

Research on the Impact of New Media on COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

As a new generation of media technology, new media is an important way for the public to obtain information about the coronavirus. However, as the development of new media is getting better and better, the information of new media is mixed, and the authenticity is difficult to distinguish, which undoubtedly brings greater resistance to the pandemic prevention work. This paper is to explore how the new media has a positive impact on the pandemic and how it has a negative impact on the pandemic. In addition, this paper also discusses what new media will look like in the future. This research depends on searching the internet for news reported by journalists from different countries. The task of preventing and controlling this major pandemic is urgent and arduous. The professionalism and ability of media practitioners, the quality of public information, and government information management and control are all facing challenges. The result of this paper is although new media help to spread the information about pandemic on the internet and help people to make good prevention in advance, there are also some people spreading rumors about pandemic all over the internet.

Keywords: *New media, pandemic, rumor, spread, coronavirus*

1. INTRODUCTION

With the development of science and technology, new media is widely used. For the sudden outbreak of a pandemic, the role of new media is on display. New media make people's life more convenient and bring a lot of advantages, but at the same time, it also may cause some problems. Under the influence of new media, people's expressions are more relaxed and unconstrained. Meanwhile, this is also a drawback, resulting in many ignorant and fearless keyboard men. The negative impact of these keyboard guys on the pandemic is to spread rumors about the pandemic at will. This paper is going to explore how the development of new media affect the pandemic prevention work in positive and negative ways. Is the continual development of new media only bring benefits for the pandemic prevention work, if not, how it affects the epidemic prevention situation in a bad way. Currently, there are many domestic and foreign researches on the current situation of the spread of online rumors, but there are few researches on rumors in the field of public health. In particular, the researches that take the pandemic rumors as the research objects are rare, and there are fewer studies on the factors of rumors. Therefore, this study takes the new media pandemic rumors as the research object, studies its characteristics and transmission factors, and provides some suggestions for the government to

improve the ability to prevent and controlling the spread of pandemic rumors [2].

2. ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCE OF NEW MEDIA ON THE WAY NEW MEDIA INFLUENCING THE PANDEMIC

New media is a new generation of media technology for information transmission and it meets the needs of the public in life and work. Nowadays, new media has become an important way for the public to get timely information about the pandemic. As the COVID-19 outbreak has spread to the whole country, the public can intuitively and timely learn about the latest situation of the pandemic in China through new media such as the internet and TV based on the pandemic data [1]. What's more, through search engines represented by Baidu and Google, people can easily input keywords and find the knowledge information they need and are interested in the database. The appearance and development of new media have made it more convenient and diversified for the public to obtain information. However, at the same time, there will be misinformation spread through the new media. Therefore, the following content will analyze the impact of new media on the pandemic from both positive and negative aspects.

2.1 The positive impact of new media on the pandemic

New media has brought many benefits to the pandemic in many ways. First of all, new media has become a green channel for the public to make suggestions in the fight against the pandemic. In the face of this major outbreak, China is actively exploring strategies to overcome the pandemic. Everyone took part in the fight against the pandemic and made suggestions. It spread quickly on social media how to wear masks correctly and how to dispose of discarded masks to avoid being maliciously resold by others. New media let people know about the outbreak and take precautions.

Through new media, normal people and bloggers with millions of followers have made comments on social media platforms such as Weibo, and Tiktok to contribute to pandemic prevention and control. For example, some enthusiastic netizens will share cartoons on pandemic prevention and teach people about the best way to sterilize at home. There are more than 3000 people who like this post and almost 2000 people share this picture with their friends and family. In addition, new media has built a bridge of communication between the government and the public. The more timely the information of public concern is transmitted and the more sufficient the communication is, the more conducive the society will move from “disorder” to “order” as soon as possible [1]. For instance, at the beginning of the SARS event in 2003, the major news media covered up the reports and did not fully disclose the information about the SARS epidemic and its prevention and treatment [5].

This phenomenon of concealment, omission and failure to report leads to the public’s right to know cannot be satisfied, and rumors abound, triggering social panic among the public. Therefore, people in some places have been frantically buying up medicines and food, which has affected social stability and brought huge losses to the country. On the other hand, new media also plays an important role as a social “pressure relief valve”. New media platforms including WeChat, Weibo, and short video apps, have set up comment sections, which is to set up a space for public opinions so that the public can vent some of their dissatisfaction with the society gathered during the crisis, so they can eliminate dissatisfaction. It buffered part of the intense social emotions and maintained the normal life and social relations of social groups. During the COVID-19, new media help people in other countries learn from China’s measures to deal with the pandemic and how did they correctly control the pandemic.

When the outbreak of COVID-19 began in Wuhan, the journalists in Wuhan used their reporting advantage to provide overseas reports from the front lines of China’s fight against the pandemic. In the later stage of the pandemic, they actively linked with journalists around the

world and continued to report the global pandemic situation through links, charts, and other ways.

Then, by interviewing Academician Nanshan Zhong and experts from relevant departments, we produced a novel called “what is coronavirus” which is our original content. China Radio International (CRI) promotes multiple language Vlog, shooting as an ordinary people to make the audience experience the daily life of people in Wuhan during the outbreak of the pandemic, and also the medical staff in the work condition, etc. at the same time, they introduce the practical experience in pandemic resistance, popularize the knowledge of the anti-pandemic product which praise by the foreign audience.

When Zhong Nanshan was interviewed by a journalist in Beijing, he decisively announced to the public that there was “person-to-person transmission” of the new crown pneumonia, which sounded the national alarm for the prevention and control of the new pandemic. Since then, he has attended many press conferences and accepted interviews with domestic and foreign journalists, answering questions for the public, and injecting confidence into the frontline war pandemic.

2.2 The negative impact of new media on the pandemic

In the era of “new media”, the rapid rise of new media platforms represented by Weibo, Wechat and Tiktok has provided a platform for information dissemination, opinion expression and, emotional exchange for the public. However, due to the public opinion guidance lagging behind the development of the situations, the high-speed and fragmented dissemination of new media inevitably caused negative situations such as spreading rumors, demonizing people in the affected area, sensationalizing panic, and deliberately stirring up emotions. The government’s inadequate governance of undesirable information on the internet, and some citizens’ loss of moral orientation and poor ability to distinguish right from wrong lead to a large number of rumors and false information throughout the network platform.

As a result, it is more difficult for the public to obtain real information about the pandemic, misleading the public in their judgment of the pandemic situation, imperceptibly causing the public to have a high degree of panic, anxiety, imbalance and other negative emotions. On the other hand, since the outbreak of the pandemic, the formation of negative online public opinions has seriously hindered the orderly implementation of pandemic prevention and control, affected the quality and efficiency of epidemic prevention and control, and caused social chaos and other malignant effects.

A researcher states that in some countries, social media affect buying crisis[3]. To be more specific, people saw posts on social media about empty stores, sparking fears related to food shortages so that many people are

trying to find the sources too. During the pandemic, people spend most of their time on social media, so many people saw that stores in different countries were empty and it will make them more panic and afraid. In the early days of the outbreak, some journalists only care for their own benefits. They just seize the public's psychology which is the limited knowledge of the outbreak and was eager to obtain information on why the outbreak occurred, the fatality rate and whether it could be cured, so some journalists throw out alarmist remarks to attract attention. Sometimes false information spread on the internet without any prove may cause a terrible consequence. For example, HCQ is a lysosomotropic agent which proved to be an agent that can treat some autoimmune diseases. Therefore, some politicians promote HCQ and say it is effective for Coronavirus. However, many reports said many people died and were in critical condition because of the overuse of HCQ. For a time, the HCQ was described as a magic drug for the Coronavirus by the politics in Iraq, causing serious injuries and deaths. This means that new media do not only has advantages for the pandemic but also some fatal weaknesses.

In addition, some normal people mislead people by using the words of medical experts on new media Platforms. In fact, these experts may not have said any of these things, and some of them have been taken out of context. Such rumors are easily reprinted by various new media platforms and ordinary people believe them because they lack professional knowledge and cannot verify them. The "snap up Shuanghuanglian" in this pandemic is a typical example of such rumors[6].

3. DISCUSSION

In the future, the advantage of new media and traditional media may be combined, and pandemic information will not be omitted, concealed, or falsely reported, so it will further expand the transmission speed and scope of pandemic information [4]. Traditional media have the advantage of extensive information channels and excellent professional news teams, and the information they release on the pandemic is more authoritative and influential. The reporting on the pandemic through TV, radio, newspaper, magazines and other traditional media helps the public to have a deeper understanding of the pandemic, avoid believing, spreading and fabricating rumors as much as possible. However, traditional media are weak in timeliness and interactivity, and do not spread the latest pandemic information promptly on time.

The speed and scope of the spread of the pandemic are greatly limited which will aggravate the panic of the public under the severe situation of the pandemic. Therefore, traditional media and new media should be combined to turn the public from passive to active in obtaining pandemic information. In WeChat, Weibo, QQ that kind of platform has a variety of forms such as video, images, sound, can be more widely popular to the public on a more

comprehensive pandemic prevention and control knowledge, effectively improving the efficiency and quality of the public's grasp of pandemic information. The spread of pandemic information through multiple channels, online and offline interaction, and diversified ways of pandemic transmission will help win the battle against pandemic prevention and control.

In recent years, the use of new media is increasing greatly and because of the pandemic, people spend most of their time on the internet. Locks, fears of infection and restrictions on face-to-face transactions are all driver greater online use. Due to the "fragmented" reading experience of new media, the public's understanding of the pandemic is fragmented. In order to meet the audience's demand, this kind of news needs people to strengthen deep analysis of events and professional interpretation. Not just satisfied with reporting the latest development of the pandemic, but also enrich the level of the event, analyze it in multi-angle. Let the audience have a more clear understanding of the pandemic. Moreover, there are people spreading rumors and extreme opinions about the pandemic which is not true on Facebook and Twitter.

In the future, those companies may need to implement stricter content regulations or respond to government regulations. As the subject, people should endow the new media with a humanistic spirit, humanize the network, and become a correct way to drive the network. If the values are missing and the right values cannot be endowed, people will be conquered by the network, alienated by the network, and become the vassal and slave of the network. The network is the embodiment of a human's essential power, and the human is the main body that uses a network.

4. CONCLUSION

Through searching for the information, it is found that the rapid development of new media is not only beneficial. While bringing benefits that let more people post positive content, such as how to prevent the epidemic and how to adjust their mentality at home, it also brings a lot of disadvantages. For example, some people who want to get attention from others spread rumors about the pandemic, causing panic among the masses and increasing pandemic prevention work.

There are also politicians in Iraq who are spreading for their own benefit that a certain drug has a therapeutic effect on the coronavirus. People who do not have enough knowledge will fall into the trap. In the future, the advantage of new media and traditional media may be combined, companies may need to implement stricter content regulations or respond to government regulations.

In this paper, there is something that this paper needs to be improved. There should be more research data to confirm options and more news examples to help people

better understand the content. Research on the development trend of new media is very necessary.

If really do a good job online ideological and political education, we must first understand the trend, follow the trend, and guide the trend on this basis. Then, the trend prediction does not start from zero, it will review the development of the new media environment in the past. After carrying the development trend of new media, the research on the impact of its value concept is also very important.

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