

Chapter 10

Misinformation on Social Media Platforms in the Global Crisis of Coronavirus

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ABSTRACT

With COVID-19 turning into a public health crisis, several theories about the origin of the virus on the internet have sparked controversy. Challenges of distinguishing legal content from fake increases the importance of deleting such information through social media networks. Misinformation was created from social media and websites without credible evidence. The COVID-19 epidemic has spread alongside what the World Health Organization calls “infodemic” misinformation. Each social media company responds differently to misinformation and therefore this lack of consistency can lead to confusion among social media users. As the dissemination of such information endangers public health, this chapter focuses on studies to track misinformation on the popular social media. Additionally, one of the consequences of the coronavirus outbreak is the creation of social panic and rapid changes in people’s lifestyles caused by social networks. This study investigates the role of social networks in the formation of social phobia and lifestyle changes on account of the corona virus.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the coronavirus outbreak has become a major global crisis affecting many countries. Over the centuries, epidemics such as the black plague (destructive

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worldwide epidemic of bubonic plague that affected Europe and Asia in the mid-1300s), great Plague of London (from 1665 to 1666), Leprosy (Hansen's disease) in Europe between the 12th and 14th centuries, syphilis (great pox) as an epidemic disease invaded Naples in the first of the Italian Wars, and affected Europe, malaria, and now the corona virus in 2020 indicate the number of victims and the density of corpses in cities, villages and the chaos of public space in different parts of the world.

Examples of these disturbances are mass graves without the names and logos of victims of the corona virus in countries. One of the most important consequences of the coronavirus outbreak is the creation of social anxiety and panic around the world as well as rapid and unbelievable changes in lifestyle. Fear of being exposed to this virus has led to irrational and dramatic behavior in societies (Beck, 1998). Beck defines it as a regular way to deal with the dangers and insecurities of self-renewal. He attributes this to a wide-ranging change he calls the reflexive modernization.

Thus, the reflectivity of people and society binds them to a complex structure of known unknowns. Reflexive modernization is a form of social change driven by seemingly scientific or logical judgments and actions. But in practice consists of reflexes (involved or contaminated with knowledge, image, technology, wealth, power, desire, etc.), so it is intended to create a risky situation (Chang, 2017). Coronavirus outbreaks indicate that endangered communities lead to vulnerable communities. However, pregnant women, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, and low-income people suffer from disproportionate damage in epidemics and natural disasters (Marshall et al., 2020).

An interesting feature of this crisis or epidemic storm is the coronavirus (Chang et al., 2020). There is a synchronicity of gaining knowledge about the virus and the spread of the virus. Not only did the virus itself spread rapidly, but misinformation about the spread of the disease was widely shared. Thus, panic broke out among the public as social media panic moved faster than the spread of the Corona virus (Depoux et al., 2020). In the process of the outbreak of the corona phenomenon, people under the influence of the immediate dangers of becoming infected with the virus, directly and indirectly through virtual social networks, sometimes engaged in uncoordinated and irrational actions. For example, irrational behaviors such as some people rushing to pharmacies and stores for masks and hygiene items can be mentioned; therefore, it can be said that the negative behavior of social networks leads to the formation of social phobia that has common consequences such as confusion and numbness, severe anxiety, excitement and aggression, and perhaps persistent fear.

This chapter is about misinformation on the popular social media. In addition, it examines the role of social networks in the formation of social panic and lifestyle changes by reason of the corona virus.

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