

The New Media And The Influence Of The Spread Of Fake News During The Beginning Of Covid-19 Pandemic: Analysis And Verification Of Web Contents

Gana Hassina

University of Algiers 3, faculty of Information and Communication Sciences, research group PRFU: Symbolic violence in the new communicative environment
hassinagn@gmail.com

Received:03/12/2022 Accepted:01/05/2023 Published: 07/06/2023

Abstract:

The study aims to reveal the role of social networking sites in spreading fake news by addressing models of news related to the spread of the Corona virus and ways to address it through various traditional and new media platforms, such as official media and some international bodies, and knowing the means used and the sources relied upon in the news fabricated about the virus as well as its coping mechanisms. The study relied on the descriptive analytical approach, the content analysis tool, and on the intentional method of sampling, which is a sample of news issued by some news sites affiliated with Arabic-speaking media institutions, and a sample of news published on social media in the period following the emergence of the epidemic

Keywords: New media,Fake news,Corona virus,Social Media.

ملخص:

تهدف الدراسة إلى الكشف عن دور مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي، في نشر الأخبار الملققة، عن طريق التطرق إلى نماذج لأخبار متعلقة انتشار فيروس كورونا وطرق التصدي لها عبر مختلف المنصات الإعلامية التقليدية منها والجديدة، كالإعلام الرسمي وبعض الهيئات الدولية، ومعرفة الوسائل المستخدمة والمصادر المعتمد عليها في الأخبار الملققة حول الفيروس وكذلك آليات مواجهتها. واعتمدت الدراسة على المنهج الوصفي التحليلي وعلى أداة تحليل المحتوى، وعلى الأسلوب القصدي في المعاينة وتمثل في عينة من الأخبار الصادرة عن بعض المواقع الإخبارية

التابعة لمؤسسات إعلامية طقة للغة العربية، وعينة من الأخبار المنشورة عبر مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي في الفترة التي تلت ظهور الـ. وقد بينت الدراسة التحليلية أن غالبية الأخبار المتداولة حول فيروس كورونا تتعلق بطرق انتشاره وتفشي المرض، وان الأخبار المتداولة والمشكوك في صحتها تم الرد عليها أو تصحيحها أو دحضها من طرف الجهات الرسمية ومن طرف المصادر الإعلامية كالقنوات والمواقع الإخبارية الموثوقة .

كلمات دالة : الإعلام الجديد، الأخبار الكاذبة، فيروس كورونا ، مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي.

Introduction

The health crisis brought about by Covid-19 has generated a heightened need for information in response to a situation of uncertainty and high emotional load, in which fake news and other informative content have grown dramatically.

Research shows that social media has become a major news source for most people; while it represents excessive communication, its mechanism allows for widespread disinformation. With over 3 billion users worldwide, social media is undoubtedly revolutionizing the way we communicate with each other. This may be convenient, easy and cheap to access information and stay informed, but at the same time, it is a minefield for misinformation and fake news.

I- Methodological procedures of the study:

I-1- The problem of the study:

The extent of unreliable information on social media is worrying and has certainly become questionable, as it is full of real-time news about various important and controversial events, especially in times of crisis and disaster. The cause of concern is not surprising since many users heavily rely on social networks as their primary source of news and share it with others.

The recent global crises have shown a prominent and even influential presence of social networks, as they were the key to solving or defusing and containing many crises before they erupted on a large scale, as happened recently during the outbreak of the Corona virus in China.

In this situation, the traditional official and private media have been floundering between facts and methods of processing them and false news, which is characterized by rapid spread and a high degree of acceptance by the recipient, unfortunately, and has found itself in a situation that requires confrontation or confrontation, censorship and

reliance at times. The spread of the phenomenon of fabricated news has imposed a new challenge facing the media of all kinds and diversity between traditional and modern, as this has negatively affected the professionalism of traditional media while modern media have built trust between them and their users and have even become in many countries the first source of news and information, according to some statistics and opinion polls.

In a phenomenon triggered by the health crisis that swept China and the rest of the world with the spread of the Corona virus in late January 2020, the official media did not succeed in dealing with and containing the crisis but seemed troubled in conveying the correct information, lost between contradictory sources and news available through the new multimedia.

With the intensification of the global health crisis, the traditional media seemed to somewhat lose the trust of the public, which did not obtain accurate, adequate and credible information, and with the failure of official institutions to communicate about the virus and actual cases, the field was widely opened to fake news, which spread through the Internet, especially social networking sites, in the absence of any official reaction, lack of information and its mismatch with reality.

Based on the previous presentation, we present the following research problem:

What is the role of the Internet in spreading fake news about the Corona virus? What is the situation like for traditional media, including official media?

Sub questions:

Sub questions:

- 1-What is circulating on the Internet regarding the Corona virus?
- 2-What are the most used methods of spreading fake news?
- 3- What are the goals and backgrounds behind the spread of fabricated news about the Corona virus?
- 4-What are the mechanisms for confronting the fabricated news about the Corona virus?

I-2-Study methodology: The current study relies on the descriptive analytical approach and the content analysis tool with the selection of study categories as follows:

I-2-1-Subject category (what was said?): This category is divided into the following:

- A- The spread of the epidemic and its modes of transmission
- b- The source of the virus
- C - Finding a vaccine or treatment for the epidemic

I-2-2- The category of form and methods (how was it said?): This category is divided into the following:

- A- Creating fake cases related to the spread of the virus.
- B - Wrong media practices, whether intentionally or unintentionally. C - Lack of accuracy and honesty
- D - Relying on false data, fabricated data and analyses

I- 2-3- The category of objectives and motives for publishing fabricated news: This category is divided into the following:

- A- The political conflict environment and psychological and biological warfare b- Economic objectives
- C- profit goals through commercial advertisements
- D - Characteristics and characteristics of fabricated news and the lack of experience of the recipient.

I-2-4- The category of coping mechanisms: This category is divided into the following:

- A- Information vigilance and prompt official responses.
- B- Strategies for dealing with and managing the Corona epidemic crisis.
- C - deterrent measures d- Technical and practical measures.

I-3- the Sample: The current study relied on the intentional method of sampling, which is represented in a sample of the news issued by some news sites of Arabic-speaking media institutions, and a sample of the news published through social networking sites (YouTube - Twitter - Facebook) with a comparison with a sample of news issued by the

authorities official and international organizations, as available through their official websites.

I-4- Study Concepts:

- **The concept of new media** : New media are forms of media that are computational and rely on computers and the Internet for redistribution. Some examples of new media are computer animations, video games, human-computer interfaces, interactive computer installations, websites, and virtual worlds. (Manovich, Lev.2003 p13)

New media are often contrasted to "old media", such as television, radio, and print media, although scholars in communication and media studies have criticized inflexible distinctions based on oldness and novelty. New media does not include analog broadcast television programs, feature films, magazines, or books – unless they contain technologies that enable digital generative or interactive processes(Manovich, Lev.2003; p25)

- **The concept of fake news:** David M.J. Lazer (2018) Identifies the concept of “fake news” as “fabricated information that simulates the content of the news media in form but not in content or organizational process, as the editorial rules and processes of the media lack the element of accuracy and credibility, and the fake news overlaps with other news to cause disturbances In information, such as disinformation and intentionally promoting false or misleading information to deceive people. (Lazer, 2018: 1094).

Fake news is divided into two main categories: misinformation and sarcasm. The first category: misleading news, is false information that contains misleading elements present in its content or context on purpose and aims to influence in an inappropriate manner in attitudes and behaviour, ensuring that The audience may think and act differently than if they were aware of the correct news. The second category: satirical news, includes news that relies on satire for the purpose of entertainment. Satire may be either partially or completely false, and it is also based on a certain degree of facts. The goal of satirical news is not deception. audience until they see it real, but to entertain and make them laugh.” (Guo, Vargo:2018,p3)

• **Corona virus:** Corona viruses are a large family of viruses that may cause disease in animals and humans. Several corona viruses are known to cause respiratory infections in humans that range in severity from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The newly discovered corona virus causes COVID-19 (WHO website).

II- Viewing and analyzing the field study on the fabricated news related to the Corona virus on the Internet

II-1- Analyzing the results for the topic category (news circulating about Corona on the Internet): There is a lot of speculation, misinformation, and false news on the Internet about how the virus originated, its causes, and how it spreads. In this study, we will try to limit a sample of fabricated news by monitoring its denial or correction by official agencies, international organizations, or even from news sites with reliable sources by arranging it according to The basis of the amount of news that the study monitored for each topic. In this category, we relied on the sum of the news that we were exposed to through the websites of official organizations and media institutions, as well as the personal accounts of individuals and institutions on social networks. That is as follows:

II-1-1- News related to the spread of the epidemic and its transmission methods: As the Corona virus spreads around the world, obtaining information about the disease becomes more important than ever, especially in the age of social networking sites that place a heavy responsibility on sites such as Facebook and YouTube. These are the platforms that billions of people now rely on for news, but at the same time they really provide fertile ground for those who want to spread misinformation. Among the false information that the official authorities tried to correct later, there is what is related to the methods of transmission, and there is what is related to the limits of the spread of the Corona virus in terms of infections and the number of deaths, which we list as follows:

II-1-1-1- Regarding the methods of transmission: Among the news that has been fabricated and circulated widely through the websites and personal accounts that we have seen are those related to the ways of transmission of the virus and its spread among infected people, for example the following: - That there are foods that cause the virus, as the pioneers of social networking sites transmitted a post saying that some

products are contaminated with the virus. The message spread around the world accusing foods of being made in the vicinity of Wuhan, but the foods on the menu include recipes from Japan, Korea and Indonesia. The official authorities denied this misleading information, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in America said that it had not been proven that the virus was transmitted through contaminated food or air but rather through respiratory droplets, such as those resulting from sneezing or coughing. The fact that the "Corona virus" is transmitted from contact with animals and eating processed meat. Media reports have spread, linking the disease to eating the meat of some birds and animals. Therefore, some competent authorities tried to explain the methods of spread and emphasize that "there is more than one type of corona virus, there is a family of the virus that is endemic in wild animals and is not transmitted to humans, while the other type is that which infects humans through the respiratory system, and is transmitted through air, dust and direct contact." With the infected person, As for animals, they are completely far from transmitting the disease because the animal corona is completely different from human corona, and there is no link between them."

- You will find others who have shared links to websites and videos linking the Corona virus to the emergence of 5G in the region from which the disease emerged in China. In the title of an article entitled "News Commentary", we find the following: "The 5G was launched in Wuhan weeks before the outbreak of the Corona virus." Other YouTube videos share complex conspiracy theories, including the thesis that the Diamond Princess cruise ship, whose passengers were quarantined, was vulnerable to the virus because it used 5G technology for its communications. A lot of news has also spread about other ways of spreading. Below is what the World Health Organization published on its official website as a response to some of the questions that come to mind of any reader, trying to correct everything that is wrong or exaggerated after the rapid spread of the Corona virus around the world and ways to prevent it. . Including, for example, the following: The risk of contracting the emerging corona virus as a result of contact with things, including coins, banknotes, or credit cards, is very low. Preliminary information indicates that the emerging corona virus can survive on surfaces for a few hours or more. And something can be contaminated with the emerging corona virus through an infected person if he coughs, sneezes, or touches him, and when people infected with the virus cough or sneeze, the virus

is transmitted in droplets that can travel a certain distance from that person. It also cannot be transmitted by mosquito bites.

We find the Doctors Without Borders website offering and answering some answers regarding the spread of the virus, so what is the degree of transmission of corona infection? And the answer is that our understanding of the virus and disease is still in the evolving stage. It appears that the virus can be spread through the cough of infected people, but the extent to which the virus is transmitted effectively from another person is not yet fully understood. (Doctors Without Borders website)

II-1-1-2- Concerning statistics and the number of infections and deaths: In a state of panic, social media users circulate the latest news related to the spread of the virus, some of which are documented, and some of which are classified as false news. Especially about the number of infections and deaths, but the fabrication in such a case appeared more on social media, especially at the beginning of the virus outbreak, with the media blackout practiced by the Chinese official authorities in an attempt to contain the crisis. One Hal Turner Show website, for example, cited exaggerated false figures for the number of people affected by the virus, citing 23 million people in quarantine and 112,000 dead, but fact-checking website Lead Stories confirmed that these figures were incorrect. Many news was published about the discrepancy of the officially declared figures and reality, as the British "Daily Meer" published figures belonging to the Chinese company "Inchent", the second largest company in China, in which it announced that the number of infected people has reached 154023 while 58,924 people died, and these numbers are 10 times greater than the numbers announced by official sources, which indicate that the number of infected is 14,446 and 304 deaths (Akhbar Al-Youm portal).

News also spread about the people most vulnerable to infection with the emerging Corona virus are the elderly, which raised the concerns of this group, and later explanations were provided by specialists that the virus affects all ages, but the elderly and people with chronic diseases (such as asthma, diabetes, and heart disease) are most vulnerable to complications and death in the event of infection with the virus.

We also find a kind of news that indicates that the situation in Wuhan Province is very catastrophic in the videos spread on YouTube by Chinese or immigrants in China who indicated that the death rate is much more than announced, and some videos showed hysteria and congestion

among some infected people and strange behaviors that led some of them to contribute to spreading the virus by spreading their droplets in public places.

II-1-2- News related to the source of the virus:

II-1-2-1- Its source is an animal corona virus: which contributed to the circulation of news indicating that the virus had an animal source, that there were many reports that it appeared in the Wuhan region in central China, which is known for a huge market for wild and marine animals, including fish and shellfish, and even rats and beavers. and snakes before moving later to other countries. And the news that referred to many animal sources of the virus varied. At first, reports indicated that snakes in particular, may be behind the spread of the virus due to the similarity in the genetic infiltration of the virus with that that affects snakes; then at a later time, it was said that it was bats, and according to previous data, bats may It was transmitted to snakes, and snakes transmitted it to humans, and an investigation of the Wuhan Institute of Virology found that the genetic makeup of the new virus was 96% identical to the type found in bats, which were also the original source of SARS. (Future Health website) In light of this information, videos of Chinese people eating bats have spread over the past few weeks, and a video shows a Chinese woman eating a bat. However, bats are not a common food in China, and the search for the exact source of the virus is still ongoing.

Some also blamed Chinese eating habits for the outbreak of the disease on many platforms because they eat the products of these animals, and news emerged claiming that China is completely banned from eating the meat of these animals and closing them to the markets for trading them, and eating wild animals in Chinese culture is considered a luxury, because of its scarcity and cost. Some TCM practitioners also believe that eating exotic organisms can cure certain diseases and increase "male potency."

In official and scientific bodies, it has not been ruled out that wild animals are the source, but not necessarily by eating their products. It is known that 70% of new viral diseases similar to pneumonia originate in animals, such as SARS and MERS, whose family belongs to the new virus.

It is noteworthy that some sites reported that the World Health Organization stated that the emerging Corona virus is a zoonotic virus transmitted to humans when in close contact with farm animals or wild animals infected with the virus. The WHO said in data that evidence

strongly suggests "the virus is linked to exposure to a seafood market in the Chinese city of Wuhan." However, by looking at the organization's website, we do not find an explicit statement about that, as a documentary film shown on the Chinese television channel showed that the first cases that were detected were carriers of a virus completely different from what is known to specialists and were not related to the Wuhan market, which negates the hypothesis of that transmission, and it did not appear on any official site and on any official channel an official announcement to prevent or prohibit wild animal meat, but it showed the same film The documentary depicts the closure of the Wuhan market as part of precautionary measures against the spread of the virus.

In the same context, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) published on its official website its readiness to support countries in their efforts to promote a clean food environment. Although the novel corona virus is not known to be a foodborne disease, the usual good practice regarding animal handling and good hygiene throughout the food chain is essential for public health and will help prevent and control infectious diseases (FAO website).

II-1-2-2. The corona virus is a biological weapon: One of the baseless theories that have been circulating on social media recently is that the virus is a secret biological weapons program in Wuhan or that it was smuggled from a Canadian laboratory. But there is no evidence to support either. The Canadian laboratory that has been talked about is the National Microbial Laboratory in Winnipeg, which 2013 investigated coronavirus infections. But as mentioned before, there are many types of the corona, and the case that the laboratory was studying is MERS virus, meaning Middle East respiratory syndrome (Al-Youm Al-Sabea).

- Since the first hours of the spread of the new "Corona" virus, the conspiracy theory began to promote hypotheses that the virus is nothing but a virus "created" in laboratories as a biological weapon, either against China by a hostile country such as the United States or created by China and spread wrongly, and the American "Zero Hedge" website published the statements of a Chinese scientist based in the city of Wuhan, in which he said that he was the one who created the new "Corona" virus as a "weapon". . The site also published the details and personal data of the Chinese researcher, which includes his name, photo, email and phone number, which made many sites question the credibility of that information. Indeed, after that, the management of the "Twitter" platform

took strict action by banning the account of the American site, accusing it of promoting fabricated news and stories regarding the Corona virus.

But the Washington Times also published a report that reinforces that conspiracy theory, stating that the corona virus was "created in a military laboratory in Wuhan," run by the Chinese government and affiliated with the Wuhan Institute of Virology, and was looking into using the virus as a "military biological weapon." But that hypothesis has also fallen because its sole basis is statements attributed to a former Israeli intelligence officer, Danny Shoham, whom she said had experience in biological warfare. The former Israeli intelligence officer told the newspaper: "It is possible that some institutes affiliated with this laboratory were working on the study and development of Chinese biological weapons, and other outlets may have picked up the same idea and followed their path and mistakenly led to the spread of the virus." (Arabic Sputnik website).

In the opposite direction, some sides accuse the US of this, with political commentators in Russia suggesting that the virus is an "American biological weapon" targeting Moscow and Beijing. Russia's Zvezda website, funded by the Defense Department, published an article late last month titled "Corona virus: U.S. Biological Warfare Against Russia and China."

The article begins by presenting some of the losses suffered by the Chinese economy due to Corona, to support its evidence about the "American conspiracy," adding, "This aims to weaken Beijing in the next round of trade negotiations with Washington."

The material then reviews the controversy over Russian suspicions about the presence of U.S. biological research laboratories in several countries, such as Georgia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan, despite America's signing of the Geneva Convention on Biological Weapons in 1975. "These laboratories hide malicious intent, especially after reports spread that the US Biolaboratory in Georgia has tested lethal biological weapons on Georgian citizens."

For its part, Al-Mayadeen TV also published what it described as "suspicious facts", which may show the involvement of the United States in the spread of the new Corona virus in China. She pointed out that the spread of the virus coincided with the arrival of a large US military delegation, consisting of 300 personnel, arriving in the city of Wuhan in

the Chinese province of Hubei on October 19, 2019, to participate in a military games festival hosted by China and held there. On November 2, 2019, the first case of corona virus was recorded in that province and later spread rapidly in December.

But the American magazine "Foreign Policy" also published a lengthy report in which it refuted all these conspiracy theories, saying that the Corona virus is not "created" in a laboratory and is not a "biological weapon. The American magazine said that the conspiracy theory began to appear on small sites, which talked about that Canadian researchers sold this strain of the "Corona" virus to China to develop it as a biological weapon, but it got out of control. David Fisman, professor of epidemiology at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto, said: "The corona virus is mysterious and moves fast and can cause panic, and we live in an era of emerging infectious diseases, and there is an attempt to dramatize the numbers of victims, to promote conspiracy theories, we are facing a catastrophe and not a biological weapon, it is a major shift in viral activity on the planet and not by humans, but by nature itself." Mia Magumder, of the Health Informatics Program at Boston Children's Hospital, said: "It's nothing to do with a biological weapon, and it has to be treated as a constant of nature.

The magazine also quoted the US Center for Disease Control as saying that after studying all the cases received and the type of virus, there is no evidence to support the idea that it is a "created" virus in laboratories or a biological weapon, but rather that it is just an infectious "virus" that is transmitted to humans and mutates very quickly. (Arabic Sputnik)

II-1-3- News related to finding a vaccine:

Researchers around the world are struggling to discover a vaccine against the corona virus that has become a health threat. Just days after Chinese scientists presented the genetic map of the corona virus, scientists along with biotech and vaccine companies are racing against time to discover a vaccine for the virus. Several posts on Facebook and Twitter have claimed that the outbreak of the new virus is linked to an expired patent, and some claim that there is already a vaccine for the virus. The problem with this is that there are many types of corona virus, and seven of them can infect humans. The Wuhan virus is a new strain, and so far there is no effective vaccine.

There is also one bizarre claim associated with the corona virus that a miracle mineral solution, chlorine dioxide used in bleaching, is also a way to fight the corona virus. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration warned last year against taking the substance, which right-wing groups

claimed was a cure for autism, cancer and AIDS, calling it a dangerous bleach that could cause life-threatening side effects.

According to some social media posts, the cure for the corona virus is already known, the old antimalarial drug chloroquine. One of its advantages is that it is cheap and available in addition to the presence of many studies about it and preliminary laboratory studies indicate that the drug may be very effective in treating the virus .But the therapeutic effectiveness of this drug has not yet been proven and some studies about it have already begun in China.

Fabricated news about vaccines also spread on Twitter accounts, for example, the success of an Egyptian vaccine provided by the Egyptian Minister of Health to the Chinese Ministry of Health, which proved to be 100% effective, and showed pictures of packages carrying the vaccine, and it also indicated that Egypt provided 1000 detectors for the Corona virus and technical medical documents on how to control the disease, and a team consisting of Algerians and Iraqis claiming that they had found a vaccine against the virus appeared on the Algerian media, documenting this information with statements Directly to the joint medical team. However, the official authorities and ministries of health have not published statements denying or confirming the news, and the Minister of Health stated in a television session on the third Algerian channel on March 6th that he had not received any contact from this team and had not received any official correspondence regarding this matter.

According to Cepi, which specializes in combating epidemics in West Africa, it is already working on developing a vaccine against the corona virus, and in January, Cepi announced that the Covid-19 vaccine will be ready for testing within 16 weeks - by the end of May.

Although there is no proven vaccine yet for this virus or its symptoms, which are pneumonia, there are more than 70 drugs or drug formulations that may be useful in combating the virus, according to the World Health Organization and the Director-General of the World Health Organization explained that there are dozens of vaccines for the Corona virus "under development" and are being studied around the world, pointing out that there are 20 vaccines under clinical trials, and that the first results will appear within weeks (CNN website). Arabic).

II-2- The results of the analysis of the category of form and methods (how was it said?): These are the methods used in spreading fabricated news regarding the spread of the Corona virus:

II- 2-1. Creating fake issues related to the spread of the virus: As a start, groups were created on social media discussing the issue of the Corona virus by adopting and promoting false and fake news. The fake news was presented and fabricated as a fact commensurate with the ideologies of the target audience, after which thousands of automatic likes were programmed with several specific posts, in addition to many comments on them, to show them on the news feed. It was promoted to get thousands of tweets and likes and then posted hundreds of videos on YouTube.

II-2-2. Media malpractices, whether intentionally or unintentionally:

- Relying on anonymous and undisclosed sources and secondary sources of information and news.
- Imbalance in the media material, bias and lack of objectivity in presenting the point of view of one party without the other.
- The use of suggestion and salting leads to the recipient guessing and predicting.
- Excitement in the headlines, which may differ from the content of the news.
- Promoting fabricated news, packaged in a way that can be consumed by public opinion, through the template of exaggeration and exaggeration in distortion and manipulation of the truth to imperceptibly introduce the masses into the collective consciousness.

II-2-3. Lack of accuracy and honesty: as a result of several factors, including:

- Seeking excitement and not being sufficiently aware of the serious consequences that rumours and lies may entail.
- The lack of experience of the recipient, who depends more on the predominance of emotion, so the rumour spread usually continues even after it is denied, and the denial is usually not as popular as the rumour.

II-2-4. Reliance on fake data, fabricated data and analysis: The fake news industry, in an attempt to circumvent public opinion, relies on provoking a state of fear, or sending a state of intimidation, towards what the fabricator sees as a threat to the environment surrounding the public. The network of fabricators may go beyond the motive of intimidation to create a state of terror among the public (creating a state of phobia and hatred) about what it considers a threat to the public life system or to the model of the political, economic and social system, and its cultural, symbolic and moral values that are intended to be through the

manufacture of false news as an alternative to the competing discourse and the value system of the rival party.

Since most members of the public fear the danger or dangers that may threaten their public life model, the state of fear raised by the network of fabricators through the process of creating false news pushes them to interact with the alternative narratives produced by the fabricated discourse, which makes the public fenced or trapped in the circle of the siege imposed by fake news, and this siege expand as the motives of intimidation intensify.

II-3- The results of the analysis of the category of targets and backgrounds for the dissemination of fabricated news about the Corona virus:

II-3-1. The political conflict environment and psychological and biological warfare: The political conflict environment is a key catalyst for the escalation of the misleading media pattern "represented in fabricated news and statements as one of the tools of "psychological conflict", and all these patterns have found their way in modern media from social networks, blogs and websites, in light of their ability to spread rapidly, and not to be subject to censorship in many cases, And the absence of reliable mechanisms for correcting false news, or denying fabricated ones. Among the fabricated news spread about the Corona virus is related to the international conflict, as observers believe that there are many question marks about the countries most affected by the disease and the nature of their political and economic relationship with Washington. In this regard, Hassan Imad Abshan, an Iranian writer and political analyst, said that Iran is under severe siege due to the virus and that there is a media campaign led by Washington to spread terror in the country by inflating the number of infections, which leads to conflicting information and increases Iranians' fear of quarantine on their country and the closure of all borders and ports with it (Sputnik News).

This is in addition to racism towards China, which was manifested in several manifestations, including the exposure of Chinese citizens residing in some Arab countries and in Europe to attitudes of discrimination, racism and ridicule, as these people published many videos on social networking sites to express the abuse they are subjected to due to the Corona virus and people avoiding them in public places, and launched campaigns, trends and hashtags against racism, including "I am not Corona - I am not Corona". At the official level, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian criticized some media outlets calling

Corona «Chinese virus» and described this act as responsible, according to what was published on the Facebook page China Xinhua News.

II-3-2. Economic objectives: Conflict and economic competition have always been one of the backgrounds behind many economic crises, and the spread of the Corona virus has affected the global economy in general and the economy of China greatly after China has become the world's largest exporter of cars, mobile phones and medical equipment, as the conference announced The United Nations for Trade and Development "UNCTAD" that the decline in production in China due to the outbreak of the Corona virus, in just one month, led to a loss of \$ 50 billion for all countries in manufacturing industries during the month of February alone, of which \$ 149 million was in Russia only (United Nations news website).

II-3-3. Profitable goals through commercial advertisements: The current media scene - globally and regionally - confirms that the patterns of employing fabricated news have greatly multiplied to include profit goals, through the keenness of websites, even the largest ones, to use controversial news headlines, and in most cases fabricated, and perhaps not. The content has a connection, to obtain “traffic” that helps it increase the site’s follow-up rate, the number of its visitors and its news readers. These sites and other new media outlets also resort to this type of media misinformation in order to obtain commercial advertisements that, through their financial return, can fulfill their financial obligations. towards its employees, at a time when the media is suffering from declining funding, while some websites resort to this to distract public opinion from major issues that concern it.

II-3-4. Characteristics and attributes of fabricated news and the lack of experience of the recipient: it is characterized by repetition and its attachment to postulates and axioms, and it also shows small particles and details in an intense, reductive and simple manner at the same time, easily infiltrating into the consciousness of the recipient and then turning into postulates. A study by the American Institute of Massachusetts concluded that fake news spreads 6 times faster than real news, that the percentage of followers of this news is ten times greater than followers of real news, and that people tend to re-publish it exaggeratedly, given that it is unfamiliar news. (Al-Asi, 2018). In addition to the recipient’s lack of experience in dealing with fake news, according to traditional media rules, the spread of rumors usually continues even after they are denied. It should be noted that most of the fabricated news spread on social

media about the Corona virus depends on the lack of sources and may speed it up. Transferring information without considering its content or date.

II-4-Results of the analysis of the category of mechanisms for countering fake news about the Corona virus:

4-1. Information vigilance and prompt official responses: The official authorities represented by the Ministry of Health of the countries in which the Covid-19 virus appeared, led by China, hastened to publish official data, organize press conferences, and update information on the epidemiological situation related to the Covid-19 virus through official websites, platforms and portals. And publishing news updates about Corona through various public and private media. The World Health Organization also called for not concealing the true number of people infected with the virus. The official channel of Chinese TV responds daily through news bulletins by publishing the latest developments about the virus, including the number of infections and deaths, as well as levels of increase and recovery rates, especially with the spread of the epidemic outside China, so that the crisis has become global and there is no room for obfuscation. It also prepared a 49-minute documentary film, entitled: "The epicentre of the Corona virus ... 24 hours in Wuhan," where the film recorded life during this period and told the stories of ordinary people and the efforts made by the state and by people such as volunteers, doctors and nurses. The channel also published reports of many cases who left hospitals after their full recovery, including even the elderly. To deny the common saying that only healthy young people with high immunity overcome the disease.

II-4-2- Strategies for dealing with and managing the Corona epidemic crisis:

II-4-2-1. strategy of total recognition: It depends on recognizing the facts and the critical situation, and this is evident during the last stage of the development of the virus, as China was unable to control the situation, which prompted it to declare a state of extreme emergency in the country and request assistance from the World Health Organization. At this stage of the crisis reaching its climax, the media tended to rely on credibility, by constantly publishing accurate information about the development of the situation through official websites, fighting rumors and fabricated news, and adopting transparency and clarity.

II-4-2-2. Avoidance strategy or parallel strategy: (stratégielatérale) In many of the news we have seen, we have noticed that the topic of discussion has been moved to another level or space so as not to focus on the epidemic as a main topic in the media, especially the official ones, and to direct public attention outside the actual crisis, and this appears by changing the angles of dealing with the issue of the epidemic. In the studied case, we found that the news was based on two types of situations:

- **The position of intrigue and conspiracy**, which is based on highlighting the spread of the Corona epidemic as a conspiracy.

- **The position of the side effects**, which is transferring the topic of discussion to another party, such as the focus of the Chinese media (through what we followed through the Arabic-language China channel “CGTN”, and the Chinaxinhua news page) on the spread of the virus in other countries outside China, such as Europe, South Korea and Iran.

II-4-2-3. refusal strategy: This strategy is based on the position of silence and silence in a systematic manner and not communicating during the crisis, closing channels of communication, categorically denying the facts and denying the events and news about them, and this strategy was adopted only during a stage of the emergence of the virus, which is the stage of discovering the epidemic when news spread about the Chinese doctor "Li Wenliang". Who discovered the virus and warned of the spread of a dangerous epidemic, but the Chinese authorities asked him to remain silent, and with the rapid spread of the virus, China was forced to officially declare the epidemic, as the state of silence can only be adopted in short periods to deal with the crisis. In the case of Iran, the official authorities continue to hide the real numbers of people infected with the Corona virus, and in this regard, an Iranian official accused Parliamentarian "Abadi" the Iranian Sultan of concealing the real numbers related to the number of deaths that reached 137 people, and the reports of cemeteries in Iran indicate huge numbers that cannot be hidden. According to the Iranian International Channel, while the official spokesman for the Iranian Ministry of Health stated the number of deaths is 34 and the injuries are 388 people. (package: 2008, pp. 170-172.)

II-4-3. Deterrent measures: Some countries have linked the act of publishing fabricated information and news about the Corona virus to national security, for example, the United Arab Emirates, which issued strict instructions not to address any news about a new infection in the

UAE, and considered talking about this topic, whether on social media, a state security crime, after news spread about the increase in the number of infections with the virus to 50 cases, while the official authorities announce 28 cases.

II-4-4. Technical and practical measures: Through social networking sites: These sites are one of the most important sites that are subjected to harsh criticism regarding the fabricated news published in them, and because of that, they have become pressured to ensure that their platforms do not provoke panic, fear and violence, and after the wide spread of false news about the Corona virus, which filled social networking sites, the management of this reality resorted to addressing misinformation, as Facebook, Twitter and Tik Tok provided links to accurate information about the virus. In addition to setting rules that prohibit the dissemination of defamatory and false information, Facebook has resorted to reducing this information by using fact-checkers to review the information and detect false information so that individuals who shared this news are notified that it is false, and Facebook has focused on claims about the existence of a vaccine for the virus and wrong treatments.

Instagram is also bringing up some virus-related hashtags. WhatsApp has taken measures to prevent users from forwarding messages to more than 5 people or groups. Video sharing app TikTok added a link to the World Health Organization's website to report information they believe is harmful.

As for YouTube, the site removes videos, especially those that contain hatred, harassment, or messages that incite violence and fraud. Regarding the virus, the site displays previews of text news articles.

“Read it” has a platform to protect against misinformation and directs users to discussion groups with authoritative content for people interested in the spread of the virus. Some platforms have also resorted to hiding posts after a period of publication, such as the "Sana Chat" platform, in which publications disappear after 24 hours, which prevents them from spreading quickly, and thus limiting their viewing or sharing to a small number of people (Al-Araby Al-Jadeed).

. the Results of the study:

- The countries affected by the Corona virus relied on several strategic approaches in dealing with the crisis and confronting it, some of which were based on the position of conspiracy, and some of them adopted the position of rejection and denial of the facts, and others adopted a parallel strategy to avoid the effects and repercussions of the crisis.

- Multiple mechanisms for confronting the health crisis "Corona", where some websites have developed practical technical procedures and measures to limit the spread of fabricated news, in addition to the reliance of organizations and official authorities on information vigilance in preparation to face any emergency.

- As for the goals and backgrounds behind the spread of fabricated news about the Corona virus, they varied between political, economic and commercial backgrounds. – The method of intimidation and excitement represents the most important methods that have been employed in fabricated news, in addition to suggestion, insinuation, bias, and the adoption of fake and fabricated data and images.

- The study concluded that all the circulated and dubious news were answered, corrected or refuted by the official authorities and by media sources such as reliable news channels and websites.

-The analytical study showed that most of the news circulating about the Corona virus relates to the ways of its spread and the spread of the disease, and the numbers it caused in infections and deaths, then followed by news related to the sources of the virus that have not been decided yet, and finally comes the news related to finding a vaccine and treatment for the epidemic:

References

Books:

- Philippe Paquet: information communication and management dandlentreprise, ed harmattan, Paris, 2008, pp170-172
- David MJ, et al. The science of fake news.Science.Vol. 359, Issue 6380, (2018).
- Guo, Lei, and Chris. "Fake News" and Emerging Online Media Ecosystem: An Integrated Intermedia Agenda-Setting Analysis of the 2016 US Presidential Election." Communication Research. (2018).
- Manovich, Lev. "New Media From Borges to HTML". The New Media Reader. Ed. Noah Wardrip-Fruin & Nick Montfort. Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2003 .

Internet websites:

- 50 billion dollars in losses from the impact of Corona, United Nations news website, linknews.un.orgCounseling March 4, 2020, March 5, 2020 at 10:00)
[https://arabic.cnn.com/health/article/2020/02/28/coronavirus-vaccines-in-development-worldwide-who\)](https://arabic.cnn.com/health/article/2020/02/28/coronavirus-vaccines-in-development-worldwide-who)
- THE RISK OF THE NEW CORONA VIRUS INCREASED AFTER DISCOVERING ITS ANIMAL SOURCE,Our immune system is not immune,February 7, 2020<https://www.youm7.com/story/2020/1/30>
- Researchers:Fake news about the coronavirus is exacerbating the outbreak,February 14, 2020 Arabic Sputnik website:
[.https://arabic.sputniknews.com/Consultation 03/1/2020, at 18:49.](https://arabic.sputniknews.com/Consultation%2003/1/2020,%20at%2018:49)
- Al-Asi Hassan: The alchemy of the media... the industry of falsification and misinformation, August 14, 2018.www.diwanalArab.com. Consultation March 6, 2020, 11:00.
- Corona virus: social networking sites combat the epidemic of false news, Al-Araby Al-Jadeed website (www.alAraby.co.uk), DateConsultation 3/5/2020- 10:00.
- Information about the outbreak of the emerging corona virusFrom MSF website, 14/02/2020.<https://www.msf.org/ar/>
From the Future of Health website:<https://mostaqbal.ae/coronavirus-started-animals-dangerous/>
- World Health Organization website:[https://www.who.int/ar/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/qa-coronaviruses\)](https://www.who.int/ar/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/qa-coronaviruses)
- FAO website, link<http://www.fao.org/2019-ncov/en/>
- Is China hiding the real number of Corona deaths? Akhbar Al-Youm portal, February 6, 2020.www.m.akhbarelyom.com. Consultation date: 02/03/2020
- IIs there a vaccine for the Corona virus?.. Here is the answer Source: Al Arabiya Net, 02/29/2020.[https://www.alArabiya.net/ar/medicine-and-health/2020/02/29/Consultation date: 05/03/2020.](https://www.alArabiya.net/ar/medicine-and-health/2020/02/29/Consultation%20date:%2005/03/2020)