

The Role of the Official Media Against Circulating Rumors and Media Disinformation About the Corona Pandemic (A'keed Observatory as a Model)

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Abstract

The study aimed to identify the role of the official media against the circulating rumors and media misinformation about the Corona pandemic, through the Akeed Media Observatory in Jordan. In this study, the researcher adopted the descriptive and analytical approach, as he monitored the role of the A'keed Media Observatory to confront rumors about the Corona pandemic. The study sample was chosen from the media workers in Akeed Observatory, and their number reached (30) media workers, and in order to achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher developed a questionnaire with the aim of identifying the role of the Akeed Media Observatory in Jordan to address rumors about the Corona pandemic, and the study reached a conclusion that the Akeed Media Observatory in Jordan achieved a large and essential role in confronting circulating rumors and disinformation about the Corona pandemic. The study recommended the development of mechanisms and media strategies to address the rumors about the Corona pandemic.

Keywords: Rumors, Corona virus (Covid 19), Media Disinformation, Akeed Media Observatory in Jordan

1. Introduction

It is self-evident that any part of the world is exposed to crises at any time, and such crises may occur as a result of many reasons, and whatever the cause, the crises have great effects and damages on the material and human levels (Bapuji et al, 2020). Many health and social problems arise from crises in many rich and poor countries alike, but their effects are more severe and destructive for poor countries whose material, technical and planning capabilities in relation to the health system are limited and weak (Harari, 2020).

It is worth noting that no country is immune to the dangers of crises. This is a fact that no one can ignore or overlook. No country, society or individual is safe from the effects of crises (Harris, 2020). Hence, decision-makers must be prepared to face crises and mitigate their effects and be well-prepared through the application of prevention measures (Stechemesser et al, 2020).

It should be noted that crises affect the normal life of the afflicted society and leave it in a state of total or partial inability to meet the necessary needs of its members, and often the crisis leaves affected individuals who are in dire need of urgent necessary health and economic services (Taranova et al, 2018). From this standpoint, the nature of the crisis is that it is characterized by severity and surprise, and this is what happened in the world about the phenomenon of the spread of the Corona virus, which has killed hundreds of thousands in the world (AL Mahirah, 2020).

On the other hand, the Corona virus is one of a large family of viruses known to cause illnesses ranging from colds to more severe diseases, such as the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) (World Health Organization, 2020). The Corona virus was identified in 2019, in Wuhan, China, as this virus represents a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans before. However, global reports have shown the concept of this phenomenon, its causes, and its impact on societies in terms of health, and so far, no treatment has been found. It is also possible to identify the Corona virus by genetic sequence (United Nations, 2020).

2. Background

Information is a fundamental resource for citizens in our society. It is a valuable mechanism for guiding people, especially in highly complex situations such as the one generated by the Covid-19 pandemic. In this sense, information is a tool that can help reduce uncertainty and anxiety. Conversely, it might increase panic and chaos.

Acting on the wrong information can kill. In the first 3 months of 2020, nearly 6 000 people around the globe were hospitalized because of coronavirus misinformation, recent research suggests. At its extreme, death can be the tragic outcome of what the World Health Organization has termed the "infodemic", an overabundance of information — some accurate, some not — that spreads alongside a disease outbreak.

As stated by the WHO, the COVID-19 outbreak and response has been accompanied by a massive infodemic: an overabundance of information – some accurate and some not – that makes it hard for people to find trustworthy sources and reliable guidance when they need it. Infodemic refers to a large increase in the volume of information associated with a specific topic and whose growth can occur exponentially in a short period of time due to a specific incident, such as the current pandemic. In this situation, misinformation and rumors appear on the scene, along with manipulation of information with doubtful intent. In the information age, this phenomenon is amplified through social networks, spreading farther and faster like a virus (Zarocostas, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic represents a substantial challenge to global human well-being. Not unlike other challenges (e.g., global warming), the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic depends on the actions of individual citizens and, therefore, the quality of the information to which people are exposed. Unfortunately, however, misinformation about COVID-19 has proliferated (Frenkel, Alba, & Zhong, 2020; Russonello, 2020).

However, in the context of the events taking place in the world concerning the spread of the Corona virus, there are standards related to the role of the official media against circulating rumors and media misinformation about the Corona pandemic. So, it should be noted that the current situation, and the new reality related to the role of the official media against the circulating rumors and media misinformation about the Corona pandemic and its future possibilities created important and dangerous challenges. Hence, the official media in Jordan have the responsibility to confront them and deal with them in the present and future, through Akeed Observatory, especially with the expectations of increasing severity and acceleration of these challenges in the future in light of the developments and changes that the world is witnessing about the Corona pandemic.

Based on all of the above, the mechanisms of the official media role against the circulating rumors and media misinformation about the Corona pandemic through Akeed Observatory should be more careful to confront rumors about the pandemic, as Akeed Observatory, which is one of the Jordanian official media, must be responsible for refuting the rumors and fabrications by presenting the facts in its time. Moreover, it should work on the development of public awareness, and immunization from psychological sensitivity in general, and rumors in particular, as the Akeed Observatory works with its various tools and media to continuously educate individuals in the Jordanian society to establish their faith and confidence in official and government communications, as well as holding seminars, lectures, discussions and sessions that contribute to eliminating rumors About the Coronavirus Pandemic.

2.1 Problem of the Study

Double rhetoric, bilateral standards, media disinformation and rumors about the Coronavirus play a big role in creating the stereotype about the spread of this virus (Rahardi, 2020). It is worth noting that the media, with all its trends, used the psychological factor of the word and terminology to influence others (Ali, 2020). Accordingly, there are rumors that aim to create confusion, to create a state of imbalance in society and to undermine confidence in the institutions, pillars and joints of the state in general, as we are now about the rumors about the Corona pandemic, which aim to change trends and destabilize society in terms of economic, social and health.

On the other hand, rumors about the Corona virus seek to occupy part of the citizen's mind and direct his thinking and direction, in mysterious circumstances (Hou et al, 2020). These rumors make people in a state of apprehension, suspicion, suspicion and fear, which is what is measured in the state of our societies now, as everyone fears for their future, the fate of their homeland and their health (Abdoli, 2020). The rumor increases and becomes more convincing when it is adopted by people who occupy parliamentary or trade union positions, meaning they are not affiliated with the government or any of the official pillars of the state (Lin et al, 2021). It should not be borne in mind that rumor is a weapon of those affected and monopolists (AL Mahirah, 2020). These rumors aim to confuse the public opinion to create a state of turmoil and impede all health efforts around reducing the spread of Coronavirus infections (Zhu et al, 2020). From this standpoint, diagnostic processes facilitate treatment. So, one of the effective tools to counter rumors is to create confidence between the media and the people by providing them with correct news and full readiness by the government to refute any rumor by presenting the facts, and moving through knowledge platforms in raising the health level (Jalali&Mohammadi, 2020). As this comes through the Akeed Media Observatory in Jordan, it is considered the credibility of Jordanian media, which is one of the projects of the Jordan Media Institute, and a tool for media accountability, as it tracks the credibility of what is published and broadcast through the Jordanian media.

Experience has shown that the media can play a clear role in persuading others to follow a certain behavior in their lives that they would not do without that idea, and the responsibility now remains on the national media outlets to collect

their methods and use them in interactive activities that take place within an institutionalized and organized context to express government opinions or decisions to achieve higher national interests away from deception and media misinformation (Islam et al, 2020). And based on the previous considerations, the main questioning of the study problem comes, which is as follows:

What is the role of the official media against circulating rumors and media misinformation about the Corona pandemic (Akeed Observatory as a model)?

2.2 Questions of Study

1. What is the role of the Jordanian official media, through Aakeed Observatory, against the circulated rumors about the Corona pandemic?
2. What is the role of media misinformation about the Corona pandemic?
3. What are the ways to put an end to the spread of rumors about the Corona pandemic?

2.3 Objectives of the Study

1. Identifying the role of the Jordanian official media, through Aakeed Observatory, against the rumors circulating about the Corona pandemic.
2. Identifying media misinformation about the Corona pandemic.
3. Identifying the ways to put an end to the spread of rumors about the Corona pandemic.
4. Identifying the perception proposed by the Akeem Media Observatory in Jordan regarding proposals that would ensure limiting the spread of rumors about the Corona pandemic.

2.4 Significance of the Study

1. Demonstrating the role played by the Akeed Media Observatory in Jordan to counter the spread of rumors and media misinformation about the Corona pandemic.
2. Providing media information through the Akeed Media Observatory in Jordan that inform political decision-makers and media workers to develop a vision about media misinformation about the Corona pandemic.
3. This study may contribute to clarifying the role of the Jordanian official media in reaching the pillars and components of confronting rumors about the Corona pandemic.
4. Submit proposals for how to avoid media misinformation and destructive rumors and face the challenges and problems resulting from the spread of the Corona pandemic, by using the Akeed Media Observatory in Jordan as an effective media tool in raising awareness about rumors related to the Corona pandemic.

2.5 Terms of Study

Role: it is an expected behavior in a specific situation, taking into account the prevailing social norms in the group, and taking into account their aspirations, requirements, and social organization (Sharadgah, 2016). The researcher defines it procedurally as “the tasks of the media in giving pictures, facts, messages and opinions about the Corona pandemic and avoiding media misinformation.

Media: is the collection, storage, processing and dissemination of news, data, pictures, facts, messages, opinions, and comments required to know current incidents and to cover events with impartiality, accuracy and credibility, in order to gain the public's respect (Sharadgah, 2017).

The rumor: is “the publication of a novel to interpret events and transmit them from person to person related to something, event or issue of public concern, as these rumors usually lack a reliable source that carries evidence of the authenticity of the news (Nguyen, 2017).

The media role of Akeed Observatory: It is known as employing important events and issues, and following up on their developments and their repercussions on the Jordanian society, in order to meet the natural human need to know the surrounding environment, and to know the current events around it, and the media content in Akeed Observatory is almost the main prevailing source today in the media which is supposed to cover these events with impartiality, accuracy and credibility about the Corona pandemic.

Prevention standards according to Akeed Observatory: These are the criteria that are represented in a safe environment free from risks to the individual's life or safety, as well as a series of procedures, rules and regulations with a legislative framework, which the AKEED Media Observatory seeks to demonstrate their importance and how they are concerned with human health and their preservation of risks Coronavirus infection.

Delimitations of the Study:

Spatial and temporal delimitations: The study instruments were applied to the Akeed Media Observatory in Jordan in 2021

Human delimitations: The study instruments were applied to media professionals in the Akeed Media Observatory in Jordan.

Objectives delimitations: The study was limited to identifying the role of the official media against circulating rumors and media misinformation about the Corona pandemic, and the study adopted Akeed observatory as a model.

THE FIELD STUDY

Methodology of the Study: In this study, the researcher followed the descriptive and analytical approach, as he monitored the role of the AKEED Media Observatory to confront rumors about the Corona pandemic.

Sample of the Study: The study sample was chosen taking into account the percentages of their distribution in the original community from the media workers in the Akeed Media Observatory in Jordan, and their number reached (30) media workers.

Study Instrument: To achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher prepared a questionnaire with the aim of identifying the role of the Akeed Media Observatory in Jordan to address rumors about the Corona pandemic.

By calculating the correlation coefficients. The following table explains the procedures for calculating the validity of internal consistency.

Table (1). Pearson correlation coefficients of the questionnaire with the total degree

Questionnaire	correlation coefficients	Value of Significance
The role of the Akeed Media Observatory in Jordan to address rumors about the Corona pandemic.	0.739**	0.000

It is evident from Table (1) that the correlation coefficient of the resolution degrees reached (0.739) degrees, which is a high correlation coefficient, and it is statistically significant at the level of significance (0.000), and this indicates that the questionnaire has sincerity of internal consistency.

To verify the stability of the resolution, the researcher followed Cronbach's Alpha method, and the following table shows the stability parameters of the resolution.

Table (2). Cronbach alpha coefficient of resolution stability

Questionnaire	Cronbach alpha coefficient
The role of the Akeed Media Observatory in Jordan to address rumors about the Corona pandemic.	0.791
Total Reliability	0.841

Table (2) shows that the totalreliability of the questionnaire reached (0.841), which is a high reliabilitycoefficient.

3. Results and Discussion

The researcher analyzed the results of his study in the light of the opinions of a sample of media professionals in the Akeed Media Observatory in Jordan, so that the main question of the study was represented in the following:

What is the role of the official media against circulating rumors and media misinformation about the Corona pandemic (Akeed Observatory as a model)?

To answer this question, the arithmetic means and standard deviations were calculated for the responses of (sample individuals), and the following table explains that.

Table (3). Means, standard deviations, and ranks of the Media College students' responses to the role of official media against circulating rumors and media disinformation about the Corona pandemic

No.	Items	Means	Standard Deviations	Rank	Degree of Influence
7	The Akeed Media Observatory is based on sequential steps taken on organized scientific foundations to counter media misinformation about the Corona pandemic	4.12	0.834	1	High
10	The Akeed Media Observatory seeks to develop a new media approach to ensure that citizens are not convinced of rumors about the Coronavirus	4.09	0.855	2	High
9	The Akeed Media Observatory is based on broadcasting a true healthy culture about the Corona pandemic.	4.04	1.282	3	High
4	The Akeed Media Observatory is considered an effective tool in creating public opinion it is mentally affecting the opinions regarding the Corona pandemic	4.01	1.325	4	High
5	The Akeed Media Observatory offers concepts about rumors about the Corona pandemic	3.97	1.462	5	High
12	Akeed Media Observatory is a media that influences the ideas of Jordanian society.	3.95		6	High
1	The Akeed Media Observatory mobilizes public opinion to do something positively or negatively and broadcast specific feelings that move citizens towards a specific behavior or decision.	3.92	1.624	7	High
8	The Akeed Media Observatory is an active partner that greatly contributes to the health awareness process by presenting safety and prevention measures against the Coronavirus.	3.87	1.267	8	High
3	The Akeed Media Observatory is working on developing tools and means of communication according to the most sophisticated means of modern technology to counter the spread of rumors about the Corona virus.	3.72	0.870	9	High
2	The Akeed Media Observatory works to develop appropriate knowledge of the recipients to form a true picture of the Coronavirus	3.64	1.279	10	High
11	The Akeed Media Observatory works to produce health and preventive programs according to the new roles of the media.	3.57	0.811	11	High
6	The Akeed Media Observatory is keen to develop a healthy and intellectual culture of the recipient about the spread of rumors about the Corona virus	3.51	0.834	12	High
Total Mean		3.87	0.738	-	High

From a review of Table (3), it becomes clear that the arithmetic mean of the responses of the media workers in the Akeed Media Observatory in Jordan about the role of the official media against the circulating rumors and media misinformation about the Corona pandemic all reached (3.87) and it is at the high level, and the arithmetic means for this role ranged between (3.51-4.12), between the lowest and highest arithmetic mean.

This result can be due to the fact that the Akeed Media Observatory in Jordan forms new roles in shaping public opinion about the Corona pandemic, just as the Akeed Media Observatory in Jordan seeks to clarify that rumors can be used to shatter society social, economically and healthily. Akeed Observatory also explains that the rumor is used in media disinformation and broadcast false facts about the spread of the Coronavirus, and the researcher also attributes this result to the fact that the Akeed Media Observatory contributes to creating public opinion, taking into account the consideration of the degrees of mental and behavioral influence of the recipient, in addition to being an effective media tool that takes place in the broad spectrum of social, health and economic activities in Akeed Media Observatory publications and media articles.

4. Recommendations

1. Developing mechanisms and media strategies to counter the rumors about the Corona pandemic.
2. The necessity of preparing media programs to raise the level of employees of the Akeed Media Observatory in Jordan and inform them of the social, economic and health problems in the Jordanian society.
3. Preparing programs broadcast in different languages to identify the problems resulting from rumors about the Coronavirus.
4. The necessity of adopting the AkeedMedia Observatory in Jordan with objectivity in dealing with various issues and problems, and raising the level of its credibility in publishing news and following up on events around the Corona pandemic.
5. Establishing an informational information base on the spread of rumors related to the Coronavirus, and working on analyzing that information to ensure that these rumors are surrounded and contested by objective media evidence.
6. Directing community and health awareness and culture tools towards the Corona pandemic by explaining prevention and safety measures.
7. Adopting comprehensive media programs aimed at developing general national awareness, consecrating love for the homeland and the importance of belonging to it among society, and confronting what is proposed by the media in terms of fallacies and prejudiced ideas to negatively affect the recipients.
8. Presenting talk shows and discussing the spread of rumors about the Corona pandemic, with the aim of educating and immunizing the public.
9. Creating electronic blogs - linked to the website of all media, especially to Akeedobservatory to refute the rumors about the Corona pandemic.

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