

## Socio-Psycholinguistic Implications of Rumour and Economic Hardship Among Bali Resident in Nigeria

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### **Abstract**

Rumour has long been recognized as an influential factor shaping societal perceptions and behaviours. It often extends to economic activities. This paper examines the effect of rumours and economic hardship on residents of Bali, Taraba State, Nigeria. The focus is on the online media landscape. The objectives are to investigate the socio-psycholinguistic effects of rumour on foodstuff scarcity on Facebook; assess the responses of individuals on the new language that emerged from rumour about food scarcity; and explore the use of rumour to create artificial scarcity, which raises food prices. The study uses primary data from observation and online media documentation. The documents are analysed to understand how language is used in different social contexts. The Social Construction of Reality Theory and the Spreading Activation Theory are adopted to guide the study. The analysis of online media sources shows that rumour spreads quickly and influences the behaviour of local residents. As major findings, residents suffer from sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic effects of rumour due to the hardships caused by foodstuff scarcity. New language for food items is also found. Marketers use rumours to create artificial scarcity, leading to higher prices. These have accomplished the objectives of this study. Recommendations are made in line with the findings.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In socio-psycholinguistics, language shapes and reflects social structures and psychological processes, influencing how people perceive and respond to their environment (Giles & Coupland, 1991). Rumour, defined as unverified information reflecting collective beliefs and fears (Allport & Postman, 2013), can significantly influence economic behaviour (Schneider, 2020). In Bali, Taraba State, Nigeria, economic hardship caused by foodstuff scarcity has created fertile ground for rumour circulation, particularly through Facebook. Such rumours can

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aggravate existing challenges, fuel price increases through artificial scarcity, and introduce new terms into local language use.

In lieu of the above, Sociolinguistic studies explore the relationship between language and society, examining how language varies across different social groups and how social factors influence language use and change (Meyerhoff, 2018). These studies often focus on language as a marker of identity, power dynamics, and social interaction (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2021). In this context, it offers insights into how language reflects and perpetuates economic behaviours and perceptions within a community. By analysing the socio-psycholinguistic aspects of rumour circulation, this study contributes to understanding how linguistic practices influence economic decision-making and social cohesion in a specific cultural setting.

This study addresses a gap in research on the socio-psycholinguistic effects of economic-hardship rumours in Bali. Specifically, it seeks to:

- i. Investigate the sociolinguistic effects of rumours on Facebook about foodstuff scarcity.
- ii. Examine the psycholinguistic effects of such rumours on residents.
- iii. Assess responses to new language emerging from these rumours.
- iv. Identify how rumours are used to create artificial scarcity and raise prices.

The findings will benefit residents by clarifying how rumours shape perceptions, language, and economic decisions. They will also guide policymakers, businesses, and community leaders in addressing the negative impacts of rumours. Additionally, this study will contribute to Socio-psycholinguistic scholarship by documenting the emergence of new lexical items linked to economic hardship in the community.

## **2. CONCEPTUAL REVIEW : LANGUAGE**

The term "language" is one of the most commonly used words in English; in fact, typing the word "language" into Google nets 85,800,000 hits. Thousands of languages exist on our planet. Humans all use language as speakers, signers, thinkers, readers, and writers. Language fascinates us with its enormous power: It brings us together and it divides us; it is used to assess our intelligence, our sociability, our class, our potential. Linguistics, or the study of language, includes a variety of perspectives: theoretical, applied, historical, psychological, cognitive, and social among others. Linguists research the relationship between humans and language as well as investigate animal and machine language (Luria, Seymour, & Smoke, 2006). Most of the outcomes showcase that language is mostly a source of human's problems in which rumour is not excluded. However, language is at the same time a solution to human's problems which this paper attempts to provide and examine.

In this study, language is seen as an inseparable element with humans who make them unique creatures and it serves as a vehicle of unity for necessary interactions in their daily communication. It is added that language stands as the key to the heart of a people. If they lose the key, they lose the people. If they value the key and keep it, it will unlock the door to wealth or affluence (Nwadike, 2014). Therefore, issues hampering linguistic research between language and society needs to be addressed in this paper which has to do with psych-sociolinguistic survey on aspect of language called rumour in relation to economic hardships and its residents in Bali.

### **2.1. Sociolinguistics, Psycholinguistics and Rumour**

Sociolinguistics explores how language is influenced by society and how it in turn influences society. It examines the ways in which language is shaped by social factors such as class,

gender, age, and culture. It also looks at how people use language to negotiate power and status, and how language can be used to exclude or include others. Ultimately, it helps us to understand how language is a social phenomenon that is constantly changing and evolving (Aithison, 2006). Therefore, language and society are inseparable and issues relate to both needs to be addressed. It is relevant to the topic of economic hardship rumours and their impact on local residents because it can help to explain how language is used to construct and spread rumours. It looks at how language is influenced by social factors, such as age, gender, class, and power. In this case, it can help to explain how rumours are spread through online media, and how they affect the social dynamics of the local community. It can also help to understand the effects of the rumours on the local economy and the people who live there (Geoffrey, 2017; Timothy, 2014; Gary & Thomas, 2013).

Psycholinguistics combines methods and theories from psychology and linguistics to understand how people acquire, use and comprehend language. It attempts to evaluate the psychological reality and underpinnings of linguistic rules and processes. It seeks to link word and sentence processes of message construction and interpretation. Neutral network theories propose that language processing is interaction between constraints. It attempts to define the extent to which language mediates or structures thinking. It describes how language interrelates with memory, perception, intelligence and many other psychological factors. It deals with the psychological context of language.

Rumour may be referred to official leakages which could be rejected by any organisation, institution or a particular society because it is not yet a policy as at the time in circulation (Yina, 2024). However, Rumours, within the context of the impact of economic hardship on local residents due to food stuff scarcity in Bali, Taraba State, Nigeria, through Sociolinguistic perspective, are significant drivers of social, psychological, and economic dynamics within the community. Rumour, often fuelled by uncertainties and anxieties surrounding economic stability, can spread rapidly through online media platforms, exacerbating existing tensions and amplifying concerns. In this context, rumour regarding economic hardship may include speculation about job losses, impending economic downturns, or government policies affecting livelihoods. This rumour exploits vulnerabilities within the community, tapping into fears about the future and worsening feelings of insecurity and distrust.

Psychologically, economic hardship rumours can evoke a range of emotional responses, including fear, anxiety, and stress (Miller & Landau, 2005). Uncertainty about economic prospects, fuelled by rumours, can erode trust in institutions and contribute to a sense of helplessness among local residents (Rosnow, 1991). Moreover, the constant exposure to negative information through online media channels can contribute to a collective sense of trauma within the community (Pfefferbaum, Newman, & Nelson, 2014).

Socially, economic hardship rumours can strain interpersonal relationships, trigger social tensions, and erode community cohesion (Kapferer, 2017). Distrust and anxiety may lead to conflicts within the community, further undermining social stability (Rosnow & Fine, 2020). Additionally, economic uncertainty can deter investment and disrupt business activities, perpetuating the cycle of hardship and exacerbating the impact of rumours on local economic development (Michelson & Suchman, 2018).

From an economic perspective, rumours can have tangible consequences, such as reduced consumer confidence, decreased spending, and reluctance to invest. The spread of misinformation through online media channels can impede local development efforts and hinder economic recovery initiatives. Addressing the impact of rumours on residents requires a multifaceted approach that involves collaboration between stakeholders, including local authorities, media organisations, and community leaders.

In today's digital age, online media platforms serve as medium for the rapid dissemination of information, including rumours related to economic hardships particularly on food stuff in Bali, Taraba State, Nigeria, represents a unique case study for examining the impact of such rumours on local residents due to its socio-economic context and reliance on digital communication channels. This review synthesizes existing knowledge to understand how economic hardship rumours manifest in online media and their repercussions on the well-being of individuals in the community (Salawu, 2019).

### **2.1.1. Impact of Economic Hardship Rumours on Perception and Behaviour**

Economic hardship rumours circulating on online media platforms can shape the perceptions of local residents regarding their sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic prospects, worsening feelings of uncertainty and anxiety. Studies have shown that exposure to negative economic rumours can lead to a decline in consumer confidence, prompting individuals to adopt cautious spending behaviours and hoarding tendencies. Moreover, rumours may fuel social tensions and mistrust within the community, as individuals grapple with competing narratives regarding the state of the economy resulting in changes in their speech patterns (Onyeneke, Oyinloye, & Enwelu, 2020).

### **2.2. Empirical Review**

Here are some few empirical works that can support the present study. This serves as a means through which a gap is established for it take-off. These are highlighted below:

Smith and Ferguson (2018), in their study "Rumour Spread in Social Networks," analyse how rumours propagate within social networks, including online platforms. Their methodology involved social network analysis and surveys to trace rumour origins and patterns. The findings revealed that rumours spread rapidly in tightly-knit communities, significantly influencing community perceptions and behaviours. The study concluded that online platforms amplify rumour dissemination, leading to widespread misinformation. They recommended enhanced digital literacy and monitoring of social networks to mitigate the effects of rumours. However, the study's weakness lies in its limited scope, focusing primarily on online interactions and neglecting offline social dynamics.

Wang and Guo (2020), in their study "The Influence of Rumours on Risk Perception During the COVID-19 Outbreak in China: An Empirical Study," investigate how rumours affected public risk perception during the COVID-19 crisis. Using surveys and data analysis, the study found that rumours significantly heightened public fear and anxiety, with online media playing a crucial role in the rapid spread and amplification of these rumours. The study concludes that misinformation can exacerbate public panic and recommends stronger regulation of online content. However, the study's limitation is its focus on short-term impacts, without examining long-term consequences.

Palen, Vieweg, Liu, & Hughes (2009), in their study "Crisis in a Networked World: Features of Computer-Mediated Communication in the April 16, 2007, Virginia Tech Event," examine the role of online communication during the crisis. Through content analysis of digital communication, they found that computer-mediated platforms facilitated rapid rumour propagation, significantly impacting community responses. The study concludes that such platforms can both help and hinder crisis management, depending on the accuracy of shared information. They recommend improving information verification processes online. However, the study's weakness lies in its limited focus on digital communication, overlooking traditional media's role.

Sood and Tellis (2019), in their study "Rumours in Social Media: Determinants, Contradictions, and Resolution Mechanisms," explore the factors that drive rumour formation

and spread on social media. Using a mixed-method approach, they identify key determinants like ambiguity and emotional appeal, and analyse how these rumours influence consumer perceptions and behaviours. The study concludes that timely and accurate information is crucial for resolving rumours, and suggests strategic communication interventions. However, the study's limitation is its focus on consumer behaviour, with less emphasis on the broader social implications of rumours.

Schudson (2013), in his article "The Sociology of News," provides a thorough examination of the role and impact of news within society. He discusses how news media shape public perceptions through mechanisms like agenda-setting and framing, and explores the broader effects of media on societal values and behaviours. The study concludes that news not only reflects but also constructs social reality, influencing public discourse. Schudson recommends increased media literacy to critically engage with news content. However, the article primarily focuses on traditional news outlets, with limited discussion on the impact of digital and social media.

These empirical evidences cover various aspects related to the spread, amplification, and effects of rumours, particularly in the context of online media channels, which align with the focus of this study. However, none has investigated the socio-psycholinguistic impact of hardship rumours with focus on food stuff scarcity within Bali, Taraba State, Nigeria. Based on this existing gap in the literature, the present study attempts to fill.

### **2.3. Theoretical Framework: Socio-psycholinguistic Approach**

The theoretical framework for this study combines the sociolinguistic approach with psycholinguistic theory to explain how economic hardship rumours influence perceptions and behaviours among residents of Bali, Taraba State, Nigeria. The Social Construction of Reality Theory (Giddens, 1984) posits that individuals interpret their social reality based on linguistic cues in their environment, particularly through discourse on online platforms such as Facebook. In this context, economic hardship rumours serve as a medium through which individuals construct and reinforce their understanding of economic conditions. Complementing this, the Spreading Activation Theory (Collins & Loftus, 1975) explains how words and concepts related to economic hardship are stored and retrieved in the mind through a network of associations. Exposure to specific terms like "scarcity," "inflation," or "hunger" triggers related cognitive associations, leading to psychological reactions such as anxiety and uncertainty, which in turn influence behaviour and further rumour propagation. By integrating these perspectives, the study provides a holistic analysis of how language, cognition, and social context interact in shaping responses to economic hardship. This framework underscores how rumours are not merely linguistic phenomena but also cognitive and psychological processes that drive public sentiment and societal reactions in economically challenging times.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

This study employs a primary source of data from observation and online media platform which is known as documentation. This is done through the collection of documents such as transcripts, photographs, videos, online media information and recordings. The documents can then be analysed to understand how language is used in different social contexts. Documentation has become a popular method of data collection, especially in the field of linguistic anthropology. It's a way to study language that is often less intrusive than direct interviews or other methods.

This source provided information which has to do with the content analysis of online media source which relied on Facebook (Duranti, 2011). Online media platform which involved only Facebook from January to March, 2024 due to time constraints was assessed. After collection of data, they were systematically identified, categorised and analysed the rumours related to



economic issues which focused only on food stuff scarcity. The study adopts descriptive survey design. Descriptive research is a design in which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analysing data from a few people considered to be a representative sample of the entire population (Idris, & Abraham, 2023).

The population of this study is constituted by local residents of Bali, Taraba State who are mostly agrarian. Agriculture forms the backbone of the local economy, with crops such as maize, millet, sorghum, rice, and vegetables being cultivated. Livestock farming, including cattle, goats, and poultry, is also predominant. The total population is amounted to 211,022 which is divided into 107,979 males and 103,045 females (NBS, 2023).

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table. 1 Presents the result which illustrates fluctuations of prices of the food items below:

January, 2024		February, 2024		March, 2024	
1.Maize/bag	Pr=40-41k	Maize	Pr=38k	Maize	Pr=51k
2.Cassava/bag	Pr= 20-21k	Cassava	Pr=15-16k	Cassava	Pr=26k
3.G/corn/bag	Pr=39-40k	G/corn	Pr=35k	G/corn	Pr=50k
4.Millet/bag	Pr= 48k	Millet	Pr=32k	Millet	Pr=45k
5.Beans/bag	Pr=65-68k	Beans	Pr=47k	Beans	Pr=70k
6.G/nuts/bag	Pr= 70k	G/nuts	Pr=50k	G/nuts	Pr=75k
7.Rice /bag	Pr= 28k	Rice	Pr=23k	Rice	Pr= 45k

The table above showcases how prices of the food items listed from 1 to 6 have been fluctuating. This shows that there is clear indication of scarcity of the food items listed in the study area which brings about hardships through rumour on Facebook. For instance, it is very unusual for a bag of maize to be sold at forty thousand naira (40,000) in January which is similar to other food items such as a bag of cassava at twenty-one thousand naira (21,000), g/corn at 40 thousand naira, millet at 48 thousand naira, beans at sixty-eight thousand naira (68,000) and groundnuts at seventy thousand naira (70,000) at that time. Experience showcases that from the previous years in month of January, food items used to be very cheap and available because it is time for harvest in the study area and more than 70% of the residents are farmers who mostly engage in mass production of such food stuff.

However, in the month of February, the story became different as a result of rumour circulating then on Facebook that Federal Government will disburse funds to the various state governors for the provision of food stuff in their states in order to curtail the hardship Nigerian have been undergoing. In a similar vein, there was equally a rumour circulated on Facebook that state boarders should be closed so that trucks stop conveying food stuff from one state to the other. This plays a significant role in decreasing the prices of the food stuff listed. See, for instance, from the table above, a bag of maize that was forty-one thousand naira (41,000) in January decreased to thirty eight thousand (38,000) in February. A bag of cassava that was twenty one thousand naira (21,000) in January decreased to sixteen thousand naira (16,000) in February and all other food stuff were equally affected by the rumour.

In March, the experience is entirely different due failure of government to do what was circulating on Facebook as a rumour. The prices of those food stuff started increasing till the

time of this study. For example, a bag of maize which was 38k in February has increased to fifty thousand naira (50,000). A bag of cassava that was sixteen thousand naira (16,000) has increased to twenty-six thousand naira (26,000) in March. A bag of g/corn that was thirty five thousand (35, 000) in February has increased to fifty thousand (50,000) in March. Others such as millet, groundnuts and beans have similar increments in the study area as depicted from the above table. For instance, here are some examples of linguistic expressions found in the study area during observation as rumours in Hausa, along with their English gloss:

- i. Hausa: "Gwamnati ta ce za ta rage farashin abinci, amma babu wani canji."  
English Gloss: The government said it would reduce food prices, but there was no change.
- ii. Hausa: "Mutane suna cewa farashin masara zai sauka, amma farashin yana karuwa har yanzu."  
English Gloss: People are saying the price of maize will drop, but the price is still increasing.
- iii. Hausa: "Ana ta ce-ce-ku-ce cewa gwamnatin za ta kawo kayan abinci daga waje, amma farashin kayan abinci yana hawa sama."  
English Gloss: There is speculation that the government will import food supplies, but the prices of food items keep rising.

These expressions illustrate the rumours circulating on social media that influenced perceptions and behaviours regarding the rising food prices in the study area. All these transpired as a result of rumour which was circulating on the face book. The local residents of the study experience the worst hardship ever in the history of Bali, Taraba State, Nigeria. These result to sociolinguistic, as well as psycholinguistic effects. The effects as a result of rumour on Facebook on the local residents as found in this study include:

Finding for sociolinguistic effects: The rumour circulating on Facebook about food stuff scarcity in Bali, Taraba, Nigeria, led to the emergence of new language patterns and terminology among local residents. For instance, local residents started using phrases like "food crisis" and "shortage" more frequently in their conversations, reflecting the influence of the rumour on their linguistic expressions. This finding is supported by the following linguistic expressions of rumours based on the sociolinguistic effects, in Hausa along with their English gloss:

- i. Hausa: "Yanzu ana kiran wannan yanayin 'tsarin yunwa,' saboda rashin abinci a kasuwa."  
English Gloss: Now they are calling this situation 'hunger regime,' due to the scarcity of food in the market.
- ii. Hausa: "Mutane suna ta amfani da kalmar 'karancin abinci' fiye da da, saboda sun ji cewa kayan abinci za su kare."  
English Gloss: People are using the term 'food shortage' more than before because they heard that food supplies will run out.
- iii. Hausa: "Kalmar 'cikas na abinci' ta zama ruwan dare a tsakanin mazauna garin Bali." English Gloss: The term 'food crisis' has become commonplace among the residents of Bali.

These examples highlight how rumours about food scarcity on social media have influenced the linguistic behaviour of the local community, leading to the frequent use of terms that reflect fear and concern over food availability.

Finding for psycholinguistic effects: The rumour regarding food stuff scarcity had significant psychological effects on local residents, leading to increased anxiety and fear about their food

security. For instance, many residents reported feeling stressed and uncertain about their ability to afford and access basic food items, resulting in changes in their speech patterns and non-verbal communication indicating distress. Moreover, this finding showcases that rumours have some psycholinguistic effects on the residents of Bali, Taraba State, Nigeria as thus:

- i. Hausa: "Mutane suna ta ce-ce-ku-ce da furta kalmar 'za mu sha wahala,' tare da nuna damuwa a fuskokinsu."  
English Gloss: People keep repeating the phrase 'we will suffer,' with visible concern on their faces.
- ii. Hausa: "Wasu mazauna garin sun fara nuna tsoro ta hanyar gajerun jawabai kamar 'komai ya kare,' suna cikin damuwa sosai."  
English Gloss: Some residents have started expressing fear with short statements like 'everything is over,' indicating deep distress.
- iii. Hausa: "Firgita da rashin abinci ya sa mutane suna magana da sauri da rashin nutsuwa, suna ta ce-ce-ku-ce kamar ba za su iya tsira ba."  
English Gloss: "The fear of food scarcity has caused people to speak quickly and nervously, constantly discussing that they might not survive."

These examples further illustrate how the psychological impact of the rumour influenced not just the content but also the manner in which people communicated, with speech patterns reflecting heightened emotional distress as all indicated by observation made during a survey in the study area.

Table 2. Presents the language emergence due to the hardship in the study area

	Language Emergence	Gloss/Denotative Meaning	Connotative Meaning
1	Tinubu	Cassava	Saviour of hunger
2	Mai Sauye	Garri	Rescue
3	Mai Tsada	Maize	Sustainer
4	Alheri	Rice	Blessing
5	Farin Jini	Beans	Protein-rich
6	Zabo	Millet	Endurance
7	Mala'ika	Yam	Lifesaver
8	Mai Shafa	Palm Oil	Government
9	Muslim muslim	Hardships	Hardship providers
10	Tinibuya	Tinibu's time	Hardship period
11	Sobsi	Fuel Subsidy	Price discount

During the time of hardship, the names of food items took on different connotations or colloquial terms. In the study area, during periods of scarcity or economic difficulty, people used the following alternative names in their interaction for some food items in the Hausa language as shown in above. These certainly have led to the emergence of new lexical items in the languages involved.

Language Emergence Responses: Finding: In response to the rumour circulating on Facebook, local residents adapted their language use to convey solidarity and support within the community. For instance, residents started using phrases like "we're in this together" and "helping hand" more frequently, showcasing a linguistic shift towards collective resilience in the face of perceived food shortages. Above that, the resident came up with new language such as Tinubu" to mean "bringer of hunger" and many more which are analysed below:



In this finding, this study reveals that economic hardship rumours in Bali, Taraba State, have generated new lexical items to describe food items, economic conditions, and coping strategies, such as “Tinubu” for cassava, connotatively meaning “saviour of hunger” but used ironically to mean “provider of hunger”; “Mai Sauye” for garri, meaning “rescuer” from hunger; “Maize” as “mai tsada,” meaning “sustainer,” but now scarce; “Alheri” for rice, meaning “blessing,” reflecting its rarity; “Beans” as “farin jini,” symbolising unexpected popularity; and “Millet” as “zabo,” meaning “endurance,” highlighting its high cost. These emergent terms mirror collective perceptions of scarcity and the symbolic value of these items in sustaining livelihoods, aligning with Allport and Postman’s (2013) view that rumours reflect shared beliefs and fears. The findings support the Social Construction of Reality Theory (Giddens, 1984) by showing how economic hardship vocabulary is socially constructed through discourse on Facebook, and the Spreading Activation Theory (Collins & Loftus, 1975), as exposure to scarcity-related words activates mental associations that trigger emotional responses and influence behaviour. They also affirm DiFonzo and Bordia’s (2007) assertion that rumours are social communication tools shaping public opinion and Schneider’s (2020) claim that economic rumours alter consumption patterns. The implication is that while such lexical innovations reflect community resilience, they can also normalise scarcity, deepen distrust, and influence economic behaviour, making it essential for policymakers to counter harmful rumours, stabilise markets, and sustain public confidence, while linguists recognise rumour as a driver of real-time lexical change.

In another finding: rumours such as “abinci ya kare a kasuwa” (food is finished in the market) and “bana za’ayi yunwa” (this year, there will be hunger) in Hausa are strategically used by marketers in Bali, Taraba State, to create artificial scarcity. This misinformation spreads fear among consumers, prompting panic-buying that increases demand. Marketers exploit this heightened demand to inflate prices, even when supply is sufficient. The phrase “ana tsoron yunwa” (fear of hunger is rising) captures the psychological impact on the community, aligning with the Spreading Activation Theory (Collins & Loftus, 1975), where repeated exposure to scarcity-related terms triggers mental associations that heighten anxiety and influence purchasing behaviour. It also reflects the Social Construction of Reality Theory (Giddens, 1984), as these narratives shape collective perceptions of economic conditions regardless of factual supply levels. Consistent with DiFonzo and Bordia’s (2007) argument that rumours guide public opinion, and Schneider’s (2020) observation that economic rumours alter market dynamics, the findings reveal that such linguistic expressions not only manipulate consumer psychology but also sustain inflated prices. The implication is that while residents are forced to buy without alternatives, these rumour-driven behaviours perpetuate cycles of economic exploitation, underscoring the need for targeted policy interventions to curb misinformation and protect vulnerable consumers.

Therefore, this study is limited to rumours circulated on Facebook that contributed to the scarcity of essential food items and consequent hardships for local residents of Bali, Taraba State, Nigeria. The affected items include maize, rice, cassava, ground corn, groundnut, beans, and millet, as they represent the basic dietary needs of participants in the study area. Bali serves as the geographical focus, and the socio-psycholinguistic approach frames the analysis, examining how language use in online rumour transmission reflects and shapes both social interactions and psychological responses. Consistent with the Social Construction of Reality Theory (Giddens, 1984), the findings show that Facebook discourse socially constructs perceptions of scarcity, while the Spreading Activation Theory (Collins & Loftus, 1975) explains how repeated exposure to scarcity-related terms triggers mental associations, heightens anxiety, and influences purchasing behaviour. In line with DiFonzo and Bordia’s (2007) assertion that rumours shape public opinion and Schneider’s (2020) finding that economic rumours alter market dynamics, the study demonstrates that these Facebook-based

narratives amplified fear, encouraged panic-buying, and sustained inflated prices despite adequate supply. The implication is that misinformation on social media can manipulate consumer psychology, erode market trust, and exacerbate economic hardship, highlighting the urgency for targeted policy measures and community awareness to mitigate rumour-induced exploitation.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, it is obvious that rumour on Facebook has negative effects on local residents of Bali because the findings submit it that the people in the study area suffered from sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic effects of rumour due to hardships of food stuff scarcity. New language for food items is also found and marketers use rumours to create artificial scarcity. These have accomplished the objectives of this study.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of the study highlighting the negative effects of rumours on local residents of Bali, it's imperative to implement the following recommendations:

- **Community Education and Awareness:** Launch educational campaigns to raise awareness about the consequences of spreading rumours and the importance of verifying information before sharing it.
- **Psychological Support Services:** Establish psychological support services to help individuals cope with the psycholinguistic effects of rumours, providing counseling and mental health resources.
- **Promote Healthy Communication:** Encourage open and transparent communication within communities to foster trust and discourage the spread of rumours.
- **Address Food Scarcity:** Implement measures to address food scarcity issues in the study area, such as promoting sustainable agriculture practices and providing access to food aid programs.
- **Monitor Social Media:** Employ social media monitoring tools to identify and counteract rumours circulating on platforms like Facebook, ensuring accurate information dissemination.
- **Stricter enforcement of anti-fraud regulations** is essential, and increasing market transparency along with public awareness initiatives can prevent marketers from using rumours to create artificial scarcity.

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