Fake News and Understanding of Pakistani Millennial

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Abstract: The mushroomed growth and usage of social media have benefitted the world in many ways on the other hand it has also given rise to many issues. Fake news and its extensive spread is one of the problem, world is tackling at this time. Fake news is a kind of deception that purposely integrates to affect masses and create panic, which is fabricated too have aim to instill a false sense of truth in the users mind. This paper provides a conceptual overview of fake news on social media, expanding and illustrating the unique characteristics of fake news in Pakistan. A survey is conducted from university Millennial from the capital city of Islamabad. Results showed that use of social media is increasing day by day amongst young generation of Pakistan and becoming main source of information for them. In this scenario the rate at which such false news are penetrating social media and the internet is distressing, as most of the students claim to often witness fake news on social media. Social media personalities, celebrities and political representatives should make efforts in creating awareness regard fake news, so that our nation stay safe from the hazardous effects and panic created from social media.

Keywords: Social Media, Fake News, Pakistan, Millennial.

INTRODUCTION

In this time of digital era social media has become one of the crucial entities in forming the everyday lives of numerous over the globe. As indicated by the Global Digital Report (2018) there are 3.2 billion users of Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp and Twitter. In Pakistan, 35 million individuals, or around 18 percent of the population are the users of Social Media. Other than using social media for making personal and business associations, users significantly use social media directly or indirectly as source for news. During all this time the trend of fake news stories is also rising, these are the news that are false and purposefully created to deceive the users. Shah (2018) explored that nowadays television is not just only mean of spreading fake news, but with the advent of social media fake stories get viral through posts on Facebook, melodramatic messages on WhatsApp and as such news are off base and far away from reality [1], they cannot get publish in reputable newspaper as well. It has been seen that fake news gets viral quickly and mostly receive with the message of forwarded as received. This also implies the sender might want the story to be viewed as totally impartial and fair. This also give the meaning that receiver does not have to think critically about the content of story as the person or the friend who has sent the news has officially done the basic reasoning for the receiver. Receiver simply has to absorb the news and pass it on. Then, forward by

forward, byte by byte, story ends up acknowledged actuality, counterfeit news moves toward becoming truth, and bring chaos to society. Unfortunately in Pakistan due to lack of education, fake news and exaggeration is a very common phenomenon. If we talk about neighboring countries like India, people prefer watching movies and dramas. However, in Pakistan politics has become major mean of entertainment for general population. Pakistani people respond momentarily to each news ticker as they don't have other sources of entertainment. News channels contend furiously to beat each other trying to be the first to break a news, bringing about news being spread without even due authentication or true source. Apparently in Pakistan, some smaller media channels intentionally spread twisted actualities on the grounds that if they sell the news they will survive. Bogle (2018) reported that acc US scientists that false news spread "farther, faster, deeper, and more broadly" than true news on Twitter between 2006 and 2017 [2]. While the researchers suggested false news was shared more often because of its novelty, Dr Vosoughi said more work is needed about the motivations of people who share this content and its impact. Therefore this study draws the following questions and attained the answers in its findings.

Bogle (2018) alluded the report of US researchers that during 2006 to 2017 the spread of a fake story is more remote, quicker, more profound and also more extensive than authentic news on twitter [3]. At the same time the scholars proposed false news get disseminated more frequently on social media mostly because of its curiosity, Dr. Vosoughi emphasized that more effort is required in creating sense of awareness

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and inspirations for users who share the information. This research is based on finding the answers to such question which help in making users of social media more conscious about sharing any information without its authenticity.

This survey is carried out to study the demographic specifics of individuals susceptible to fake information through social media websites in Pakistan. The level of awareness for fake news has been assessed in this survey and if receiver first believes in information which eventually proves to be a fake news. The samples of the study are 250 users who are generally social media users in Pakistan and they have been victim of fake news once in their life. The sample rate comprise of 50 percent males and 50 percent females of the total respondents.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The frequency result of respondents on the basis of gender shown in the Table. Total 250 responds were selected for the current research out of which 50% male and 50% were female respondents.

Which medium do you use for news?
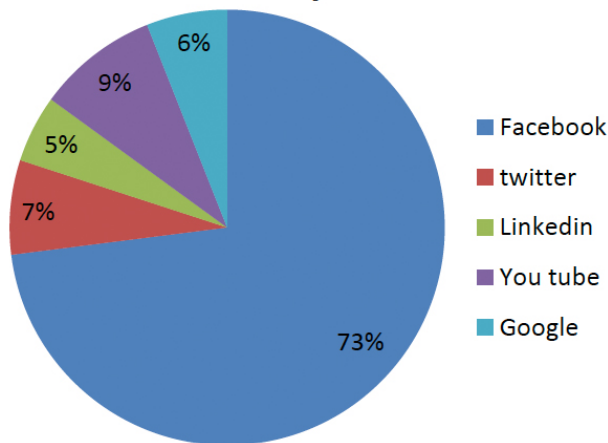
Westerman, Spence and Heide (2014) founded that greater the usage of medium more the credibility for the users it can gain [4]. For this survey the result in response of which medium do you use for news of table show that 73% of the responded agree to use facebook as medium for news. Similarly 9% use youtube followed by google, twitter and linkedin with percentage of 7%, 6%, and 5% respectively. The results indicate that facebook is the popular SNS for new on social media.

Most of the respondents respond that they used social media more than 6hrs i.e 45%. 25% responded

How much time you spend on social media daily
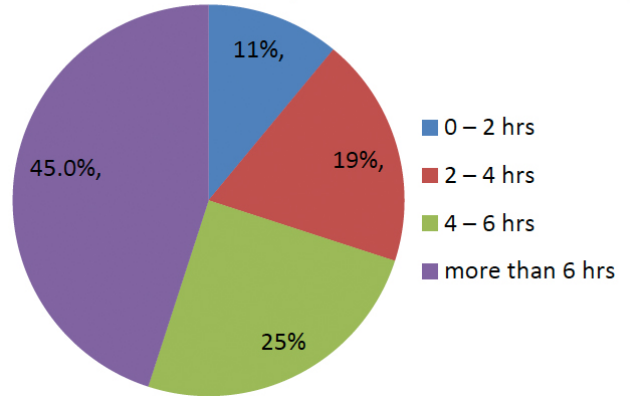
said that they used social media for 4-6 hrs daily, 19% respond on 2-4 hrs and 0-2 hrs were only 11%. The analysis shows that most of respondents use social media more than 6 hours daily. Perrin (2015) on usage of time reported that 65% of the world adults now using social media [5] and Hughes and Lee (2012) more time the spent on a social medium by individual more it will be preferred by the users [6].
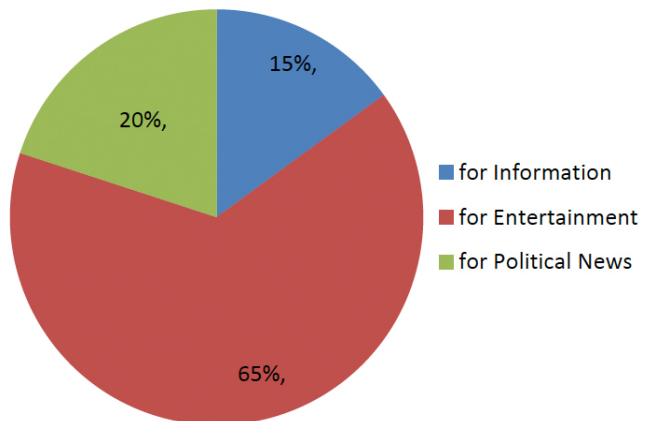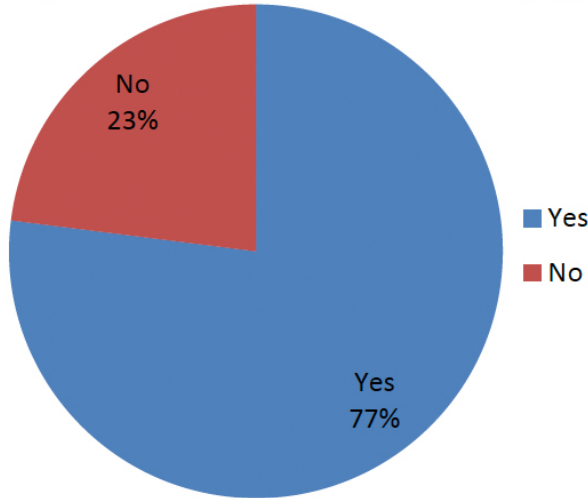
Why do you use social media ?

Chart show that 65% respondents use social media for entertainment. 20% used for political news and only 15% access social media for gathering information. Lee and Ma (2012) found that gratifications of information seeking and entertainment on social media is significant among people [7], they turn to social media when they want to acquire knowledge about something.

Result in the form of pie chart show that 23% respondents did not subscribe or like different pages however 77% of the respondent subscribe and like the favorite pages
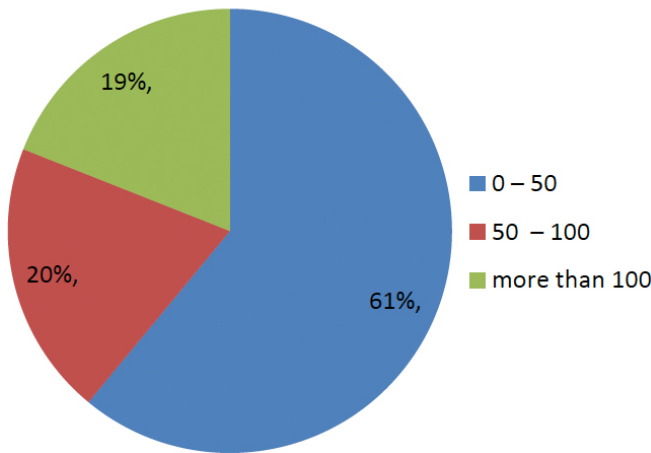
A question was asked from the respondents to view the clear picture of subscribed pages. 61% respondent

Do you subscribe and like different pages?

Do you subscribe and like different pages?

No
23%

Yes

No

Yes
77%

How many pages you subscribed

19%,

0 − 50
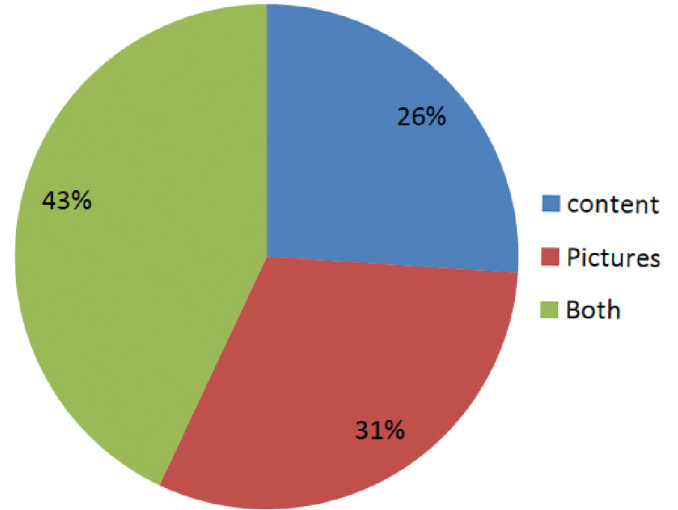
50 − 100

more than 100

20%,

61%,

research respond that they used social media for update about the celebrities. 26% use for showbiz, 19% respondent use Political News and only 12% used for daily life news. 22% respondents choose the category above all. The results show that 22% of the respondent select social media for showbiz, update about the celebrities, political news and daily like news.

News is fake on basis of

26%

content

Pictures

Both

43%

31%

The result shows that 43% respondents identify the news on the basis of pictures and content however 31% consider that news is fake on the basis of picture and 26% on the basis of content. Gupta (2013) found in a survey about fake news crises 86% of the tweets during hurricane crises were based on fake images and false URLs [8], which were cause of panic for the affectees and also for rescue teams and helping organizations.
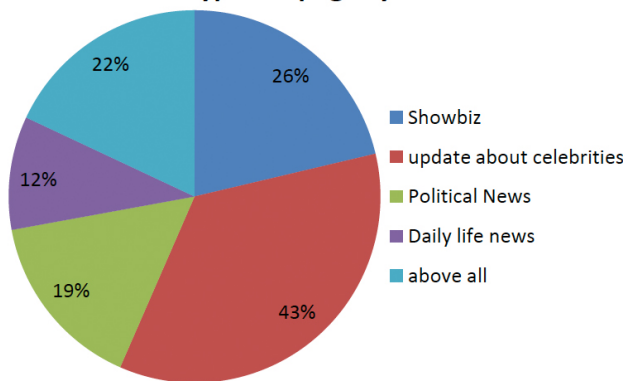
subscribed 0-5 pages, similarly 20% respond on 50-100 pages and 19% said that they subscribed more than 100 pages. The results indicate that most respondents were area who subscribed 0-50 pages respectively.

Types of pages you like

22%

26%

12%

Showbiz

update about celebrities

Political News

Daily life news

above all

19%

43%

The analysis of the response describe in the form of the chart that 43% of the respondents in current

Frequency of the fake news you faced daily
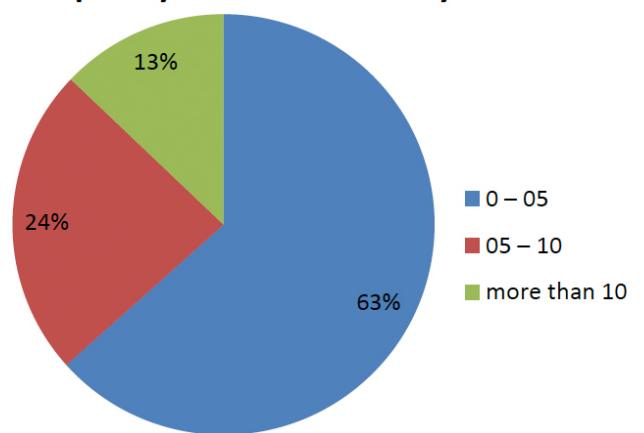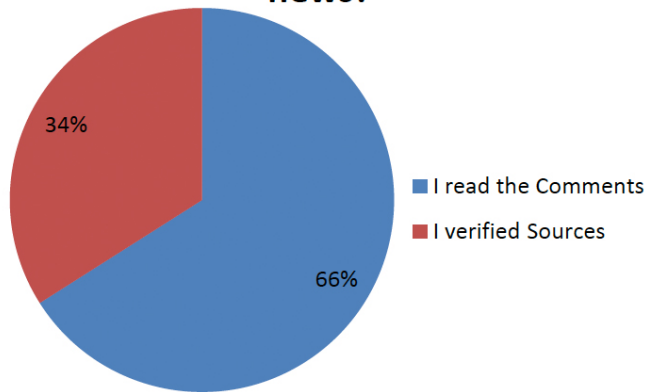
13%

0 − 05

05 − 10

more than 10

24%

63%

Chart elaborates that 63% of the respondent face 0-5 fake news daily. 24% respondents face 5-10 fake news daily and 13% respond against more than 10 fake news. Statista (2016) found that it is not just the

political domain that was affected by this fake news drama [9]. These deceptions also included crime stories, with one story about a woman's extreme reaction to winning the lottery being engaged with on Facebook almost 1.77 million times. The frequency with which such false news penetrates social media and the internet is worrying, as over half of the population claim to frequently witness fake news on websites mostly on Facebook and Twitter.

How do you get to know about the fake news?

66% respondent read the comments and considers fake news and only 34% verified the sources and declared that news is fake. Bogle (2018) found that the spread of a fake story is more remote, quicker, more profound and also more extensive than authentic news and such false news get disseminated more frequently on social media mostly because of its curiosity [10]. Respondents Chart elaborates that 63% of the respondent face 0-5 fake news daily. 24% respondents face 5-10 fake news daily and 13% respond against more than 10 fake news.

Who shared the fake news?
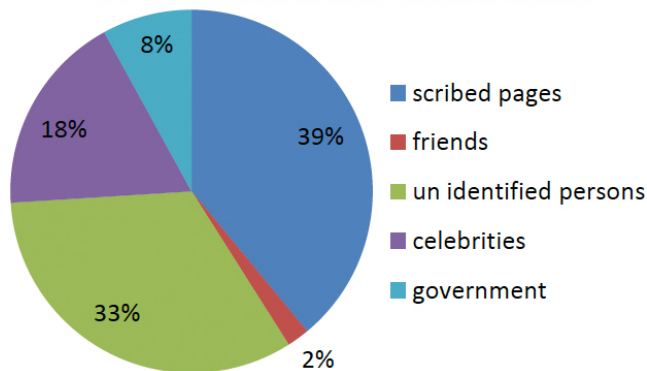
39% respondents said that main source of fake news is scribed pages and 33% of the un-identified persons similarly 18% think that main sources of fake news is celebrities and 8% consider government and

only 2% think from friends they get fake news. Gottfried and Shearer (2016) found that mostly people get fake news from social media sources which are not identified or the links those are unsubstantiated or discredited [11].

Why people share/post fake news ?
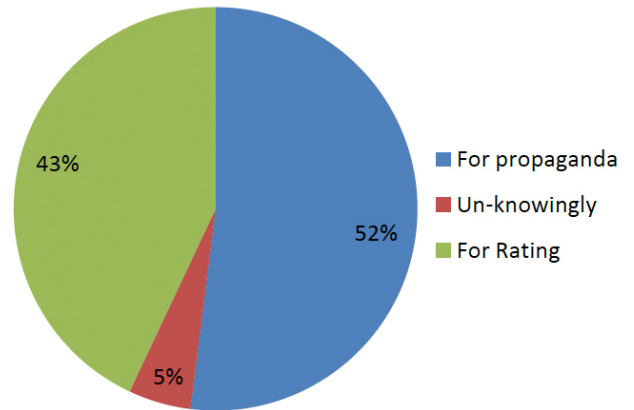
52% respondents believe that fake news is part of propaganda, 43% think that these type of news are part of rating and only 5% un-knowingly people post or share the fake news. Shao (2016) found that fake news are not a new sensation, the online information network is mainly productive ground for disseminating false story. Social media can be easily misused to manipulate people point of view thanks to the low cost of producing deceitful sites and abundance of pages, also called as social bots [12]. Varol at al (2017) described that fake news accounts can post information and intermingle with each other and with authentic profile users through social media, just like real person [13]. Jagatic (2007) found that people tend to belief social media contacts and can be influenced into trusting and disseminating information further [14].

You believed the story than turned out fake
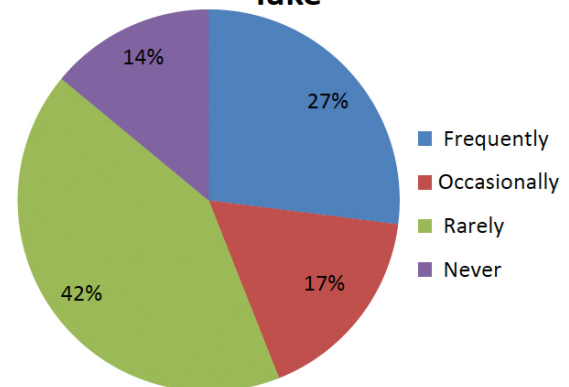
In response of a question that you believed the story than turned out fake, 42% of the respondents feel

that rarely it happen, however 27% frequently and 17% consider occasionally and only 14% it happens never. Vrij, Mann and Leal (2013) said that generally, humans are mostly futile at distinguishing ruse [15]. There are number of factors like their nature of assuming that information they get is true and trustworthy. Also Pennycook (2015) explained that users seem to show a general trustfulness and are extremely receptive to concepts that they do not fully understand and comprehend, and fall for them in believing [16].

## Which is the most soft platform for spreading fake news
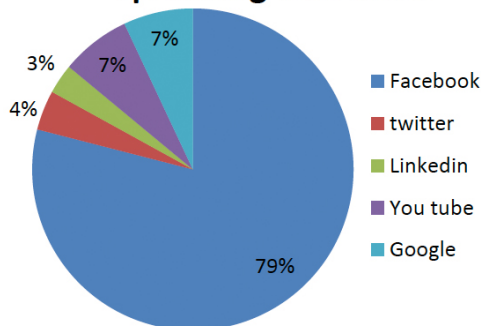
Respondents consider the facebook is most soft platform to spreading fake news i.e 79% similarly 7% on google and youtube followed by twitter and linkin, 4% and 3% respectively. Shah (2018) explored that nowadays television is not just only mean of spreading fake news, but with the advent of social media fake stories get viral through posts on Facebook, melodramatic messages on WhatsApp and as such news are off base and far away from reality. Del Vicario [17] with other researchers (2016) found that false news on Facebook are likely to go viral as authentic news and then its twitter that is easy access for using it as platform for spreading fake information. Also growing popularity of transient social media like Snapchat may become platform for dissemination of false news.

What type of things you shared
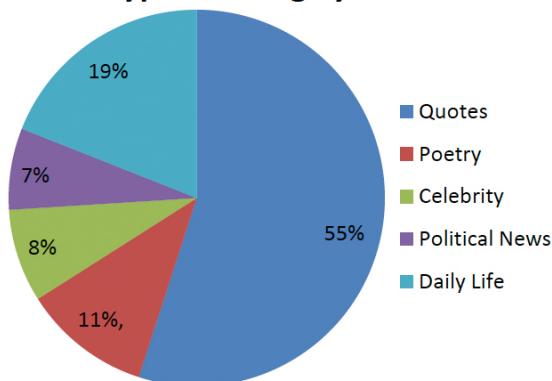
55% of the respondents agree that they shared quotes similarly 19% respondents shared daily life, 11% respondents post poetry on social media and 8% believe that they shared celebrity news and 7% political news. Heinonen (2011) found that users' activities on social media are based on how actively users behave online [18]. Valck (2009) identified different virtual community groups based on participation patterns: Fundamental members were those who participated the most by retrieving, supplying, and discoursing information. Communicators focused on discussing information [19]. Users who are seekers of information mainly retrieve and pass information. Individual who use social network as hobby focus on maintaining and updating their personal profile on the site. Functionalists are interested in regaining information. Then opportunists' use social networking sites only for minimal and niche information.

Do you verified the sources that you shared
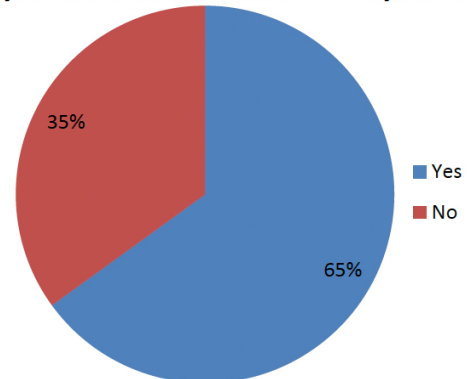
Only 35% of respondents verified and then shared news however 65% share news without verified it.

What is your response on fake news
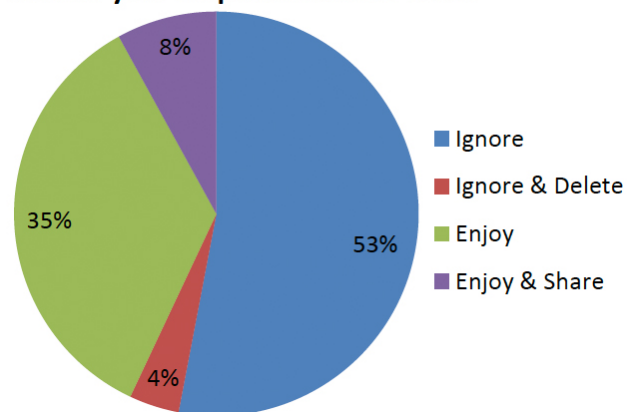
53% of the respondents ignore the fake news similarly 35% respondents enjoy the fake news however 8% enjoy and share the news and only 4% ignore and delete the fake news. Ratkiewicz, with other

scholars (2011) found that mostly people are likely to ignore fake news which they get, also there are number of users who share such news further without checking its authenticity [20].

CONCLUSION

Nowadays misinformation through social media platforms has become the issue that is far too complex to resolve. Though recognizing the users who are directly or indirectly get affected through fake news and its impact identifying the most vulnerable audience is a first yet important step towards developing a deeper understanding of this challenge. To meet this challenge, it is important that social media users, particularly the new generation are informed about the fake news problem. Many users come across fake news but mostly they are not aware about the source and target of the fake news, so it is need of time that this issue become in spot light and extensively discussed in the national discourse. Social media personalities, celebrities and political representatives can contribute to lessen the impact of this issue by spreading awareness on traditional media and most importantly the media of the day; social media, similarly law making authorities and government organization can play their role by creating awareness campaigns amongst students regarding fake news phenomenon and its prevention to fall into it, or to pass it further.

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