
Spiral of Silence in an Algorithm-Driven Social Media Content Environment: Conceptual Framework and Research Propositions

KOME – An International Journal of Pure
Communication Inquiry
Volume 10 Issue 1, p. 32-46.
© The Author(s) 2022
Reprints and Permission:
kome@komejournal.com
Published by the Hungarian
Communication Studies Association
DOI: [10.17646/KOME.75672.86](https://doi.org/10.17646/KOME.75672.86)

Hyuk Jun Cheong¹, Sufyan M. Baksh² and Ilwoo Ju³

¹ Graduate School of Global Communication and Language, Akita International University, JAPAN

² Department of Communication & Media, The University of Scranton, U.S.A.

³ Brian Lamb School of Communication, Purdue University, U.S.A.

Abstract: The aim of this conceptual study is to explore the major tenets of the spiral of silence theory (i.e., fear of isolation, willingness to speak out, quasi-statistical sense) within social media environments, where users are predominantly shown content that aligns with their views and interests. In this environment of algorithmic-suggested content, the researchers offer several propositions as to how the spiral of silence tenets operate relative to the perceived anonymity, tie strengths, and the postings suggested by programmed algorithms used by social media platforms. New research directions on spiral of silence theory, social media communication, and opinion polarization are also discussed. Finally, implications for researchers, policymakers, and social media practitioners are addressed.

Keywords: spiral of silence, algorithm-driven content, social media communication, CMC, opinion polarization, conceptual paper