 / 93	268 (69.6%)	64.8–74.0
MSB4	1 / 14 / 111 / 172 / 87	259 (67.3%)	62.4–71.8
MSB5	0 / 5 / 46 / 166 / 168	334 (86.8%)	83.0–89.8

N = 385. Endorsed = agree or strongly agree. Non-endorsement includes neutral answers. Wilson intervals are pointwise; exact wording is in Appendix A.

Legal-consequence awareness was endorsed by 244 respondents (63.4%). Considering possible harm was endorsed by 269 (69.9%), reporting by 268 (69.6%) and correction or removal by 259 (67.3%). The literacy-benefit statement was endorsed by 334 (86.8%). Endorsement includes agree and strongly agree; it does not verify whether respondents actually performed these actions.

4.3 Verification and synthetic-media awareness

Table 3 describes selected DVI items. These statements concern awareness and self-reported verification orientation, not the number of misleading items encountered.

Table 3. Synthetic-media awareness and verification items

Item	Counts 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5	Endorsed n (%)	95% CI (%)
DVI1	3 / 21 / 117 / 186 / 58	244 (63.4%)	58.5–68.0
DVI2	0 / 13 / 107 / 191 / 74	265 (68.8%)	64.0–73.3
DVI3	2 / 17 / 88 / 194 / 84	278 (72.2%)	67.5–76.4
DVI4	0 / 5 / 53 / 173 / 154	327 (84.9%)	81.0–88.2
DVI5	0 / 7 / 62 / 155 / 161	316 (82.1%)	77.9–85.6

N = 385. Endorsed = agree or strongly agree. Non-endorsement includes neutral answers. Wilson intervals are pointwise; exact wording is in Appendix A.

Awareness that AI can create convincing fake media was endorsed by 244 respondents (63.4%). Source checking and seeking corroboration were endorsed by 265 (68.8%) and 278 (72.2%); 316 (82.1%) endorsed avoiding content they cannot reasonably verify. These responses should not be treated as a test of actual detection skill.

4.4 Paired endorsement patterns

Table 4 compares the legal-awareness item with each response item for the same individuals. The comparisons are descriptive of answers to differently worded questions.

Table 4. Paired endorsement comparisons

Contrast	First only / second only	Difference pp	95% CI pp	Holm p
MSB1 − MSB2	63 / 88	-6.5	-12.7–-0.3	0.151
MSB1 − MSB3	61 / 85	-6.2	-12.2–0.0	0.151
MSB1 − MSB4	80 / 95	-3.9	-10.6–2.9	0.290

N = 385; pp = percentage points. Exact McNemar tests; Holm correction across three tests. Bootstrap intervals use 10,000 respondent-level resamples and are pointwise. Wording differs across items.

The differences in endorsement between legal awareness and harm consideration, reporting and correction were −6.5, −6.2 and −3.9 percentage points respectively. The three adjusted exact-test results should be interpreted with their pointwise intervals; a non-significant difference does not demonstrate that the items are equivalent. A neutral response is included whenever an item is not endorsed.

Table 5 shows the joint distribution of legal awareness and reported reporting/flagging. The four categories are response combinations, not fixed types of users.

Table 5. Joint endorsement of awareness and reporting

Response configuration	Count (%)
Both endorsed	183 (47.5%)
Legal awareness only	61 (15.8%)
Reporting only	85 (22.1%)
Neither endorsed	56 (14.5%)

N = 385. Neither includes neutral responses; categories are descriptive, not participant types.

Most notably, 183 respondents endorsed both awareness and reporting, while some endorsed only one. These coexistence patterns do not show whether awareness preceded reporting, whether a mechanism was available, or whether a respondent has ever encountered deceptive material.

4.5 Exploratory associations and direct comparisons

Table 6 reports Spearman rank correlations between legal-awareness responses and the three response items. The Holm adjustment covers the three correlation tests; confidence intervals are pointwise.

Table 6. Legal awareness and reported responses

Items	Spearman ρ	95% CI	p	Holm p
MSB1 / MSB2	0.110	0.010–0.207	0.031	0.062
MSB1 / MSB3	0.138	0.040–0.237	0.007	0.020
MSB1 / MSB4	0.014	-0.081–0.113	0.790	0.790

N = 385. Three correlation p-values adjusted by Holm. Pointwise percentile intervals use 3,000 respondent-level resamples and are not multiplicity adjusted.

The association with reporting is small (ρ = .138) and remains distinguishable from zero after Holm adjustment. Associations with harm consideration and correction are uncertain under the same adjustment. These results must not be interpreted as evidence that awareness causes reporting or that the other relationships are zero.

Table 7 directly compares the dependent correlation coefficients by resampling complete respondent records. This avoids inferring a difference solely because one p-value crosses a threshold and another does not.

Table 7. Differences between dependent correlations

Outcome contrast	Difference in ρ	95% CI
MSB2 − MSB3	-0.028	-0.157–0.102
MSB2 − MSB4	0.096	-0.038–0.231
MSB3 − MSB4	0.124	-0.006–0.257

N = 385. Each coefficient correlates MSB1 with the named outcome. Intervals are pointwise percentile intervals from 3,000 paired respondent resamples; they are not adjusted for multiplicity.

The intervals show the precision of the available comparison under the resampling assumptions. They are not adjusted for multiple pairwise comparisons and do not establish equivalent associations when they include zero. The limitations of single items and the undocumented sampling process remain important for all estimates.

5. Discussion

The findings distinguish stated legal awareness from several reported responses to potentially misleading content. They support a focused discussion of measurement and information practices, while leaving causal and population-level questions unresolved.

5.1 Awareness and reporting

Legal-consequence awareness and reported reporting/flagging have a small positive association. A respondent who is aware of possible consequences might be attentive to harmful content, but the survey does not establish that mechanism. Other explanations include general digital confidence, prior experience, access to a reporting channel or an unmeasured concern about harm. The two items also refer to different circumstances: MSB1 concerns creating or sharing harmful false material; MSB3 concerns reporting deceptive content when a mechanism is available.

The result should not be read as evidence that reporting always improves information quality. Reporting mechanisms may vary in accessibility, accuracy, transparency and the availability of review. A person can report content in error, and a platform's response may affect lawful expression. Assessing a reporting process requires evidence about decisions and remedies, not just questionnaire agreement.[18]

5.2 Harm consideration, correction and timing

Harm consideration occurs before forwarding unverified content, whereas correction or removal becomes relevant after the respondent learns that content is false. Their associations

[18] UNESCO, Guidelines (n 8).

with legal awareness were not clearly established after the specified adjustment. That result is compatible with a range of possible relationships; it is not proof that legal awareness is irrelevant. The timing and opportunity to engage in each action differ, and the questionnaire does not establish whether an opportunity arose.

Direct comparison of correlations is necessary before claiming that awareness is more closely associated with one practice than another. A p-value can differ across models because of precision as well as effect size. The bootstrap contrasts provide a preliminary assessment while remaining sensitive to sample composition and measurement.[19]

5.3 Credibility and media literacy

The source-checking and corroboration items reflect concepts discussed in credibility and media-literacy research. They may be useful starting points for instruction, but self-report is not an objective demonstration that a user checked a particular claim or reached the correct conclusion. Researchers should distinguish the ability to identify an original source from a general belief that verification is valuable.[20]

Evidence on interventions varies. The Guess study found improvements in discernment under its tested conditions, while the Badrinathan field experiment did not demonstrate an average benefit from its particular intervention. Neither result directly tests this questionnaire or its Bangladesh sample. A locally designed study should evaluate whether participants distinguish accurate from false claims without encouraging indiscriminate distrust.[21]

5.4 Legal context and expression

Bangladesh's Cyber Security Act 2026 replaced the 2025 Cyber Security Ordinance and its amendment. The present survey does not ask respondents to identify the relevant legal provisions, and a general endorsement cannot establish legal competence or an offence.[22] Legal evaluation depends on the relevant provision, conduct, facts and any applicable temporal rules. The distinction between a false claim, deliberate deception, satire, lawful criticism and AI-generated material should be maintained.

Legal education should therefore explain specific rules using authoritative, current sources and realistic scenarios. It should avoid implying that every mistake or synthetic item is unlawful. Clear legal information, accurate reporting procedures and protection of lawful expression can be complementary goals.[23]

The legal framework also changes over time. A law in force at the time a person encountered content may differ from the law in force at publication, and questions of commencement, repeal and transitional provisions require attention. Because fieldwork dates are not supplied, the present analysis does not reconstruct the law that applied when respondents answered. A subsequent legal analysis could state a defined reference date, identify a specific scenario and

[19] Altman and Bland (n 16); Wasserstein and Lazar (n 16).

[20] Metzger (n 2); Livingstone (n 4).

[21] Guess and others (n 5); Badrinathan (n 5).

[22] Cyber Security Act 2026 (Bangladesh Act No 81 of 2026).

[23] UNESCO, Guidelines (n 8).

distinguish a respondent's belief about consequences from an independent assessment of applicable law.[24]

5.5 Sample and inference

The sample is heavily law oriented, and the data do not document recruitment, dates or a sampling frame. It cannot be assumed to represent all users, all students or people exposed to AI misinformation in Bangladesh. The file also does not identify how often respondents use social media or whether they have encountered a deceptive post. A future study should measure exposure directly, define a recall period and distinguish experiences from broad beliefs.

The Codebook's synthetic labels for identifiers and contextual comments should be reconciled with the research team's confirmation that the numerical responses are real. Documentation should explain how records were assembled and whether identifiers or optional comments were generated or transformed. This does not replace the need to retain consent and recruitment documentation.

5.6 Integrated interpretation

Information credibility, media literacy and planned behaviour illuminate different parts of a decision process. A user may evaluate a source, decide whether sharing could cause harm, and later report or correct a claim. The present study does not observe that sequence; it asks separate questions about it. Its contribution is to keep those questions analytically distinct and to make the limits of self-report visible.[25]

6. Theoretical and Practical Implications

The implications follow from the item-level analysis and the cited literature. They are recommendations for further testing, not evidence that an intervention or legal policy has changed behaviour.

6.1 Theoretical implications

First, legal-consequence awareness should be measured separately from demonstrated legal knowledge and from different online practices. A general question about possible consequences cannot identify which law a person knows or how they would apply it in a specific case. Second, pre-sharing consideration, reporting and correction should not automatically be combined into a single reflective measure: the items differ in timing, context and opportunity. A validated future instrument could examine whether these are related dimensions and how consistently people interpret each question.[26]

Third, the theory of planned behaviour can help design questions about attitudes, norms and perceived control, but the present items do not measure a complete model. Future research

[24] Cyber Security Act 2026 (n 22).
[25] Metzger (n 2); Ajzen (n 6).
[26] Boateng and others (n 10).

could independently measure intentions, verification skill and actual sharing under defined conditions, then test theoretical relationships with a design that supports those inferences.

A credible measurement programme can combine cognitive interviews, multiple items written to capture a defined construct, and objective tasks where a claim's origin and accuracy are known to the researchers. Factor structure and reliability should then be assessed before scores are used in regression or structural models. No reliability coefficient alone proves validity, and a high coefficient cannot show that participants understood the questions in the intended way.[27]

6.2 Practical and policy implications

Media-literacy programmes can teach a repeatable routine: pause, locate the original source, check the date and context, compare independent evidence and avoid forwarding when a material claim cannot be verified. Exercises should include both authentic and manipulated materials so that learners do not treat all unfamiliar content as false. Programmes should be evaluated on discernment and appropriate action rather than only confidence or satisfaction.[28]

Platforms and institutions can make reporting and correction mechanisms accessible, transparent and capable of review. Legal guidance should explain relevant thresholds and rights without suggesting that all incorrect or AI-generated content is illegal. These measures should be assessed for usability, fairness and effects on lawful expression in the setting where they are used.[29]

7. Conclusion, Limitations and Future Research

In 385 recorded responses, 63.4% endorsed awareness that harmful false content can have legal consequences; 69.9% endorsed considering harm before forwarding; 69.6% endorsed reporting under the stated condition; and 67.3% endorsed correction or removal after learning content was false. The association between legal awareness and reporting was small and positive. The data do not establish that legal awareness produces reporting or that the observed sample represents Bangladesh's social media users.

The study is limited by self-reported single items, cross-sectional measurement, an undocumented sampling and fieldwork process, and the absence of a direct misinformation-exposure measure. Its title reflects these limits. The numerical records were identified by the researcher as real survey data, while the Codebook describes the identifier and optional comment fields as synthetic; their provenance should be documented. No observed platform behaviour, legal violation or causal effect is established.

Future research should document recruitment, fieldwork dates and eligibility, measure exposure with a defined period, and separate objective legal knowledge, source-evaluation skills and actual responses. A scenario experiment or ethically designed verification task could vary information about source, potential harm and available reporting or correction

[27] Boateng and others (n 10); Sijtsma (n 10).

[28] Guess and others (n 5); Badrinathan (n 5).

[29] UNESCO, Guidelines (n 8).

mechanisms. A preregistered study with validated measures and a clearly defined population could test whether these mechanisms affect discernment and responsible sharing.

Declarations

Ethical approval and oversight

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Center for Academic & Professional Career Development and Research (CAPCDR), an external institutional body, under approval reference CAPCDR: SMUCT/LLB/SS-0020260908-25. External ethical review was sought because Shanto-Mariam University of Creative Technology does not have an institutional ethics committee responsible for reviewing this type of research.

Informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from adult participants before questionnaire completion. The questionnaire explained the study purpose, voluntary participation, anonymity and the option to discontinue. All analysed records contain affirmative consent and adult-eligibility responses.

Data availability

The numerical data supporting the reported analyses are held by the research team. Requests for de-identified data and analytical specifications may be directed to the corresponding author. Any sharing is subject to participant confidentiality and applicable institutional requirements. The contextual-text field was excluded from the analysis.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Author contributions

Nusrat Zahan Nishi: Lead student researcher; conceptualisation; preparation of study materials; organisation and curation of survey data; manuscript development. The project was conducted under the supervision of Prof. Dr Kazi Abdul Mannan.

Kazi Abdul Mannan: Conceptual and methodological guidance; supervision; interpretation of statistical findings; critical review and editing of the manuscript.

Generative AI disclosure

Generative AI assisted manuscript drafting, language editing, organisation and the development of analytical code. Statistical estimates were computed programmatically from the numerical survey data. Responsibility for the study's analysis, interpretation and reporting rests with the authors.

Bibliography

Ajzen I, ‘The Theory of Planned Behavior’ (1991) 50 Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes 179

Altman DG and Bland JM, ‘Absence of Evidence Is Not Evidence of Absence’ (1995) 311 BMJ 485

Badrinathan S, ‘Educative Interventions to Combat Misinformation: Evidence from a Field Experiment in India’ (2021) 115 American Political Science Review 1325

Boateng GO and others, ‘Best Practices for Developing and Validating Scales for Health, Social, and Behavioral Research: A Primer’ (2018) 6 Frontiers in Public Health 149

Cochran WG, *Sampling Techniques* (3rd edn, John Wiley & Sons 1977)

Efron B and Tibshirani RJ, *An Introduction to the Bootstrap* (Chapman & Hall 1993)

Guess AM and others, ‘A Digital Media Literacy Intervention Increases Discernment between Mainstream and False News in the United States and India’ (2020) 117 Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 15536

Holm S, ‘A Simple Sequentially Rejective Multiple Test Procedure’ (1979) 6 Scandinavian Journal of Statistics 65

Lazer DMJ and others, ‘The Science of Fake News’ (2018) 359 Science 1094

Livingstone S, ‘Media Literacy and the Challenge of New Information and Communication Technologies’ (2004) 7 The Communication Review 3

McNemar Q, ‘Note on the Sampling Error of the Difference between Correlated Proportions or Percentages’ (1947) 12 Psychometrika 153

Metzger MJ, ‘Making Sense of Credibility on the Web: Models for Evaluating Online Information and Recommendations for Future Research’ (2007) 58 Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology 2078

Pennycook G and others, ‘Shifting Attention to Accuracy Can Reduce Misinformation Online’ (2021) 592 Nature 590

Podsakoff PM and others, ‘Common Method Biases in Behavioral Research: A Critical Review of the Literature and Recommended Remedies’ (2003) 88 Journal of Applied Psychology 879

Sijtsma K, ‘On the Use, the Misuse, and the Very Limited Usefulness of Cronbach’s Alpha’ (2009) 74 Psychometrika 107

UNESCO, *Guidelines for the Governance of Digital Platforms: Safeguarding Freedom of Expression and Access to Information through a Multi-Stakeholder Approach* (UNESCO 2023)

von Elm E and others, ‘The Strengthening the Reporting of Observational Studies in Epidemiology (STROBE) Statement: Guidelines for Reporting Observational Studies’ (2007) 4 PLOS Medicine e296

Vosoughi S, Roy D and Aral S, ‘The Spread of True and False News Online’ (2018) 359 Science 1146

Wasserstein RL and Lazar NA, ‘The ASA Statement on p-Values: Context, Process, and Purpose’ (2016) 70 American Statistician 129

Appendix A. Analytical questionnaire items

Table A1 reproduces the survey statements so that each estimate can be interpreted against its exact wording.

Table A1. Exact wording of analytical items

Code	Questionnaire statement
MSB1	I am aware that creating or sharing harmful false content can have legal consequences.
MSB2	I consider possible harm before forwarding unverified AI-generated content.
MSB3	I report or flag deceptive content when appropriate mechanisms are available.
MSB4	I correct or remove content if I later learn that it is false.
MSB5	Legal and media-literacy awareness improves my responsible social media behaviour.
DVI1	I understand that AI can create convincing fake images, audio and video.
DVI2	I check the source before sharing suspicious or sensational digital content.
DVI3	I look for corroborating evidence when media authenticity is uncertain.
DVI4	Deepfake awareness increases my intention to verify online information.
DVI5	I would avoid sharing content that I cannot reasonably verify.

Source: Group 14 Codebook. Answers range from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The items are interpreted separately and do not measure a single validated latent construct.

Table of legislation

Cyber Security Act 2026 (Bangladesh Act No 81 of 2026)